

LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL AUTHORITY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Screening

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Unit 3/4, Northwood House, Northwood Crescent,
Northwood, Dublin, D09 X899, Ireland

T: +353 1 658 3500 | E: info@ftco.ie

CORK | DUBLIN | CARLOW

www.fehilytimoney.ie

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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this Report to Inform AA Screening to Leitrim County Council for their Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) was commissioned by Leitrim County Council to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for their Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan (LABAP) for the years 2026 - 2031. The aim of the LABAP is to promote biodiversity conservation at local authority level.

This report presents an examination of whether the LABAP is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

1.2 Background to Biodiversity Action Plans

LABAPs must be prepared in accordance with The Heritage Council's Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan Guidelines (2024). These guidelines provide best practice guidance to local authorities on preparing and implementing biodiversity conservation actions within their functional area. These guidelines advise that LABAPs 'should aim to record, conserve, restore and promote biodiversity, and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of it among the people of the area.'

LABAPs are designed to provide a structured approach to biodiversity conservation at local level. Local authorities are required to develop a compelling vision for their LABAP and a set of clear, measurable and achievable objectives for biodiversity conservation in their functional area. LABAPs are developed by local authority Biodiversity Officers with the support of a dedicated Biodiversity Working Group. Public engagement and consultation must be undertaken at the Pre-draft and Draft Plan stages of the Plan-making process. All submissions from stakeholders and members of the public should be considered during the development of a LABAP.

LABAPs should serve to define targeted and focussed action for promoting biodiversity conservation through the functions of a local authority in alignment with nature legislation and higher order policy such as the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and inter-related policy. LABAPs should be in harmony with and support the land use planning framework, including City and County Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

LABAPs are non-statutory land use plans that should be screened for the need for SEA and AA.



1.3 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

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

These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The competent authority must carry out a screening for appropriate assessment to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed plan, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site. If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site, an appropriate assessment of its implications for the European Site(s) in view of the Site's conservation objectives must be carried out.

The provisions of Article 6(3) do not apply where the proposed plan or project is 'connected with or necessary to the management of the site'. In this case, the plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

1.4 Guidance

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin (2009, updated 2010);
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission 2013;
- Scottish Natural Heritage. (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Guidance.
- Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2019). Brussels, (2019/C 33/01). OJ C 33, 25.1.2019.



- 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, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (European Commission, 2002). This document was updated by Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Commission Notice (2021) Brussels, 28.9.2021 C (2021) 6913 final;
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator (2021).
- Atkinson, S., Magee, M., Moorkens, E.A. & Heavey, M. (2024). Guidance on Assessment and Construction Management in Margaritifera Catchments in Ireland. <https://e-mussels.eu/europe/conservation-guidelines>

1.5 Assessment Process and Approach

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a proposed plan or project on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model. In order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

- Source(s) – e.g., pollutant run-off, noise, removal of vegetation etc.;
- Pathway(s) – functional link, or ecological pathway e.g., groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and,
- Receptor(s) –the qualifying habitats and species of European sites and ecological resources supporting those habitats/species.

In the context of this report, a source is any identifiable element of the proposed plan that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)¹ for an SAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)² for an SPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term Qualifying Interests also applies to SCIs (and is used in this document for simplicity). A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor.

The assessment commences with a description of the plan, and the associated sources for impacts to the receiving environment. The type of impacts that are likely due to the plan (Source) are identified having regard to the spatial and temporal scale of the plan, resource requirements and likely emissions. These sources are then used to define the zone of influence (Zoi) of the plan.

¹ SACs are areas designated under the Habitats Directive to conserve habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and plant and animal species listed in Annex II. Collectively these are referred to as the 'Qualifying Interests' or 'QIs' of the SAC.

² SPAs are sites classified under the Birds Directive to protect rare or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I to the Directive as well as regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands. Wetland habitats that support internationally important populations of migratory birds may be coastal or inland. Collectively, these species and habitats are referred to as the 'Special Conservation Interests' of the SPA.



The European Commission Notice (2021) on the 'Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, states that in identifying European sites (Natural 2000 sites), which may be affected by a plan or project, the following should be identified:

- Any European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;
- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project. European sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the plan project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g., water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;
- European sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project.

The zone of influence of a plan is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have potential effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. The OPR (2021) practice note states that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km). Section 3.3 sets out the detailed rationale for the identification of relevant European sites within the ZoI based on the sources of impacts arising from the proposed plan. Subsequently, an assessment is undertaken with respect to potential connectivity (Pathways) to European Sites and their qualifying interests/special conservation interests are identified.

The potential for in-combination impacts with other plans and projects is also assessed having regard to the identified impacts of the proposed plan along the ecological pathways identified to European sites.

The likelihood of significant effects on the European Sites within the ZoI is examined having regard to the sensitivity of each European site with pathways for impacts associated with the proposed plan on its own and in combination with other plans and projects.

Having regard to the European Commission Communication on the Precautionary Principle (European Commission, 2000) the:

“absence of scientific evidence on the significant negative effect of an action cannot be used as justification for approval of this action. When applied to Article 6(3) procedure, the precautionary principle implies that the absence of a negative effect on Natura 2000 sites has to be demonstrated before a plan or project can be authorised. In other words, if there is a lack of certainty as to whether there will be any negative effects, then the plan or project cannot be approved.”

Where significant effects are determined to be likely, or where there is uncertainty regarding the likelihood of significant effects, the plan will be required under law to be subjected to Appropriate Assessment.



2. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

2.1 Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan

The overarching aim of the LABAP is to record, conserve, restore and promote biodiversity, and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of biodiversity among the people of the area.

The following Objectives are defined in the LABAP:

- Raise awareness of biodiversity through education and community engagement.
- Protect and restore natural habitats and native species.
- Tackle and raise awareness of Invasive Alien Species (IAS).
- Promote and celebrate sustainable land use practices.
- Track progress through monitoring and evaluation.
- Provide funding, resources and support for biodiversity actions.

A series of Actions³ have been defined in the LABAP under each Objective and Theme. The higher-level Objectives are broader in scope, while the Actions underpinning the Objectives are more defined and measurable. These are presented in Table 3-1.

³ Tables 2-1 and 3-3 consider the Draft LABAP Actions. Amendments to the Draft LABAP and further screening for AA have been documented in Appendix 1 of this Screening Report.



Table 2-1: LABAP Strategic Objectives and Actions

Objective	Theme	Action Code	Action
Objective 1: Raise awareness of biodiversity through education and community engagement	Community Engagement	1.1	Promote the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan
		1.2	Establish partnerships with community groups to promote, support and implement local biodiversity initiatives
		1.3	Work with faith communities to identify lands & buildings to implement biodiversity measures in collaboration with local communities.
		1.4	Support local communities with the creation and implementation of Community Biodiversity Action Plans
	Education, Training & Resources	1.5	Share field resources for use by community groups, schools and individuals for biodiversity projects and monitoring programmes
		1.6	Facilitate and support workshops, field trips, public events and public awareness campaigns to foster biodiversity awareness and connection to nature
		1.7	Create a central information hub to provide the public with environmental organisational responsibilities and contact information
		1.8	Celebrate Biodiversity Week and Heritage Week with public events to raise awareness and appreciation of biodiversity
		1.9	Deliver climate-themed events and ensure sustainability and climate action are integrated into all events through the development of local authority-wide policy on events
		1.10	Promote and expand the delivery of the Heritage in Schools Programme to Primary schools
Objective 2: Protect and restore natural habitats and native species	Protection of Habitats and Native Species	2.1	Identify wetland habitats of local and national importance using Wetlands Surveys Ireland data for potential conservation and restoration projects
		2.2	Identify, protect and restore areas of native ancient woodlands
		2.3	Support initiatives under the WFD that contribute to the restoration of ecology in water bodies, and the blue dot catchments programme



