



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin Wicklow County Council

**Pleanáil, Forbairt Eacnamaíochta agus Tuaithe
Planning, Economic and Rural Development**

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Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination under the EU's Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC

For

Proposed Variation to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied)

Arklow Local Planning Framework

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination is being made by Wicklow County Council (WCC) for a Variation ("the Variation") to the Wicklow County Development Plan (WCDP) 2022-2028 (as varied). The Variation is being made under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and proposes administrative and technical changes to the WCDP, adds contemporary detail on the planning framework in County Wicklow to Volume 1 of the WCDP, and integrates a Local Planning Framework (LPF) for Arklow into the WCDP. This integration of the Arklow LPF into the WCDP constitutes the substantive component of the Variation.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, as transposed by Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires that a final determination is made as to whether a plan or project (Variation to a County Development Plan, in this case) would adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

A Natura Impact Report (NIR) has been prepared for the Variation, which identified whether the implementation of the Variation had the potential to have likely, significant effects on the integrity of European Sites, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

Having regard to the nature of the Variation/LPF, development aspirations for the Arklow area, and the characteristics of the baseline environment, WCC concluded that the Variation/LPF:

- Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site.
- Individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, has the potential to have likely, significant effects on 3 No. European sites, in view of site conservation objectives and best scientific knowledge.

Site Code	Site Name
004127	Wicklow Head SPA
004186	The Murrough Special Protection Area
004237	Seas off Wexford Special Protection Area

The LPF provides a land use planning framework for the Arklow area and supports various types of development, including housing, transport and renewable energy development. The implementation of the LPF objectives, which are supportive of various forms of development, have the potential to result in likely significant effects on European Sites from the following: 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; LPF related activities (noise, vibration, lighting, human presence,

*Tá an doiciméad seo ar fáil i bhformáidí eile ar iarratas.
This document is available in alternative formats on request.*

Ba chóir gach comhfhreagras a sheoladh chuig an Stiúrthóir Seirbhísí, Pleanáil, Forbairt Eacnamaíochta agus Tuaithe.
All correspondence should be addressed to the Director of Services, Planning, Economic and Rural Development.



structures, etc) leading to disturbance / displacement of species and LPF related activities leading to a reduction in species populations / density.

WCC therefore determined that AA of the Variation/LPF was required and an NIR should be prepared for the Variation/LPF.

An NIR was produced, which considered the potential for the Variation/LPF to adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, with regards to their Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests. The Variation/LPF was informed by the NIR, and mitigation measures were integrated into the Variation/LPF to mitigate its potential adverse effects on European Sites. The NIR concluded that the Variation/LPF would not give rise to any adverse effects on European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects., considering these mitigation measures

Material Alterations to the Variation/LPF were made following a review of the issues raised during a period of the prescribed public consultation period for the Variation. Materials Alterations that were screened in for AA were subject to full AA. Mitigation measures preventing adverse effects of these Material Alterations on receiving European Sites were identified and cross-referenced.

A consolidated NIR was produced for the Variation, which concluded the following:

- The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interests, special conservation interests and conservation objectives of the European sites have been addressed by the inclusion of mitigation measures that will prioritise the avoidance of adverse effects in the first place and mitigate adverse effects where these cannot be avoided. Furthermore, all lower-level plans and projects arising through the implementation of the Variation and Arklow LPF will themselves be subject to AA when further details of design and location are known.
- In-combination effects from interactions with other plans and projects was considered in the assessment and the mitigation measures incorporated into the plan are seen to be robust to ensure there will be no adverse effects as a result of the implementation of the Variation either alone or in-combination with other plans/projects.
- Having incorporated mitigation measures, it is concluded that the Variation, will not give rise to any adverse effects on designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species, for which these sites have been designated.

In light of the above, Wicklow County Council, pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, as transposed by Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, determines that the adoption and implementation of the Variation/LPF will not individually or in combination with any other plan or project adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.

Signed by:

Helena Demohy
Director of Services

Dated:

6th July 2026.