

**Castletroy Local Area Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement

January 2018



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Summary of how environmental considerations were factored into the plan
- 3.0 Reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered
- 4.0 Monitoring measures
- 4.1 Conclusions

SEA Statement for the Castletroy Local Area Plan 2019 - 2025

1.0 Introduction

In accordance with Article 9 of the SEA Directive and 14(l) of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) regulations, the following is a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Local Area Plan. It shows that the Environmental Report and the outcome of consultations were taken into account and indicates the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives considered.

2.0 Summary of how environmental considerations were factored into the plan

One of the important documents in the plan preparation process in assessing how environmental and other considerations were taken into account in the preparation of the plan is the Chief Executives (CE's) Report produced following the public display periods of the plan.

In the final CE's Report dated 10th November 2018, 12 no. submissions were received from both organisations and individuals. Of these, two related to environmental issues. The Environmental Protection Agency submission mentioned the necessity for the preparation of an SEA statement. The Irish Water submission clarifies that there is adequate treatment capacity for the proposed population allocation of 3,078 people to the LAP area for the lifetime of the plan. Irish Water also confirms that there is sufficient potable water to cater for the needs of Castletroy during the lifetime of the plan.

During the preparation of the Proposed Local Area Plan, consideration was given to expansion of zoning outside the current plan boundaries. This option was rejected, as analysis indicated that sufficient land was zoned for different purposes within the Plan area to cater for the population for the next plan period. It was considered that further expanding zoned land would result in under used or partially developed land. This ensured that the development footprint of the plan did not expand and that emphasis was placed on the coherent development of lands within the existing development boundary. The purpose of this was to "give preference to the re-use of brownfield lands, rather than developing greenfield lands" (SEA Guidelines 2004, p.31). This was further reinforced by rationalising the existing residential zoning pattern, through phasing.

The issue of effects on Natura 2000 sites (i.e. the Lower River Shannon SAC site) and the issue of the need for appropriate assessment arose as zoning alterations close to the Mulkear River had potential implications for species such as lamprey, which use the area for spawning. An Appropriate Assessment was carried out and a Natura Impact Report was prepared. It's findings were reflected in the final Environmental Report. In short, it found that the re-establishment of zoning close to the Mulkear river and the construction of necessary flood defences to defend this land would not have significant effects on the Lower River Shannon SAC site, provided the necessary mitigation measures outlined in the Natura Impact Report (NIR) were implemented.

3.0 Reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered

The following four scenarios were considered:

1. Continuing with the existing plan.
2. The plan as currently presented.
3. The zoning of additional lands outside the current development plan boundary.
4. The plan with residential zoning lands unchanged.

Scenario 1 - Proceed with existing plan i.e. the do nothing alternative. As indicated earlier such a course of action would not allow the plan to be updated to include aspects of current best practice in relation to environmental and planning issues. The publication of the National Planning Framework added to the importance of updating the Castletroy Plan. The Planning and Development Act (As Amended) sets out the statutory time frame for reviewing local areas plans and as the 2009 plan had been extended by 5 years in 2014, the Planning Authority were required to review the plan in accordance with above legalisation.

Scenario 2 - The plan, as presented, is considered to be the best compromise between adapting to the changing needs of Castletroy i.e. conserving the natural environment and providing for the changing needs of the community by updating the zoning and policy content. Provision to accommodate sufficient housing lands have been accommodated within the existing plan boundaries and the plan has incorporated new polices which reflect the emergence of new guidance on planning and environmental matters, including that of the National Planning Framework. It also has incorporated measures for the protection of heritage features and sites within the plan boundaries

Scenario 3 - It had been submitted that lands outside the existing plan area would be zoned for development purposes during the plan preparation purposes. This option was considered but not pursued as it would result in zoning which would be in excess of requirements and contribute to urban sprawl which runs counter to the contents of the Department's guidance document called *Development Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2007, S4.6). This states "*excessive areas of land...should not be zoned for development*". While some alteration of zoning took place within the existing development boundary no expansion of the boundaries has taken place. Sufficient lands for differing purposes have been zoned within the existing boundaries to cater for the forthcoming plan time period.

Scenario 4 - Continuing with the residentially zoned lands as set out in the 2009 plan was not pursued, as there were concerns in terms of complying with the population targets, set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF).

4.0 Monitoring measures

The following monitoring measures are proposed as part of this SEA process, to monitor the effects on the environment of implementing the review of the LAP. Measures include targets and thresholds that determine where remedial action may be required in order to achieve that target and fulfil the environmental protection objective.

Table 4.1 Monitoring Measures

Environmental Category	Potential impact	Indicators	Comments
Bio diversity, flora and fauna	Fragmentation, loss of habitats, species	Known losses, reports, surveys by relevant bodies, NPWS Fisheries	Requires cooperation liaison with other bodies.
Population and Human Health	Ground surface/ water pollution. Traffic accidents. Noise	Pollution incidents, Traffic reports	Could be obtained through Traffic Impact Assessments produced as part of planning applications.
Soil	Contamination	Reports/Surveys	Local contamination may occur as a result of pollution.
Water	Pollution of ground and surface waters, estuary waters. Excessive abstraction	Water pollution surveys, incidents as brought to light as a result of complaints, sampling	Cooperation with other bodies such as Fisheries NPWS and Health Board required.
Air and Climate factors	Local air pollution. Greenhouse gas emissions	Traffic volumes. Comments in individual EISs submitted.	Contents of EIS submitted to the Planning Authority in the monitoring time frame may be indirect sources of data
Material assets	Use of brown field sites	Planning applications	Nil

Cultural heritage.	Development in or close to protected sites, habitats or structures.	Known loss of sites or structures.	Increased liaison with other bodies required.
--------------------	---	------------------------------------	---

4.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of the SEA process was to ensure that the policy and guidance content of the Castletroy Local Area Plan follow good environmental practice. This was the aim of the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out as part of the plan review, in which the policy content of the plan was assessed against Strategic Environmental objectives. One of the first steps in establishing this is ascertaining whether or not the policies are in accordance with National and EU legislation. This approach has been consistent throughout the plan in that the policies have sought to take into account National and EU guidelines and legislation.

The rationale behind the policies was that the cumulative effect of the development or other plan proposals on the area should maintain the balance of or improve the overall environmental stock of the area. Limited loss to the natural environment may be inevitable but these are outweighed by such factors as concentration of development that is more easily serviced.