

Variation no. 1

of Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016

Eastern Bridge and Associated Roads Scheme

SEA Statement

On the 9th of May 2011, Sligo Borough Council made a variation of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Variation became operational on the 10th of May 2011.

Variation No. 1 of the SEDP consists of the following:

A. In Section 10.2 Strategic road proposals, under the heading Strategic roads objectives, include the following objective:

T1.3 Eastern Bridge scheme (E2) as approved by An Bord Pleanála, crossing the Garavogue River from Cleaveragh Demesne to Rathquarter, continuing north and turning west to connect with Ash Lane at Ballinode neighbourhood centre.

B. On Map 2 Transport Objectives and on the corresponding Figure 10 in the SEDP document, indicate the strategic road objective T1.3.

Variation No. 1 of the SEDP is accompanied by:

- **Addendum IV** of the Environmental Report (SEA) previously prepared in association with the SEDP 2010-2016.
- An **Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report** prepared pursuant to Part XAB of the Planning and Development Acts 2000–2010.

1. Legislative requirements

The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) include the following provision relating to an adopted variation of a development plan for which an environmental report has been prepared:

Information on decision

- 13Q. (1) In addition to the requirement of section 13 (8)(b) of the Act, a notice under section 13 (8)(a) of the Act shall state that a statement is also available summarising -
- (a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the variation,
 - (a) how
 - (i) the environmental report prepared pursuant to article 13L,
 - (ii) submissions and observations made to the planning authority in response to a notice under section 13(2) of the Act, and
 - (iii) any consultations under article 13O,have been taken into account during the making of the variation,
 - (b) the reasons for choosing the variation, as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and
 - (c) the measures decided upon to monitor, in accordance with article 13R, the significant environmental effects of implementation of the variation.

2. Consultation with environmental authorities

On 19 January 2011, a notice under Section 13M of the SEA Regulations was sent to the following environmental authorities:

- Development Applications Unit, Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG)
- Co-ordination Unit, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR)
- Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The letter indicated that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made no later than the 9th of February 2011.

The letter also indicated that the proposed course of action was to prepare an **Appendix (Addendum) to the SEDP Environmental Report** (including only the relevant points of information from those outlined in Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004) and an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

2.1 Response to consultation

Responses were received from the DCENR (26 January 2011), the EPA (7 February 2011) and the DAU/DoEHLG (10 February 2011).

- The DCENR indicated that the Department had no comments to make, without prejudice to any comments/observations that Inland Fisheries Ireland may have in this regard.
- The EPA submission consisted of a SEA pack (guidance documentation) and a standard SEA Scoping Submission Template (generally applicable to any plan, not customised to the proposed Eastern Bridge variation).
- The DAU submission consisted of the archaeological observations of the Heritage Policy and Architectural Protection section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (generally applicable to any plan, not customised to the proposed Eastern Bridge variation).

2.2 Consideration of response

Having regard to the general nature of the submission received from the DAU and the EPA, and to the fact that an Environmental Report had already been prepared in relation to the Sligo and Environs Development Plan, it was considered appropriate to proceed with the preparation of an **Addendum IV of the Environmental Report** (addressing only the relevant points of information from those outlined in Schedule 2B of the SEA regulations) and also prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

3. Public consultation

The Proposed Eastern Bridge Variation of the *Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016* (SEDP) was on public display from 9 March to 5 April (both dates included). During this public consultation period, Sligo Borough Council received 787 submissions and observations on the Proposed Variation.

The Environmental Protection Agency (Submission no. 3) noted the contents of the proposed variation and advised the Planning Authority to ensure that the assessment provided in the Addendum IV to the Environmental Report indicates how mitigation and monitoring measures have been addressed.

The Manager's response clarified that Section 7 of the Addendum IV of the Environmental Report includes subsection G, which outlines the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan. These are policies and objectives included in relevant chapters of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (SEDP). Section 10 of the (main document) Environmental Report associated with the SEDP contains details on monitoring measures, with indicators, targets and relevant sources of information.

The EPA also referred to the requirements of the Habitats Directive to carry out Appropriate Assessment Screening for all plans, programmes and projects. It recommended that the Planning Authority consult with the NPWS in relation to Appropriate Assessment.

18 May 2011

The Manager's response indicated that the Planning Authority had already consulted with the NPWS in the preparation of an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

Two of the submissions received from the public (no. 191 and no. 366) raised issues relating to perceived deficiencies of the Appropriate Assessment. The Manager's response indicated that the European and national guidance was duly followed and that the only change needed to the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report would be the inclusion of telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the County Heritage Officer and the relevant NPWS Officer.

Submission no. 191 also disputed parts of the assessment of the proposed strategic road objective T1.3 against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs). The Manager's response demonstrated that the assessment provided in Table 2 of Addendum IV (ER) was correct.

4. Recommendations following public consultation

Having considered the environment-related issues raised in submissions on the proposed variation, the Manager did not recommend any changes to the text of the variation or to the corresponding map. The only change recommended was a minor correction of the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report as indicated above.

5. Conclusion

Following consultation with environmental authorities, prescribed bodies and the wider public, and consideration of the issues raised in submissions on the proposed variation, the Planning Authority has decided to adopt the variation without any modifications to the text and map.

It is considered that the existing Environmental Report and its Addendum IV, together with the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, provide all the legally-required environmental information related to the Variation no.1 of the SEDP.