Objective	Theme	Action Code	Action
		2.4	Develop an ecological network map of the county to identify wildlife corridors and develop a plan to increase connectivity across the network and collaborate with neighbouring LA's
		2.5	Investigate feasibility of implementing recommendations from hedgerow appraisal survey where appropriate
		2.6	Identify and map County Biodiversity Areas (CBA) according to Heritage Council Guidance and support initiatives to protect these sites.
		2.7	Undertake County grassland surveys and identify potential grassland sites for conservation and restoration
		2.8	Support the creation of ponds and restoration of wetland habitats on public and private lands
	Biodiversity on public land	2.9	Identify Local Authority land that may require ecological surveys and highlight areas that may be at risk and require protection
		2.10	Implement the AIPP as a Council partner and manage public land in line with AIPP guidelines
		2.11	Investigate opportunities for planting native forestry on public land through the Forestry Programme 2023 - 2027 (e.g. FT3 Forests on Public Lands)
		2.12	Develop an artificial lighting policy to incorporate environmentally friendly lighting practices in rural and urban areas where possible
		2.13	Explore the potential for the development of a new wetland ecology park off the Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon as a hub for nature-based tourism whilst ensuring that the biodiversity of the wetlands is both maintained and protected.



Objective	Theme	Action Code	Action
Objective 3: Tackle and raise awareness of Invasive Alien Species (IAS)	IAS Outreach & Education	3.1	Develop an integrated programme to raise awareness of invasive alien species to help identify, prevent, manage and eradicate invasive species
		3.2	Promote Irish provenance native trees and plants to community groups, landowners and all stakeholders
	Action for IAS	3.3	Survey and map the presence of IAS throughout the county
		3.4	Organise and support the removal of IAS by community volunteers and landowners
		3.5	Work with other stakeholders to map the presence of Japanese Knotweed on public sites and implement management plan to eradicate it
Objective 4: Promote and celebrate sustainable land use practices	Pesticides	4.1	Develop and adopt a pesticide reduction strategy for Leitrim County Council
		4.2	Deliver a public awareness raising campaign about pesticide use and the effects of pesticides on the environment and on human health
	Hedgerows, Trees & Forestry	4.3	Promote Forestry schemes that encourage planting native trees and community ownership of forestry
		4.4	Work with farmers and landowners to promote good practices for hedgerow management
	Agriculture	4.5	Encourage low-intensity farming practices that enhance biodiversity, organic farming and support farmers in protecting high nature value farmland
		4.6	Promote agricultural practices that implement actions to prevent agricultural run off, protect riparian buffer zones and improve water quality
	Peatland	4.7	Promote and support projects and landowners that are restoring peatlands to store carbon and to protect biodiversity
	Management of Urban Green Spaces	4.8	Support the creation of public and connected green spaces and wildlife corridors in Carrick on Shannon (DZ) and in other urban areas to enhance biodiversity, health and wellbeing.
		4.9	Provide advice on incorporating biodiversity measures and nature based solutions where appropriate in capital projects



Objective	Theme	Action Code	Action
		4.10	Promote and celebrate biodiversity friendly practices in residential areas, community spaces and council properties.
Objective 5: Track progress through monitoring and evaluation	Ecological data	5.1	Compile and incorporate ecological data from previous surveys into internal GIS systems and provide access to GIS mapping and data for relevant staff
		5.2	Carry out ecological surveys to ground truth non-designated sites that have been identified as County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs)
		5.3	Identify gaps in the surveying and monitoring of species and support surveys and studies to fill knowledge gaps
		5.4	Collaborate with other biodiversity organisations to share and publish data
		5.5	Undertake barn owl survey in Co. Leitrim and raise awareness of barn owls to the public and landowners in areas where they are likely to re-establish
		5.6	Continue wetlands surveys on ecologically important sites that have been identified
		5.7	Encourage and support local communities, schools and citizen scientists to participate in biodiversity monitoring programmes to record ecological data
	Monitoring & Evaluation	5.8	Facilitate the Biodiversity Working Group which is made up of key stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the BAP
		5.9	Conduct biodiversity surveys & audits to monitor progress and adapt management practices as necessary
		5.10	Report biodiversity measures adopted and progress made towards objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan
Objective 6: Provide funding, resources and support for Biodiversity Actions	Financial resources Capacity building	6.1	Apply for relevant funding for biodiversity projects and actions in the LABAP
		6.2	Support community groups to apply for funding to develop community biodiversity projects
		6.3	Establish partnerships with local organisations and stakeholders to leverage additional resources and expertise



Objective	Theme	Action Code	Action
		6.4	Advocate for adequate staff and financial resources within the Local Authority to implement actions from the LABAP
		6.5	Investigate opportunities to offer placements for 3rd level students and graduates
		6.6	Develop and deliver a biodiversity training programme for Leitrim County Council staff & elected members
	Policy	6.7	All relevant policies developed or updated within the council will consider biodiversity at the policy development stage
		6.8	Incorporate biodiversity priorities into the next County Development Plan
		6.9	Promote best practice guidance and policies for biodiversity to relevant LA staff



2.2 Draft Plan Consultations and Amendments

This document is a consolidated version of the AA Screening Report, which has been updated in response to submissions received during the consultation period, and considers amendments that were made to the Original Draft Plan. The local authority has consulted with the following Environmental Authorities within the Republic of Ireland:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Development Applications Unit)
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

A copy of the Draft LABAP and the Draft SEA and AA Screening Reports were sent to the Environmental Authorities, who were given four weeks to make submissions on the Draft Plan and the accompanying environmental reports. One submission was received from the EPA and has been included in Appendix 1 of the accompanying SEA screening report.

Draft Plan amendments arising from consultation submissions and the Plan-making process have been subject to further AA Screening Assessment. This assessment is presented in Appendix 1 of this report. The amendments will not introduce a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on European Sites.

2.3 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

The LABAP sits within a hierarchy of plans and has been informed by and is consistent with the aims and objectives of other plans, programmes and strategies developed at national, regional and local levels. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

National Level

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework First Revision (2025).
- Heritage Ireland 2030: A Framework for Heritage (2022).
- Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028 (2023).
- The 4th National Biodiversity Plan 2023 - 2030 (2024) (discussed further in Section 3.1.1 below).
- Climate Action Plan (2025).

Regional and Local Level

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern & Western Regional Assembly 2020 - 2032.
- Leitrim County Development Plan 2023 - 2029.
- Leitrim County Council Local Authority Climate Action 2024 – 2029.
- Leitrim County Heritage Plan 2020 - 2025.

Given the transboundary linkages between biodiversity in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the LABAPs in Ireland also generally have the potential to support biodiversity protection and enhancement-related plans for Northern Ireland, including:



- Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland.
- Biodiversity Strategy (Draft Nature Recovery Strategy).
- Climate Change Adaptation Programme and Action Plan for Northern Ireland.

2.3.1 The 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to protect and value nature. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to 'act for nature.' This plan provides the overarching arching framework for delivering biodiversity conservation through LABAPs.

