



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin Wicklow County Council

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination under Part 6 Chapter 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended) relating to Proposed Variation No. 7 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

Wicklow County Council (WCC) is preparing a Variation to the Wicklow County Development Plan (WCDP) 2022-2028, in accordance with the Section 58 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended) (herein referred to as 'the Act').

An AA Screening Determination as to whether the Emerging Proposed Variation No. 7 to the WCDP is likely to have significant effects on the integrity of European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is being made under the Part 6, Chapter 2 of the Act.

The purpose of the Emerging Proposed Variation is to take account of '*NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements*' - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued under Section 28 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) (July 2025). The Guidelines provide for an increased annual housing growth requirement for Wicklow County Council, and an 'additional provision' mechanism to support the zoning of additional lands in areas where it can be justified. The Emerging Proposed Variation will consider zoning of lands for additional residential development in settlements in the County.

Following an assessment of the Emerging Proposed Variation No. 7, it was determined that AA is required for the Emerging Proposed Variation No. 7. The principal reasons for this are as follows:

- The Emerging Proposed Variation is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Sites.
- The Emerging Proposed Variation may, on the basis of objective information, individually, or in-combination with other plans and projects, if unmitigated, have likely significant effects on European Sites in the County, in view of site conservation objectives and best scientific knowledge.
- The zoning of lands for residential development has potential to result in likely, significant effects, including in-combination effects, that can be transmitted to European sites in the County and surrounding Zone of Influence.
- The Emerging Proposed Variation supports the carrying out the additional residential development and associated infrastructural development in the County. This development has the potential to result in likely significant effects on the Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests of European Sites (in the absence of mitigation) from the following:
 - Loss/reduction of habitat area
 - Habitat or species fragmentation
 - Disturbance to key species
 - Reduction of species density
 - Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc.)

Considering the above, it is necessary for WCC to complete AA of the Emerging Proposed Variation and an associated Natura Impact Report (NIR).

Signed:


Helena Dennehy, Director of Services
Planning, Economic & Rural Development

Dated:

14/7/26