



Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination

under Regulation No. 4 of the European Union (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2025 (SI No. 456 of 2025) for:

Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

This Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) determination regarding whether or not implementation of Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 would be likely to have significant effects on the environment is being made under the above Regulations, taking account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2 of the above Regulations. These criteria are taken into account as follows:

PART 1

1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources

In accordance with Section 58(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2024, Leitrim County Council is proposing Variation No. 1 of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029. This proposed Variation arises from the publication of the *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision* and the *National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities* issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) which place a statutory obligation on Planning Authorities to ensure that the necessary planning framework is in place including sufficient residential zoned land to facilitate the achievement of housing growth requirements over the plan period.

In accordance with the requirements of the Section 28 Guidelines, a Chief Executive's Report was presented to the Elected Members in November 2025 which outlined the development capacity of each of the sites that had a 'New Residential' land use zoning objective in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 as well as the level of infrastructure provision for each site in terms of road access, wastewater treatment, water supply, public lighting and footpaths. The Report recommended that potential sites for residential use are to be assessed so as to ensure that sufficient lands are available for residential growth over the remainder of the lifetime of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and to secure the objectives of the 2025 NPF Implementation Guidelines.



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The proposed variation also responds to other recent changes in national planning policy including the publication of the following Section 28 Guidelines:

- Planning Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, July 2025 and,
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines, 2024.

The proposed Variation includes amendments to the Written Statement (Volume I), Settlement Plans (Volume II) and the Book of Maps (Volume III) of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029. The proposed amendments included in this proposed Variation are outlined, in summary, below:

1. To include the addition of further lands with a 'New Residential' land use zoning objective to address the new housing growth requirements.
2. To include the land use zoning objectives and the land use zoning map for Carrick-on-Shannon as contained in the Carrick-on-Shannon Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 into the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 thereby ensuring that all zoned lands in the county are now contained in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.
3. To rezone a parcel of land in Kinlough currently identified with a 'New Residential - Low Density' land use zoning objective to 'Agriculture' arising from a submission to the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) process.
4. To include the addition of further lands in Manorhamilton with an 'Enterprise and Employment' land use zoning objective.
5. To update Section 8.11.2.1 of the Plan - *N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Project* to reflect the revised scope of the project to now comprise the *Carrick-on-Shannon Bypass and Traffic Management Plan* and reference in objective TRAN OBJ 3 to same.
6. To update the text to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 as consequential changes arising from the foregoing.

The *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities* provide updated housing growth requirements to Planning Authorities in order to facilitate the revision and update of development plans in accordance with the *National Planning Framework –First Revision (2025)*. The Revised NPF identifies the need to plan for approximately 50,000 additional households nationally per annum to 2040. The housing growth requirement for County Leitrim as reflected in Appendix I of the guidelines has not altered from the original growth targets as provided in the initial *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning* guidelines published in December 2022 as represented in the following table.

Table 1: County Leitrim Housing Growth Requirements

Adopted Development Plan – Annual Housing Requirement (Housing Supply Target)	New Annual Housing Growth Requirement to 2034	New Annual Housing Growth Requirement to 2040
201	201	155



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The revised 2025 Guidelines requires Local Authorities to include ‘*additional provision*’ of up to 50% over and above the housing growth requirement for each Local Authority that is reflected within the relevant City or County Development Plan, subject to consistency with the policies and objectives of the National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025), relevant Ministerial Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), relevant Government policy, and the undertaking of necessary environmental assessments.

The Planning Authority has reassessed the County Development Plan 2023-2029 and undertook a review of the adequacy of existing zoned lands to cater for the housing growth requirement figures, which remain unchanged and the potential for ‘*additional provision*’ as set out in Appendix 1 of the guidelines. There was a particular focus on considering the likelihood of lands identified for residential development within the plan being brought forward for development within the remaining period of the plan.

