



Mullingar Local
Area Plan 2014-2020

Volume 3
SEA Environmental Report

Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report Scoping
of the
Proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020

1 Introduction

1.1 Preamble

Westmeath County Council has prepared a proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan (LAP). The proposed LAP represents the first time that a Local Area Plan will have been produced for Mullingar and it is the intention to supersede the 3 existing LAPs in Mullingar and to incorporate each of these areas into a single LAP for the Town in Framework Plans.

The Ardmore/Marlinstown LAP adopted 2009, and the Robinstown LAP were subject to an Environmental Appraisal as set out in The Planning and Development Act 2000 Section 19 (4) (a) and primarily for reasons of timing were not subject to SEA. The Mullingar South LAP was screened for SEA and found not to require any further consideration by means of an Environmental Report.

As part of the preparation of the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan Westmeath County Council has prepared an Environmental Report of the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Plan.

The Environmental Report is required to include the information that may reasonably be required, taking into account-

- Current knowledge and methods of assessment,
- The contents and level of detail in the Plan
- The stage of the Plan in the decision making process, and
- The extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to facilitate consultation with all stakeholders including environmental Authorities and to influence the preparation Mullingar Local Area plan in order to ensure that account is taken of environmental considerations.

There are a number of significant issues which have arisen in consideration of the current and future planning and development of Mullingar and require particular consideration these include:

- The provision in the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan for increased development and the consequences of this for increased water abstraction from Lough Owel. (significant implications for AA also)
- Policy and objectives for development/improvement of access and tourism facilities to natural heritage assets in the hinterland of Mullingar.
- Sequential development
- Efficient use of existing public infrastructure (material assets)
- Identified flood risks

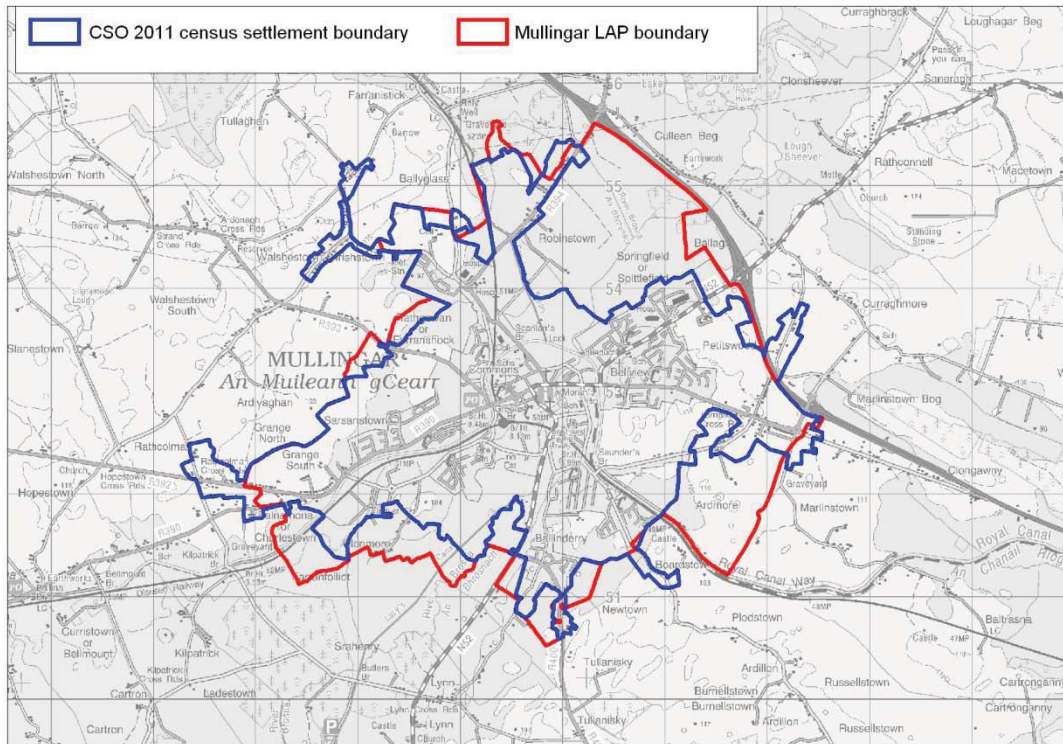
1.2 Statutory context

The requirement and mechanism for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Development Plan review process is set out in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011 with particular reference to Articles 14A to 14 J.