This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. The five overarching objectives to address new and emerging issues include the following:

- Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity
- Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
- Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People
- Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity
- Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

The NBAP contains actions pertaining to the preparation to LABAPs under *Objective One: Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity* and *Objective Three: Secure Nature's Contribution to People*, including the following:

Table 2-2: NBAP Actions pertaining to the preparation of Local Biodiversity Plans

Action Number	Action
1C5	The Heritage Council will publish updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans and their integration with City and County Development Plans
1C6	All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan adopted by the end of 2026 which is subject to regular review and revision processes in line with relevant guideline standards
3A3	Local Authorities will work to identify and respond to opportunities for enhancing the biocultural value of GBUE through appropriate design strategies, the use of visual and performing arts, and enhancing equity of access and promoting use of GBUE by community groups, and integrating cultural services in local biodiversity action plans

Local Authorities are expected to align their LABAPs with national commitments defined in the NBAP to ensure a cohesive approach to biodiversity conservation across the country.



3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction to Screening

This section of the report examines if the plan is likely to have a significant effect upon European Sites from the plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase is progressed in the following stages. A series of questions are asked during the Screening Stage of the AA process in order to determine:

- Whether the plan or project introduces any sources of environmental or ecological impact
- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.

Whether the plan or project will have a likely significant effect on a European Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential effects.

Plans are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no sources of environmental impact associated with a plan or project.
- Where there are no pathways such as hydrological links between a plan or project area, and relevant European sites
- Where a European site is located at a distance from the plan or project area such that effects are not foreseen;
- Where known threats or vulnerabilities at a European site cannot be linked to potential effects that may arise from a plan or project.

3.2 Potential Interactions of the Proposed Plan on the receiving environment

Having regard to the European Commission (2021) guidance document and the OPR (2021) practice note, the potential impacts of the LABAP actions on the receiving environment at source are considered based (in Table 3.1) on the following criteria:

- Habitat destruction/fragmentation/deterioration;
- Surface water run-off carrying suspended silt and contaminants, into local watercourses;
- Changes to groundwater quality, yield and/or flow paths associated with the proposed project;
- Plan related activities (noise, vibration, lighting, human presence, structures, etc) leading to disturbance / displacement of species;
- Plan related activities leading to a reduction in species populations / density;
- Air pollution due to dust and other airborne emissions; and
- Disturbance and potential spread of invasive species

These impacts are further examined in defining the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the plan to identify likely significant effects through the Source-Pathway-Receptor assessment (Section 3.3).



Table 3-1: Identification of sources arising from the proposed plan that have potential for interactions with the receiving environment

Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
Objective 1: Raise awareness of biodiversity through education and community engagement	1.1	Promote the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a cross-sectoral framework to create landscapes and environmental conditions where pollinator species can survive and thrive. The action is centred around supporting the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which will then inform and support focused and target pollinator-friendly biodiversity initiatives in County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.2	Establish partnerships with community groups to promote, support and implement local biodiversity initiatives	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim, which in turn will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.3	Work with faith communities to identify lands & buildings to implement biodiversity measures in collaboration with local communities.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. Faith communities can often own large areas of land such as churchyards and burial grounds, which serves as an opportunity to enhance biodiversity at these sites. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.4	Support local communities with the creation and implementation of Community Biodiversity Action Plans	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			The action will also increase stakeholder engagement, environmental interest and stewardship within the local community. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.5	Share field resources for use by community groups, schools and individuals for biodiversity projects and monitoring programmes	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.6	Facilitate and support workshops, field trips, public events and public awareness campaigns to foster biodiversity awareness and connection to nature	This action will foster increased stakeholder engagement in the Plan area, thus supporting implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim. This action will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.7	Create a central information hub to provide the public with environmental organisational responsibilities and contact information	This action will foster increased stakeholder engagement in the Plan area, thus supporting implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim and, in turn, contributing to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. Providing members of the public with a central information hub will support improved understanding and awareness of biodiversity initiatives in the Plan area. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
	1.8	Celebrate Biodiversity Week and Heritage Week with public events to raise awareness and appreciation of biodiversity	This action will foster increased stakeholder engagement in the Plan area, thus supporting implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim. This action will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. Promoting biodiversity initiatives will support improved understanding and awareness of biodiversity initiatives in the Plan area. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.9	Deliver climate-themed events and ensure sustainability and climate action are integrated into all events through the development of local authority-wide policy on events	This action is in support of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and climate in the Plan area through the introduction of a policy on events. This action has the potential to generate co-benefits for other environmental components, including climate and population and human health. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	1.10	Promote and expand the delivery of the Heritage in Schools Programme to Primary schools	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will foster interest in younger members of the community and increase biodiversity awareness. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
Objective 2: Protect and restore natural habitats and native species	2.1	Identify wetland habitats of local and national importance using Wetlands Surveys Ireland data for potential conservation and restoration projects	This action proposes the identification and itemisation of important wetland habitats in the Plan Area. This action will support the effective implementation of the BAP, furthermore protection and restoration of wetlands will potentially lead to focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will also enable informed decision-making at local authority level for potential enhancement or restoration measures. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.2	Identify, protect and restore areas of native ancient woodlands	This action proposes surveying and protection of native ancient woodlands in County Leitrim. The action has the potential to have direct positive effects on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, indirect positive effects on water and soil quality, and climate. The protection and restoration of native ancient woodlands will enhance natural and cultural heritage in the Plan area. This action is in support of biodiversity conservation and enhancement within the Plan area and will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment. All restoration projects will be subject to appropriate project-level environmental assessment. At Plan-level the general goal of this action is to achieve biodiversity protection and enhancement.
	2.3	Support initiatives under the WFD that contribute to the restoration of ecology in water bodies, and the blue dot catchments programme	<p>The Water Framework Directive is a framework for ensuring the good qualitative and quantitative health of all water bodies. Blue Dot Catchments Programme is a collaborative programme focused on directing resources towards the protection and restoration of sensitive, high-status objective water bodies. This action will support these frameworks to maintain, and where required, restore water bodies to 'Good Status' (both chemically and ecologically).</p> <p>The action, therefore, has the potential to generate direct positive effects on biodiversity, the water environment, and</p>