In reviewing the housing growth requirement, the Planning Authority addressed the scope for additional provision of up to 50% in excess of the baseline housing growth requirement to optimise the ability to deliver on the housing requirements of the NPF. This approach recognises the fact that, for a variety of reasons, a relatively significant proportion of lands identified with a housing or mixed-use land use zoning objective have not been activated over the period of the Development Plan. Having regard to the Housing Growth Targets set out in the guidelines with the requirement of now providing 50% additional provision, the extent of lands identified for residential development for the County is now increased. This includes rezoning of lands to ‘*New Residential*’ (15.71 Ha) and ‘*Mixed Use*’ (0.4 Ha) from other uses along with the zoning of lands not previously included within development envelopes for ‘*New Residential*’ (13.47 Ha) land use zoning objectives.

A full review of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 will take place subsequently, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2024, which introduces a new statutory framework for plan-making. For the purposes of clarity and the avoidance of doubt, this variation has had regard to the relevant Section 28 guidelines. The limited scope of this proposed variation is acknowledged pending the future full County Development Plan review and the legal basis for the upcoming adoption under the new Act, which introduces a more strategic, 10-year planning cycle. It should be noted that this proposed Variation does not constitute a comprehensive review of all relevant policies, objectives, or guidance.

Given the scale of additional *New Residential* lands across various settlements, the Proposed Variation may result in likely significant environmental effects, if unmitigated.

2. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

The Proposed Variation will be guided by the First Revision to the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region



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and the existing Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029. The varied County Development Plan will provide the framework for decision-making and consent granting at project level and will guide any lower-tier plans and future proposals for land use developments and activities in County Leitrim.

3. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

The Proposed Variation will integrate environmental considerations with a view to continuing to promote sustainable development at county and local levels in Leitrim.

4. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: environmental problems relevant to the plan

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.

It is intended that, through provisions relating to environmental protection and management, the Proposed Variation will contribute towards ensuring that environmental conditions do not get worse and, where possible, they contribute towards its amelioration.

Environmental challenges within County Leitrim include those relating to: accommodating new populations and growth which ensuring the appropriate protection and management of the environment; fluvial flood risk; and achieving at least '*good status*' under the European Water Framework Directive as various waterbodies draining and downstream of the county are identified not achieving *good* or *high status* as is the objective of the Water Framework Directive (for example, Rinn, Bradoge, Cullies, Douglas, Drumshanbo, Garavogue, Gowlaunrevagh, Killanummery, Laheen, Legga, Rinn, Shannon Upper, Yellow, Acres, and Belhavel).

5. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection)

The Proposed Variation relates to the land use and town planning sector. The Proposed Variation will be consistent with EU and national legislation on the environment, including those relating to the waste management and the Water Framework Directive.



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PART 2

1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The development provided by the Proposed Variation will relate, directly and/or indirectly, to a range of land use developments and activities that would be likely to, if unmitigated, significantly affect all environmental components; this would include positive and negative effects across the county and beyond. Such effects would encompass short term construction effects and longer-term operational effects. It is expected that effects could be mitigated by integrating measures relating to environmental protection and management into the Proposed Variation and by adhering to such provisions from the existing Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the cumulative nature of the effects

There are two types of potential cumulative effects that would be likely to occur, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these would be likely to arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from the Proposed Variation. Examples of interrelationships between environmental components that help determine such effects include those between human health and water quality; human health and air quality; human health and flood risk; and ecology and water quality.
- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these would be likely to arise when the effects of the implementation of Variation occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, etc. such as the Development Plan and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

3. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the transboundary nature of the effects

Potential effects, such as those on water will extend beyond the Plan's boundary, however; following the application of mitigation, residual adverse significant environmental effects on another country are unlikely. County Leitrim shares a border with Northern Ireland and an SEA undertaken on the Proposed Variation would take account of the environmental baseline in Northern Ireland, as well as other issues such as environmental protection objectives in force in Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland policies, plans and programmes.

4. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors (i.e. environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into



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contact with human beings). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses for example. There is historic and predictive evidence of fluvial and coastal flooding in various locations across the county.

5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The spatial extent of potential effects includes the Plan area and areas downstream. The population most likely to be affected would be the population of the Plan area.

