

**Decision of the Planning Authority**  
regarding the need for  
Strategic Environmental Assessment of the proposed  
**Variation No. 1 of the CDP 2011-2017**  
**Strandhill Mini-Plan**

Sligo County Council has prepared a mini-plan for Strandhill, which is to be incorporated in to the County Development Plan 2011-2017 as a variation.

Having assessed the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed mini-plan, and having consulted with the prescribed environmental authorities, the Planning Authority has determined that **the proposed Strandhill Mini-Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required.**

The SEA screening process and the reasons for this decision are summarised in the following pages.

## 1. Proposed Strandhill Mini-Plan - background

The Strandhill Local Area Plan was adopted in 2003. It remained in force for six years, after which its life was extended by three years, to 2012. In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), this LAP must now be amended or revoked

It is the intention of the Planning Authority to revoke the Local Area Plan and replace it with a mini-plan, which will be incorporated in the County Development Plan (CDP) as a variation. This will ensure that the plan for Strandhill is consistent with the policies and objectives of the CDP 2011, in particular the provisions of the Core Strategy in terms of population and housing land and the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

The public consultation on this proposed variation will be carried out based on the procedure set out in Section 20 (Consultation and adoption of local area plans) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This approach has been chosen in order to ensure a meaningful consultation with the local community and other interested parties, by making it possible to consider material amendments to the draft Mini-Plan.

## 2. SEA – legal requirements

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) applies to plans and programmes for which formal preparatory action started on or after the 21st July 2004. The component of the SEA Directive relating to land use planning was transposed into Irish law in the form of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436/04), which was amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 201 of 2011).

In accordance with Article 13K(1) of the SEA Regulations, prior to making a variation to the CDP, it was necessary to “screen” the proposed variation/mini-plan, or determine whether the implementation of the mini-plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

## 3. SEA screening

The proposed Strandhill Mini-Plan was screened for potential environmental effects in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations. The conclusion of the screening exercise was as follows:

*Strandhill Mini-Plan has been prepared in the context of the existing CDP 2011-2017, which sets out a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County and has already been assessed under the SEA carried out in association with the CDP.*

*The Mini-Plan is consistent with the CDP. The CDP provisions will apply to the Mini-Plan area.*

*Strandhill Mini-Plan will be focused on the consolidation of the village, with provision for some growth in appropriate areas.*

*When compared to the 2003 Strandhill LAP, the Mini-Plan involves a reduction in the extent of the overall area of greenfield land available for development during the Plan period, particularly for residential development.*

*Having described the characteristics and assessed the expected effects of implementing the Mini-Plan for Strandhill, and having regard to the characteristics of the area likely to be affected, it is considered that the proposed Mini-Plan, if implemented, would have negligible effects on the environment.*

*Following the assessment based on the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations, it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that the implementation of the proposed CDP Variation No. 1 / Strandhill Mini-Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.*

*Accordingly, a full Strategic Environmental Assessment, separate from the SEA associated with the CDP, is not required.*

The SEA Screening Report relating to the proposed Variation no. 1/Strandhill Mini-Plan LAP can be inspected or purchased from the Planning Office of Sligo County Council. It can also be downloaded from the Council's website at [www.sligococo.ie/strandhill](http://www.sligococo.ie/strandhill)

The Planning Authority **did not determine** that the implementation of the proposed amendment would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the Planning Authority proceeded to the next stage, i.e. consultation with the prescribed environmental authorities – the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, the Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs. Planning authorities whose areas are adjoining County Sligo were also notified at this stage.

#### **4. Consultation with prescribed environmental authorities**

Formal notification, accompanied by the Screening Report, was issued to the prescribed environmental authorities on 6 December 2012, giving them an opportunity to comment on the likely environmental effects of implementing the proposed Ballymote LAP. The deadline for returning comments was 7 January 2012.

#### **5. Response to notification**

The Environmental Protection Agency responded on 3 January 2013. The EPA noted the Planning Authority's position with regard to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the proposed plan. A number of specific comments were made, including a suggestion that resulted in the modification of an objective (44.1.A) of the proposed Strandhill Mini-Plan.

The EPA also highlighted the responsibilities of the Planning Authority with regard to future amendments to the Draft Plan, infrastructure planning and compliance with other relevant policies and legislation.

No submissions were received from the other prescribed environmental authorities and planning authorities.

#### **6. Considerations**

Most of the concerns of the EPA have already been addressed through the inclusion of relevant policies in the CDP. The EPA's suggestions regarding the contents of the Mini-Plan have been adequately incorporated into the draft text and the associated SEA Screening Report.

The lack of a response from the other prescribed environmental authorities cannot be construed as an implicit agreement with the Planning Authority's conclusion regarding the level of impact of the proposed Mini-Plan on the environment.

However, in the absence of recommendations from the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, the Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), the Planning Authority has no reason to further alter the proposed Strandhill Mini-Plan or the SEA Screening Report.

## **7. Decision**

Based on the conclusion of the Screening Report, the response of the prescribed environmental authorities and the above considerations, it is the decision of the Planning Authority that full SEA is not required for the proposed CDP Variation No. 1/Strandhill Mini-Plan, which is unlikely to give rise to any environmental effects, significant or otherwise.

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