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			population and human health, and by way of interaction, indirect positive effects on the soils environment. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.4	Develop an ecological network map of the county to identify wildlife corridors and develop a plan to increase connectivity across the network and collaborate with neighbouring LA's	The creation of an ecology network map for County Leitrim will define and highlight the extents of the ecological assets within County Leitrim. The action will improve local authority decision-making through augmented knowledge of the baseline in the Plan Area, and can underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan. This can then potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity initiatives and improvements. Being reviewed-based, the action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.5	Investigate feasibility of implementing recommendations from hedgerow appraisal survey where appropriate	The County Council has commissioned a hedgerow survey to understand the unique significance that these habitats offer, and monitor trends and changes within them. Hedgerows hold features of archaeological, geological, social and natural heritage, and are important wildlife corridors and habitats, serving as refuges for biodiversity. The findings and recommendations of any hedgerow appraisals undertaken will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action in and of itself will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
	2.6	Identify and map County Biodiversity Areas (CBA) according to Heritage Council Guidance and support initiatives to protect these sites.	This action proposes the identification and mapping of County Biodiversity Areas within County Leitrim, and the informed protection of said sites. This action will foster improved decision making and will therefore underpin and support the effective implementation of the BAP. The action, in and of itself, will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.7	Undertake County grassland surveys and identify potential grassland sites for conservation and restoration	This action proposes the carrying out of grassland surveys in the Plan area. The itemisation of County grasslands will support a renewed understanding of such sites and their potential for biodiversity conservation in County Leitrim. This action will foster improved decision making by the local authority and will underpin effective implementation of the Plan, thus contributing to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.8	Support the creation of ponds and restoration of wetland habitats on public and private lands	This action will contribute to biodiversity enhancement via ponds and the restoration of wetland habitats, and will generate positive effects for population and human health, air and climate, and the water and soils environments. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment. All restoration projects will be subject to appropriate project-level environmental assessment. At Plan-level the general goal of this action is to achieve biodiversity protection and enhancement.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
	2.9	Identify Local Authority land that may require ecological surveys and highlight areas that may be at risk and require protection	This action proposes the carrying out of surveying of Local Authority land in the Plan area. Developing an understanding of council-owned land holdings in County Leitrim, risk associated with such and the potential for ecological protection of such will underpin and support effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to improved decision making and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.10	Implement the AIPP as a Council partner and manage public land in line with AIPP guidelines	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a cross-sectoral framework to create landscapes and environmental conditions where pollinator species can survive and thrive. The action is centred around fostering a collaborative approach to support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which will then inform and support focused and target pollinator-friendly biodiversity initiatives in County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.11	Investigate opportunities for planting native forestry on public land through the Forestry Programme 2023 - 2027 (e.g. FT3 Forests on Public Lands)	The Forestry Programme 2023-2027 aims to provide lasting benefits for several key areas, including biodiversity and climate change. This action supports the planting of native trees under the Forestry Programme 2023-2027, and thus will contribute to biodiversity enhancement and protection in the Plan area. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	2.12	Develop an artificial lighting policy to incorporate environmentally friendly	Reducing artificial light in ecologically sensitive areas is an effective way of protecting light-sensitive species such as bats



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
		lighting practices in rural and urban areas where possible	and small mammals. This action supports the preparation of a County Policy which will guide the inclusion of environmentally sustainable lighting throughout County Leitrim, as well as the reduction of light pollution and its associated impacts on biodiversity. The action has the potential to protect light-sensitive species and enhance ecological connectivity. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment. The creation of this policy will happen under the land use plan development process which will be subject to its own SEA and AA processes.
	2.13	Explore the potential for the development of a new wetland ecology park off the Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon as a hub for nature-based tourism whilst ensuring that the biodiversity of the wetlands is both maintained and protected.	It is proposed to explore the development of a wetland ecology park in County Leitrim. This action is explanatory in nature. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment. Such a development will be subject to appropriate project-level environmental assessment under the land use planning process.
Objective 3: Tackle and raise awareness of Invasive Alien Species (IAS)	3.1	Develop an integrated programme to raise awareness of invasive alien species to help identify, prevent, manage and eradicate invasive species	This action supports the development of an Invasive Alien Species informational programme in County Leitrim. The implementation of an Invasive Alien Species informational programme will increase awareness of invasive species in the Plan area, and thus will ensure appropriate management of invasive species and protection of native or vulnerable species in County Leitrim. This action has the potential to result in positive effects on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, soil and water quality. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	3.2	Promote Irish provenance native trees and plants to community groups, landowners and all stakeholders	This action is in support of protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the Plan area through the promotion of native tree planting, with the potential to generate co-benefits for other environmental components. The action will not



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	3.3	Survey and map the presence of IAS throughout the county	This action proposes the carrying out of baseline surveying in the Plan area. Developing an understanding and an inventory of invasive alien species in County Leitrim will underpin and support effective implementation of the Plan and potentially contribute to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	3.4	Organise and support the removal of IAS by community volunteers and landowners	This action proposes the carrying out of invasive species management in the Plan area. Developing an understanding and the removal of invasive alien species in County Leitrim will increase biodiversity awareness and environmental stewardship in the community, thus contributing to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	3.5	Work with other stakeholders to map the presence of Japanese Knotweed on public sites and implement management plan to eradicate it	This action pertains to the improvement of invasive species management, particularly of Japanese Knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>). Japanese Knotweed poses great threat to native flora due to its ability to spread rapidly and outcompete native flora. The action has the potential to result in positive effects on local flora and fauna through the prevention of invasive species spread. The action, in and of itself, does not have the potential to result in negative environmental effects. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
Objective 4: Promote and celebrate sustainable land use practices	4.1	Develop and adopt a pesticide reduction strategy for Leitrim County Council	The action has the potential to result in direct positive effects for biodiversity and population and human health, and indirect positive effects for the water and soils environments, without affecting any environmental receptor in a negative fashion. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	4.2	Deliver a public awareness raising campaign about pesticide use and the effects of pesticides on the environment and on human health	The action pertains to an active effort to increase awareness of pesticides and their effects in the Plan area. The action has the potential to result in direct positive effects for biodiversity and population and human health, and indirect positive effects for the water and soils environments, without affecting any environmental receptor in a negative fashion. The action will not result in any significant adverse effects on European Sites.
	4.3	Promote Forestry schemes that encourage planting native trees and community ownership of forestry	This action is in support of protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the Plan area through the promotion of native tree planting, with the potential to generate co-benefits for other environmental components. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	4.4	Work with farmers and landowners to promote good practices for hedgerow management	This action is centred around increasing knowledge of good practice hedgerow management. The action is awareness-oriented and has the potential to underpin and support biodiversity improvements within County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	4.5	Encourage low-intensity farming practices that enhance biodiversity,	This action is centred around acknowledging and featuring the significance of farmlands for supporting biodiversity. The



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
		organic farming and support farmers in protecting high nature value farmland	action is awareness-oriented and has the potential to improve biodiversity-related expertise and underpin and support biodiversity improvements within County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	4.6	Promote agricultural practices that implement actions to prevent agricultural run off, protect riparian buffer zones and improve water quality	This action is centred around acknowledging the role of agricultural practices for supporting biodiversity. A riparian buffer zone is an area adjacent to a water body where no chemical and organic fertilisers, cultivation and spraying can be carried out. Correctly located riparian buffer zones can minimise the impact of diffuse losses by intercepting the nutrients, sediment and pesticides and break the pathway of agricultural run off. This action has the potential to underpin and support biodiversity improvements within County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	4.7	Promote and support projects and landowners that are restoring peatlands to store carbon and to protect biodiversity	<p>This action supports the promotion and conservation of peatlands via collaboration with organisations and landowners. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the Objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan at a local level in County Leitrim, which in turn will facilitate the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general, as well as positive impacts on environmental components such as climate and air. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment. It is engagement based and at Plan-level.</p> <p>The general goal of this action is to achieve biodiversity protection and enhancement. Any peatland restoration project will be subject to appropriate project-level environmental assessment.</p>



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
	4.8	Support the creation of public and connected green spaces and wildlife corridors in Carrick on Shannon (DZ) and in other urban areas to enhance biodiversity, health and wellbeing.	This action supports the development of publicly accessible green spaces and wildlife corridors in the Carrick on Shannon Decarbonisation Zone. Green spaces and wildlife corridors connect isolated habitats and provide pathways between said habitats for pollinators. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment. The development of such green infrastructure will be subject to appropriate project-level assessment. At Plan-level the goal of this action is to promote biodiversity and associated co-benefits.
	4.9	Provide advice on incorporating biodiversity measures and nature based solutions where appropriate in capital projects	Nature Based Solutions (NBS) involve assimilating nature into addressing societal issues to support human and biodiversity wellbeing. The integration of NBS into local authority projects will underpin and support biodiversity improvements within the Plan Area. The action will not generate any significant adverse effects on European Sites. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	4.10	Promote and celebrate biodiversity friendly practices in residential areas, community spaces and council properties.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan at local level in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not result in the occurrence of a significant adverse effects on European Sites.
Objective 5: Track progress through monitoring and evaluation	5.1	Compile and incorporate ecological data from previous surveys into internal GIS systems and provide access to GIS mapping and data for relevant staff	The action pertains to process improvement for ecological management, which includes revised GIS mapping strategy. The action has the potential to aid informed decision making, and improve understanding and awareness of biodiversity in the Plan area among local authority staff. The action will not