The most recent, 2022 Census has recorded a population of 35,199 persons for County Leitrim.

6. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

Protected sites within and adjacent to the county include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (Arroo Mountain SAC, Ben Bulbin, Gleniff and Glenade Complex SAC, Boleybrack Mountain SAC, Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC, Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC, Glenade Lough SAC, Lough Gill SAC and Lough Melvin SAC);
- Special Protection Areas (Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA);
- Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), and possibly subsequent stages of assessment, will be undertaken on the Proposed Variation. On finalisation of the Screening for AA process, it may be determined that Stage 2 AA must be undertaken alongside the Variation. The SEA Directive (Article 3 para. 2) requires that SEA is carried out for certain plans and programmes that are being subject to Stage 2 AA.

Sites of significant archaeological interest include the County's various Recorded Monuments. There are approximately 1,400 of these, including examples of megalithic tombs, churches, castles, linear earthwork and ringforts. Sites of particular archaeological significance in the County include the Iron Age linear earthworks of the Black Pig's Dyke and Parke's Castle on the shore of Lough Gill, constructed in the early 1600's. Clusters of archaeological heritage are identified within and surrounding settlements and in lowland rural areas. There are lower concentrations in the central upland areas. There are seven Monuments in State Care (six in State Ownership and one in State Guardianship) within the County: Druid's Alter Passage Grave



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(Aghaderrard West); Fenagh Abbey; Megalithic Tomb (Corracloona); Franciscan Friary (Creevelea); and Park's Castle (Kilmore, Sramore).

Regarding architectural heritage, the Development Plan's Record of Protected Structures contains a total of 272 no. structures. County Leitrim has an important industrial heritage with many important historic structures, including examples of: cottages, houses, churches, castles, shops, railway stations, bridges, lodges, artisan dwellings, mills and canals. Notable protected structures in County Leitrim include Lough Rynn House, Roosky Bridge, Rossinver Church of Ireland Church and Swiss Cottage in Clooncahir. Similar to the general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are found within the County's settlements. There are eight ACAs designated in the County: Carrick-on-Shannon ACA (St. George's Terrace, Main Street and Bridge Street); Ballinamore ACA (Town Centre); Dromahair ACA (the Village Centre); Drumkeeran ACA (the Main Street); Drumshanbo ACA (the Historic Town Core); Mohill ACA (Main Street including Áras O' Carolan and the Castle area); Manorhamilton ACA (the Historic Core/Village Centre); and Jamestown ACA (the Village Centre).

b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;

The current Water Framework Directive status of various waterbodies draining and downstream of the County are identified as being of *poor*, or *moderate*, not *good* or *high* as is the objective of the Water Framework Directive (for example, Rinn, Bradoge, Cullies, Douglas, Drumshanbo, Garavogue, Gowlaunrevagh, Killanummery, Laheen, Legga, Rinn, Shannon Upper, Yellow, Acres, and Belhavel).

Provisions contributing towards the Water Framework Directive's overall objective of good status are provided by the existing County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the Proposed Variation will be consistent with these measures.

c) intensive land-use.

The Proposed Variation will provide for the relative intensive land use of areas within the County's settlements.

7. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty identified for County Leitrim are as follows: Leitrim Coast, Lough Melvin, Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim, Lough Gill, Lissan Mountain and Environs, Benbo, The Boleybrack Mountains, Lough Allen, and Slieve Anierin and Bencroy.

Areas of High Visual Amenity identified for County Leitrim are as follows: Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun, Gulladoo Lake and Environs, Dough Mountain, Thur Mountain, Lough



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Macnean Upper and Environs, Sheemore, Corry Mountain, Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs, Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs, Lough Garadice and Environs, River Shannon and Lakes, and Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs. In addition, there are a number of views and prospects identified and provided a degree of potential by the Development Plan.

With reference to the foregoing information, it is determined that the Proposed Variation may, if unmitigated, result in likely significant environmental effects and that SEA is required to be undertaken on Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Quinn', is written above a horizontal line.

Signed on behalf of Leitrim County Council:

Date: 25th February 2026