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.2	Carry out ecological surveys to ground truth non-designated sites that have been identified as County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs)	The action proposes the carrying out of ecological surveys of County Biodiversity Areas, which will underpin and support the effective implementation of the BAP and potentially lead to focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.3	Identify gaps in the surveying and monitoring of species and support surveys and studies to fill knowledge gaps	The action proposes the carrying out of ecological surveys which will underpin and support the effective implementation of the BAP and potentially lead to focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. Identifying knowledge gaps, as proposed under this action, will increase understanding and scientifically-informed knowledge of biodiversity in County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.4	Collaborate with other biodiversity organisations to share and publish data	The action pertains to process improvement for data gathering and management. The action has the potential to improve collaboration between organisations, and to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity in the Plan area. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
	5.5	Undertake barn owl survey in Co. Leitrim and raise awareness of barn owls to the public and landowners in areas where they are likely to re-establish	The action proposes the carrying out of ecological surveys, particularly barn owl surveys, which will support the effective implementation of the BAP. The barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>) is protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Barn owls are important predators of rodents and other small mammals and play a key role in ecosystem function. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.6	Continue wetlands surveys on ecologically important sites that have been identified	The action is centred around undertaking wetlands surveys on sites of ecological importance. The action has the potential to generate positive effects on biodiversity components, including sensitive habitats and priority species. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.7	Encourage and support local communities, schools and citizen scientists to participate in biodiversity monitoring programmes to record ecological data	This action has the potential to foster biodiversity protection and enhancement through engagement with local communities and school projects, leading to positive effects for both biodiversity and population and human health. Collaboration with schools will equip students and teachers with the knowledge and skills for environmental sustainability. Citizen science initiatives enable data collection by members of the public to contribute to research and add to the national dataset on Ireland's biodiversity and biological data. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.8	Facilitate the Biodiversity Working Group which is made up of key stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the BAP	This action supports the development of a Biodiversity Working Group for key stakeholders, providing a platform for information sharing and coordination. It will strengthen



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			collaboration in the implementation and monitoring of the BAP, as well as the protection and management of sensitive sites. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.9	Conduct biodiversity surveys & audits to monitor progress and adapt management practices as necessary	The action proposes the carrying out of ecological surveys of County Biodiversity Areas, which will underpin and support the effective implementation of the BAP and potentially lead to focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	5.10	Report biodiversity measures adopted and progress made towards objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan	This action will ensure alignment with and support of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, thus supporting biodiversity objectives in County Leitrim. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
Objective 6: Provide funding, resources and support for Biodiversity Actions	6.1	Apply for relevant funding for biodiversity projects and actions in the LABAP	This action pertains to funding of biodiversity-related initiatives. The action will foster a collaborative approach to forming and implementing Local Biodiversity Action Plans in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.2	Support community groups to apply for funding to develop community biodiversity projects	This action pertains to funding of biodiversity-related initiatives. The action will foster increased environmental stewardship in the community and will support a collaborative approach to implementing Local Biodiversity Action Plans in County Leitrim. The action will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.3	Establish partnerships with local organisations and stakeholders to leverage additional resources and expertise	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to exchanging knowledge and skills in County Leitrim, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.4	Advocate for adequate staff and financial resources within the Local Authority to implement actions from the LABAP	The action will enable the implementation of the BAP in County Leitrim, which in turn will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.5	Investigate opportunities to offer placements for 3rd level students and graduates	This action will increase biodiversity awareness and expertise within the community through educational opportunities in County Leitrim, which in turn will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.6	Develop and deliver a biodiversity training programme for Leitrim County Council staff & elected members	This action will increase biodiversity awareness and expertise within the local authority, and will aid integrate biodiversity improvements across all facets of the local authority. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.7	All relevant policies developed or updated within the council will consider biodiversity at the policy development stage	The action will enable the implementation of the BAP in County Leitrim, which in turn will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Sources of Impact
			impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	6.8	Incorporate biodiversity priorities into the next County Development Plan	This action supports the consideration and inclusion of biodiversity priorities in the next Leitrim County County Development Plan. Integration of biodiversity initiatives and actions in higher-order land use plans such as the CDP will ensure continued alignment with the operating National Biodiversity Action Plan. The action will not result in the occurrence of a significant adverse effects on European Sites.
	6.9	Promote best practice guidance and policies for biodiversity to relevant LA staff	This action will increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity among local authority staff, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will not generate a source of negative impact that can result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



3.2.1 Summary of the interactions of the Proposed Plan on the receiving environment

The LABAP provides a general framework for biodiversity protection and enhancement on lands in the plan area. It defines the biodiversity actions that support and promote:

- Best practice biodiversity management and improvement,
- Local authority biodiversity protection and enhancement initiatives,
- The improvement of biodiversity on local authority controlled lands,
- Biodiversity training and awareness events,
- Biodiversity education and training,
- Planting of native species (i.e. trees, shrubs, plants etc.)
- Ecological surveying and mapping to identify areas of risk from threats and pressure and areas for targeted biodiversity protection/enhancement action,
- Collaborating with key stakeholders and the public to achieve biodiversity aims.

The range of actions defined in the LABAP has the potential to have a range of positive environmental effects on biodiversity, including habitats, key species, designated sites and locally important non-designated sites.

All actions in the LABAP are aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. They have been carefully reviewed and it has been concluded that these actions do not have the potential to have unintended negative effects on the receiving environment.

The actions in the LABAP do not support intensive land use or development projects sitting outside the land use planning framework that can cause significant negative environmental effects. The LABAP will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent. There is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as result of the implementation of the LABAP.

The implementation of the LABAP will not introduce any sources of negative environmental impact, such as

- Land take;
- Resource Requirements (Drinking Water Abstraction Etc.);
- Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air);
- Excavation Requirements;
- Transportation Requirements;
- Construction, Operation, Decommissioning.

The LABAP will not introduce any source of negative environmental impact which could result in or contribute to the following types of negative effect on a European site:

- Reduction of habitat area, habitat degradation or fragmentation;
- Disturbance to species, reduction in species populations and density;
- Changes in ecological functions and/or features that are essential for the ecological requirements of habitats and species (e.g. water quality and quantity);
- Interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the site.



The implementation of the LABAP will not result in any source of negative environmental impacts that may combine with effects occurring due to other plans or projects to create an 'in-combination' significant effect on a European site.

It is clear the LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impact that may result in a negative effect on any European site.

3.3 European Sites within the Zone of Influence (Zoi)

The OPR (2021) AA Screening practice note states that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. The S-P-R model has been used to identify the Zoi to ensure that relevant European sites are identified. The S-P-R model minimises the risk of overlooking distant or obscure effect pathways, while also avoiding an over reliance on buffer zones (e.g. 15 km), within which all European sites should be considered. This approach follows the DoEHLG (2009 rev 2010) guidance on AA which states that:

“For projects, the distance could be much less than 15 km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects”

As detailed in section 1.5, for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. The potential impacts of the plan are set out in Section 3.2 of this report. The impact is essentially the ‘source’ in the S-P-R model.

These impacts may be very localised and confined to defined area with no potential connectivity to a European site and therefore no potential for effects. Alternatively, where an ecological or functional pathway exists, they may give rise to a potential effect to a Qualifying Interest of a European site.

The dominant ecological pathways to consider are:

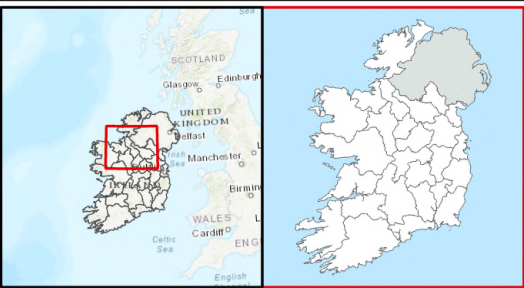
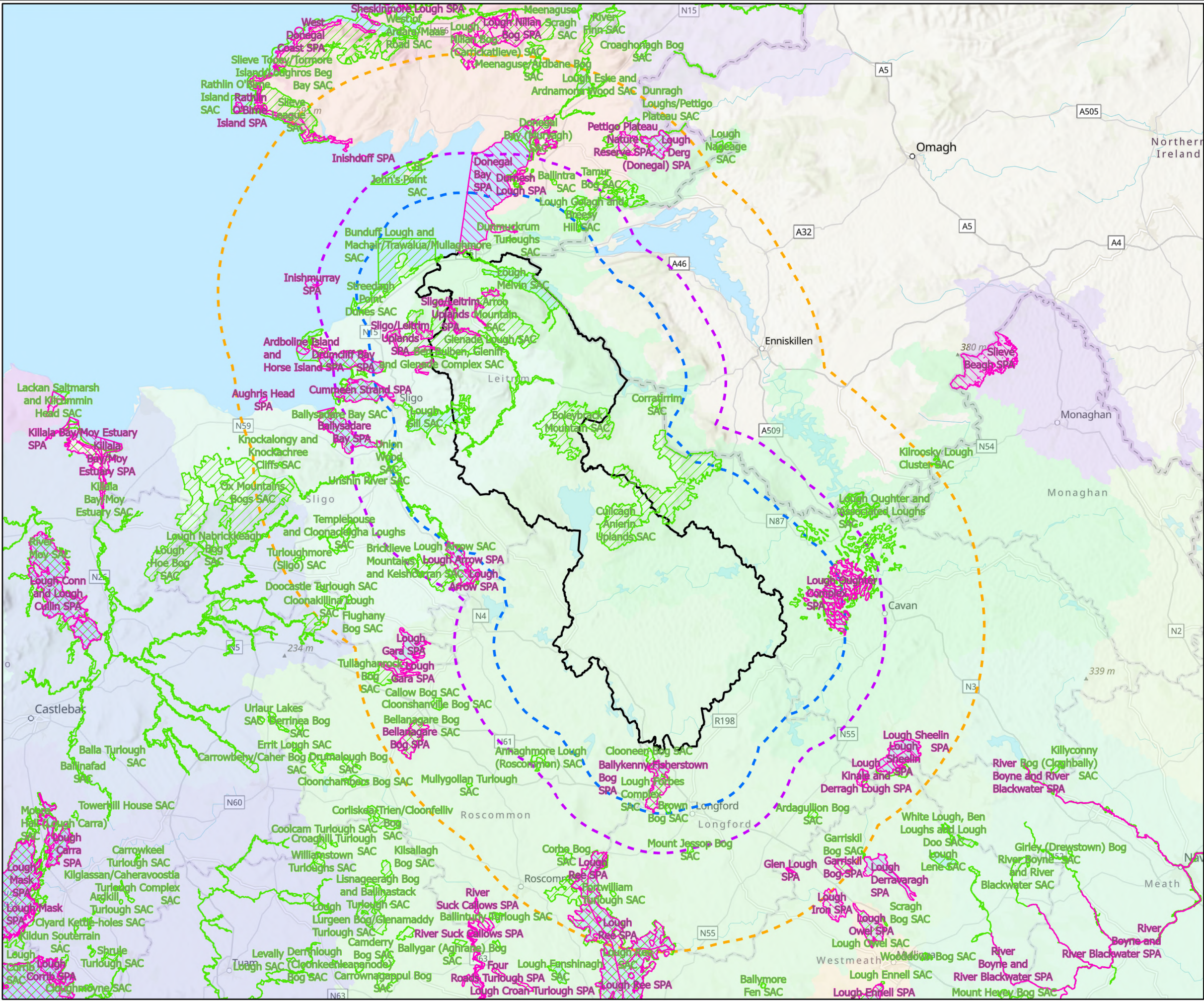
- Direct physical interactions or changes to the local environment;
- Air dispersal (noise, dust, odour emissions etc.);
- Hydrological interactions; and
- Dispersal patterns of mobile species

Based on the precautionary principal, the Zone of Influence of the proposed plan has been defined as:

- All European sites locally either solely or partially in County Leitrim
- All hydrologically connected European Sites to waterbodies within County Leitrim ; and
- All European sites within a 15km buffer of County Leitrim

All European sites within the Zone of Influence of the Plan area or which are connected to the Plan area ecologically, hydrologically or through hydrogeology have been identified - having appropriate regard to the interaction criteria defined in Section 1.5.

A map showing these European sites in or connected to the plan area is presented in Figure 3-1.



Legend

County Boundary

15km

25km

50km

Special Protection Areas

Special Area of Conservation

Catchment Name

- Blacksod-Broadhaven
- Boyne
- Corrib
- Donegal Bay North
- Erne
- Erriff-Clew Bay
- Foyle
- Gweebarra-Sheephaven
- Lough Neagh & Lower Bann
- Lower Shannon
- Moy & Killala Bay
- Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee
- Sligo Bay
- Upper Shannon

TITLE: European Sites with connectivity to County Leitrim	
PROJECT: SEA and AA Screening for Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan	
FIGURE NO: 3.1	
CLIENT: Leitrim County Council	
SCALE: 1:950,000	REVISION: 0
DATE: 26/09/2025	PAGE SIZE: A3

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3.4 Consideration of in-combination Effects with other plans or projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives”.

It is therefore required that the likely significant effects of the plan are considered in-combination with other plans or projects within the zone of influence.

The consideration of in-combination effects with other plans or projects, focused on the sources of impacts identified for the plan in Section 3.2. The principal plans that are related to the LABAP are defined in Section 2.2.

The LABAP is in harmony and consistent with all inter-related plans, including land use plans relevant to the plan area, higher order heritage related plans, the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, the national Climate Action Plan and the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. The range of positive effects that may be realised by the implementation of the LABAP have the potential to interact and combine with positive effects associated with biodiversity measures defined in these inter-related plans to create larger, more significant positive effects.

All actions in the LABAP are aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The implementation of the LABAP will not give rise to likely significant negative effects on the environment that have the potential to interact and combine with negative effects associated with measures defined in these inter-related plans or projects to create larger, more significant negative effects.

The Plan does not therefore have any potential to contribute to in-combination likely significant effects on European sites that may occur due to the wider implementation of inter-related plans or projects.



3.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Table 3-2 examines whether there is potential for effects on identified European sites considering information provided above.

Table 3-2: Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Draft Plan

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
000428	Lough Melvin SAC	0	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410], Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK0030047	Lough Melvin SAC	0	Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
000584	Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC	0	Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110], Slender green feather-moss (<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i>) [6216], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110], European dry heaths [4030], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220], Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
000623	Ben Bulbin, Gleniff and Glenade Complex SAC	0	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140], Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii) [8120], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], European dry heaths [4030], Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220], Alkaline fens [7230], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Geyer's whorl snail (Vertigo geyeri) [1013], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Juniperus	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355]				
000625	Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC	0	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Reefs [1170], Marsh Fritillary (Euphydryas aurinia) [1065], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Petalwort (Petalophyllum ralfsii) [1395], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], Machairs * in Ireland [21A0], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria - white dunes [2120], Alkaline fens [7230], Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Humid dune slacks [2190]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
001403	Arroo Mountain SAC	0	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220], Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii) [8120], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], European dry heaths [4030], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
001919	Glenade Lough SAC	0	Slender naiad (Najas flexilis) [1833], White-clawed crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes) [1092], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
001976	Lough Gill SAC	0	Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) [1095], Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], White-clawed crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes) [1092], River lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis) [1099], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) [1106], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) [1096]				
002032	Boleybrack Mountain SAC	0	Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410], European dry heaths [4030]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004151	Donegal Bay SPA	0	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046], Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003], Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004187	Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA	0	Peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus) [A103], Chough (Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax) [A346]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK00166 03	Cuillcagh Mountain SAC	0	Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Northern Atlantic wet heaths	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			with Erica tetralix [4010], European dry heaths [4030], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]	may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.			
002348	Clooneen Bog SAC	0.72	Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Bog woodland [91D0], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
001818	Lough Forbes Complex SAC	0.97	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004101	Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA	0.97	Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
000007	Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC	1.16	Bog woodland [91D0], Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
002303	Dunmuckrum Turloughs SAC	1.74	Turloughs [3180]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004049	Lough Oughter Complex SPA	3.08	Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038], Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK0030300	West Fermanagh Scarplands SAC	4.5	Limestone pavements [8240], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines [9180], Alkaline fens [7230], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			tetralix [4010], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]				
001680	Streedagh Point Dunes SAC	4.54	Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410], Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000979	Corratirrim SAC	4.91	Limestone pavements [8240]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
001898	Unshin River SAC	6.19	Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000627	Cummeen Strand/Drum cliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC	6.82	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365], Embryonic shifting dunes	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			[2110], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Estuaries [1130], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]				
004035	Cummeen Strand SPA	6.92	Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130], Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004013	Drumcliff Bay SPA	7.1	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157], Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
002346	Brown Bog SAC	7.68	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Active raised bogs [7110], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
002164	Lough Golagh and Breesy Hill SAC	7.82	Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
001673	Lough Arrow SAC	8.14	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000638	Union Wood SAC	8.77	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK0016607	Pettigoe Plateau SAC	8.91	Active raised bogs [7110], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], European dry heaths [4030], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK9020051	Pettigoe Plateau SPA	8.91	Golden Plover [A140], Wetland and waterbirds [A999]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK0030045	Largalinn SAC	9.18	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
004234	Ballintemple and Ballygilgan SPA	9.31	Barnacle goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000138	Durnesh Lough SAC	9.65	Coastal lagoons [1150], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004145	Durnesh Lough SPA	10.19	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395], Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000622	Ballysadare Bay SAC	10.31	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Estuaries [1130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Humid dune slacks [2190], Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
004129	Ballysadare Bay SPA	10.31	Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162], Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149], Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK0016619	Monawilkin SAC	10.35	Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004050	Lough Arrow SPA	10.81	Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004], Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK0030116	Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River SAC	11.37	Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000115	Ballintra SAC	11.53	European dry heaths [4030], Limestone pavements [8240]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
001656	Bricklieve Mountains & Keishcorran SAC	11.61	White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092], Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510], Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) [8120], Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065], Turloughs [3180], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK00302 12	Moninea Bog SAC	11.63	Active raised bogs [7110]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
000191	St. John's Point SAC	11.68	Limestone pavements [8240], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230], Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Alkaline fens [7230], Reefs [1170], Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas</i>	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			aurinia) [1065], Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]				
001626	Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC	12.4	Alkaline fens [7230], Geyer's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>) [1013]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
001992	Tamur Bog SAC	12.68	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK00166 14	Upper Lough Erne SAC	13.28	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
UK90200 71	Upper Lough Erne SPA	13.28	Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038], Wetland and waterbirds [A999]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
000133	Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC	13.86	Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365], Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Humid dune slacks [2190], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
004068	Inishmurray SPA	13.87	Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184], Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018], Barnacle goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045], Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect
002202	Mount Jessop Bog SAC	14.21	Bog woodland [91D0], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	The LABAP will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a significant negative effect on this European Site.	No	No	No Likely Significant Effect



4. SCREENING CONCLUSION

This report presents an examination of whether the LABAP is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

It can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information, that the plan, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on European sites. The principal reasons for this are as follows:

- The LABAP does not introduce any source of impacts that have potential for interactions with the receiving environment.
- All actions in the LABAP are aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. There is no requirement to integrate further environmental considerations into the LABAP given its intrinsic nature, its stated aims and objectives, and the potential positive effects associated with its actions.
- The LABAP is in alignment with nature legislation and higher order policy such as the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and inter-related plans and programmes.
- The actions in the LABAP do not support intensive land use or development projects sitting outside the land use planning framework that can cause likely significant negative environmental effects.
- The LABAP is not a statutory land use plan. The LABAP will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent. Any lower-order plans and projects supported by plan shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening, where necessary, in accordance with the requirements of European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) or the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as the case may be.

All amendments made to the Draft LABAP over the Plan-making process were also subject to further AA screening. It has been concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as a result of these amendments. The principal reason for this is as follows:

- The amendments are minor and will not introduce a source of negative impact that will result in likely, significant effects on any European site.

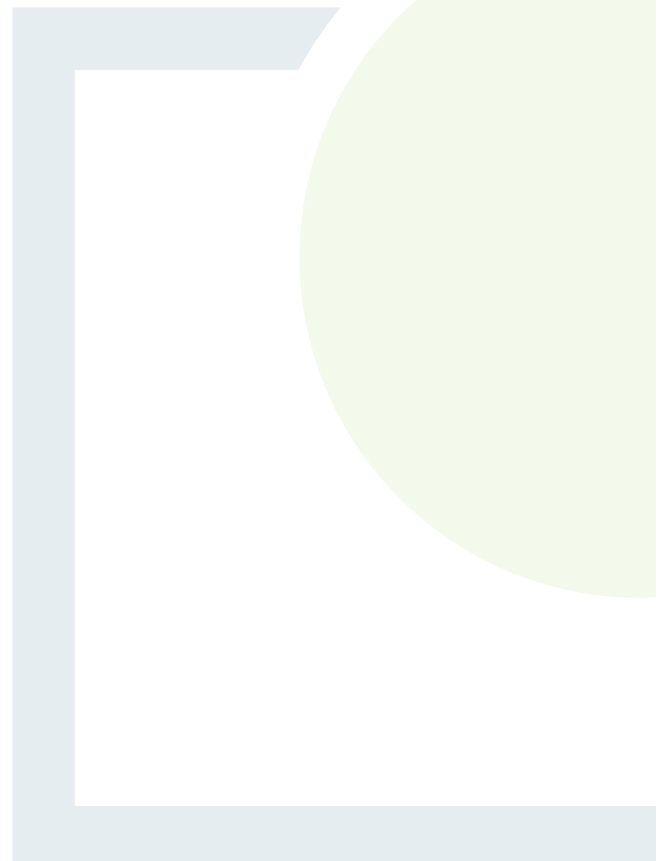
The implementation of the LABAP has no potential to result in likely significant effects on European Sites for the reasons set out above. Therefore, a full AA of the Leitrim County Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031 is not required.



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APPENDIX 1

AA Screening for
Amendments to the Draft
LABAP



Overview:

The following table presents the amendments made to the actions of the Draft Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan over the Plan-making process, with additions denoted in blue text and removals represented in blue strikethrough. These amendments have been subject to further AA Screening.

Table 1: AA Screening for Amendments to the Draft LABAP

Action Reference	Draft Plan Action	Summary of Amendment	Assessment of Potential Impacts
1.6	Facilitate and support workshops, field trips, public events and public awareness campaigns to foster biodiversity awareness and connection to nature	<i>Facilitate and support workshops, field trips, public events and public awareness campaigns to foster biodiversity awareness, connection to nature and links to Irish language and culture</i>	The amendment is minor and introduces a clause to consider links to the Irish culture and language to biodiversity and the natural world. The amendment will not introduce a source of environmental impact.
2.1	Identify wetland habitats of local and national importance using Wetlands Surveys Ireland data for potential conservation and restoration projects	The action has combined Draft Plan Actions 2.1 and 5.2. <i>Identify wetland habitats of local and national importance using Wetlands Surveys Ireland data for potential conservation and restoration projects and continue wetland surveys as required.</i>	The amendment is operational and combines Draft Plan Actions 2.1 and 5.2, which pertained to the undertaking of ecological surveys for ground-truthing non-designated sites. The amendment will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
2.2	Identify, protect and restore areas of native ancient woodlands	<i>Identify, protect and restore areas of native and ancient woodlands and support initiatives to grow native trees of local provenance.</i>	The amendment introduces a clause to additionally support initiatives growing native trees of local provenance. As assessed for the Draft Plan iteration, all restoration projects will be subject to appropriate project-level environmental assessments, and at Plan-level, the general goal of the action was to achieve biodiversity protection and enhancement. The amendment contributes to this goal without introducing a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
2.6	Identify and map County Biodiversity Areas (CBA) according to Heritage	<i>Identify and map County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) according to Heritage Council Guidance and to support</i>	The amendment has introduced a clause to support county development and land-use policy and land-use objectives. This will support appropriate land-use

Action Reference	Draft Plan Action	Summary of Amendment	Assessment of Potential Impacts
	Council Guidance and support initiatives to protect these sites.	<i>initiatives to protect these sites, existing and future County Development Plan policies and objectives.</i>	planning and ensure and strengthen the protection of these CBAs. The amendment does not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
2.9	N/A	<i>Identify opportunities and incorporate appropriate nest boxes for swifts, house martins, raptors and roosting boxes for bats on buildings and other suitable structures</i>	The amendment has introduced an additional action to foster biodiversity protection through the integration of nature-based solutions into appropriate projects. Such projects will be undertaken in accordance with the land-use planning framework (the county development plan), which will be subject to its own environmental assessment. The action has the potential to generate positive effects on interacting biodiversity (i.e., birds and bats) through the provision of alternative habitats in built environments. The amendment will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
2.15	N/A	<i>Work with the relevant authorities to support the preparation and implementation of Ireland's National Restoration Plan, when adopted, and where relevant for Leitrim County Council to help achieve national restoration targets.</i>	The amendment has introduced an additional action pertaining to collaboration with other stakeholders to support the preparation and implementation of Ireland's National Plan. Where applicable, the local authority will contribute to the achievement of national restoration targets. The action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing biodiversity and restoration initiatives and improving biodiversity and environmental restoration in the plan area. Alignment of such lower-order plans with higher-order (national) plans avoids conflicts with targets and objectives, ensures compliance and contributes to the achievement of national targets and ambitions. The action will not result in the occurrence of a real environmental effect, in and of itself.

Action Reference	Draft Plan Action	Summary of Amendment	Assessment of Potential Impacts
3.5	Work with other stakeholders to map the presence of Japanese Knotweed on public sites and implement management plan to eradicate it	<i>Work with other stakeholders to map the presence of Japanese Knotweed on public sites and implement management plan to eradicate it to develop a management plan for specific sites to target and eradicate IAS across land boundaries</i>	The amendment has modified the action to focus on the management of a range of invasive species instead of solely Japanese Knotweed. The action will foster a collaborative approach to implementing biodiversity protection and enhancement across the plan area and potentially across areas adjoining county boundaries. The amendment will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
4.4	Work with farmers and landowners to promote good practices for hedgerow management	<i>Work with farmers and landowners to promote good practices for hedgerow management. Develop a viable approach to hedgerow and tree management to promote good practice, in a manner that prevents no unnecessary or undue damage to biodiversity, whilst ensuring adequate road safety.</i>	The amendment has modified the Draft Plan action to focus on the development of a viable approach to hedgerow and tree management to promote good practice and prevent undue damage to biodiversity and ensure road safety. The amendment will not change the outcomes of the action, i.e., knowledge augmentation of good practice for hedgerow management. The amended action is ultimately awareness-oriented and will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
4.9	Provide advice on incorporating biodiversity measures and nature based solutions where appropriate in capital projects.	<i>Provide advice on incorporating biodiversity measures and nature based solutions and promote the use of guidance document, Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions, where appropriate in capital projects.</i>	The amendment has modified the Draft Plan Action to promote the use of LAWPRO guidance document 'Implementation of Urban Nature-Based Solutions' in capital projects. The amended action is promotional in nature and will not drive a type of development beyond what is provided for in the land use planning framework for the Plan Area. The amendment does not change the scope and outcomes of the draft plan action, i.e., underpin and support biodiversity improvements within the Plan Area. The amendment will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.
5.2	Carry out ecological surveys to ground truth non-designated sites that have	The action has been removed and subsumed into Action 2.6.	There is no environmental impact associated with this amendment.

Action Reference	Draft Plan Action	Summary of Amendment	Assessment of Potential Impacts
	been identified as County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs)		
5.6	Continue wetlands surveys on ecologically important sites that have been identified	The action has been removed.	There is no environmental impact associated with this amendment.
6.8	Incorporate biodiversity priorities into the next County Development Plan	<p><i>Incorporate biodiversity priorities into the next County Development Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Seek to ensure that any actions deemed relevant receive commensurate policy provision in the County Development Plan in order to manage and protect such ecological assets as part of the development management process.</i></p>	<p>The amendment has modified the Draft Plan action to introduce a clause that will ensure any actions that are deemed relevant receive appropriate and commensurate policy provision in the land-use planning framework. This has been proposed to protect ecological assets as part of the development management process.</p> <p>While phrased differently, the amended action will achieve the same outcomes as its draft plan counterpart, i.e. ensure the continued alignment with higher-order and preceding policy such as the National Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>The amendment will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.</p>
6.9	Promote best practice guidance and policies for biodiversity to relevant LA staff	<i>Develop and promote best practice guidance and policies for biodiversity with Leitrim County Council and carry out relevant training for Local Authority staff.</i>	<p>The amendment has modified the Draft Plan action to make provision for training opportunities for local authority staff. The amended action will achieve the same outcomes as its draft plan counterpart, i.e., increase the understanding and awareness of biodiversity among local authority staff, and contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general.</p> <p>The amendment will not introduce a source of negative impact on the receiving environment.</p>



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