2 Mullingar Town Profile / Environmental Baseline

2.1 Population, Household, Employment, Trends.

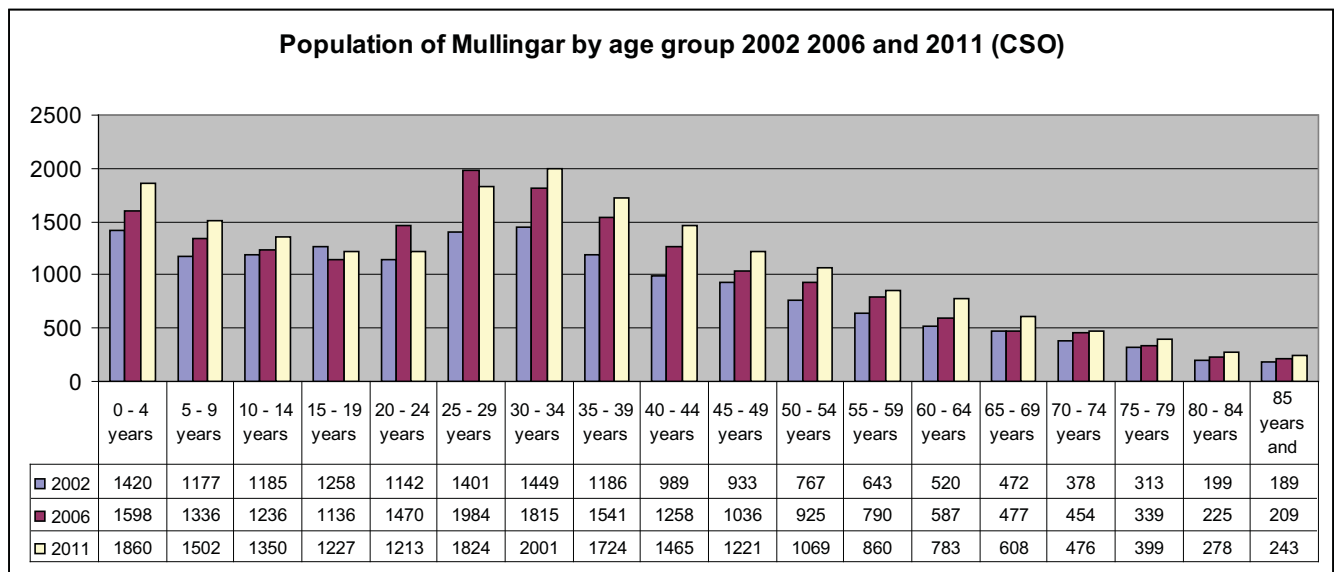
Any data derived from the Central Statistics Office relating to Mullingar has been presented within the boundaries defined in the 2011 census as the settlement boundary unless otherwise stated.



Map 2.1: proposed LAP boundary (Red) and CSO 2011 census settlement boundary (Blue)

2.1.1 Population:

Quantum

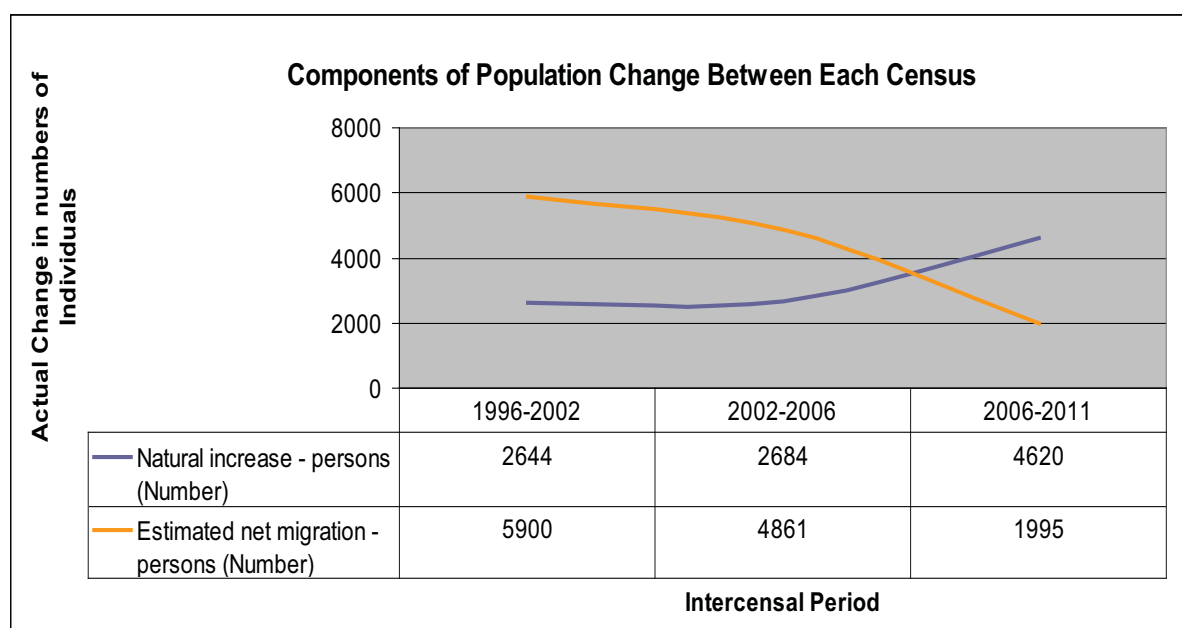


Graph 2.1.1

The total population of Mullingar town and environs as recorded in the three most recent censuses are 15,621 (2002), 18,416 (2006) and 20,103 (2011), the population has increased by 4,482 (29%) from 2002 to 2011.

The components of population change are split between natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration (in migration minus out migration). The trends for County Westmeath in this regard are set out in Graph 2.1.2 below are likely to be indicative of the situation in Mullingar.

The most significant element of population increase is now, and on extrapolation of existing trends is likely to continue to be attributed to natural increase. The increased impact of natural increase is related to fertility rate, demographics and higher life expectancy. Current and future out migration are likely to have the most significant potential for negative impact on the population of Mullingar.



Graph 2.1.2 components of population change in Westmeath

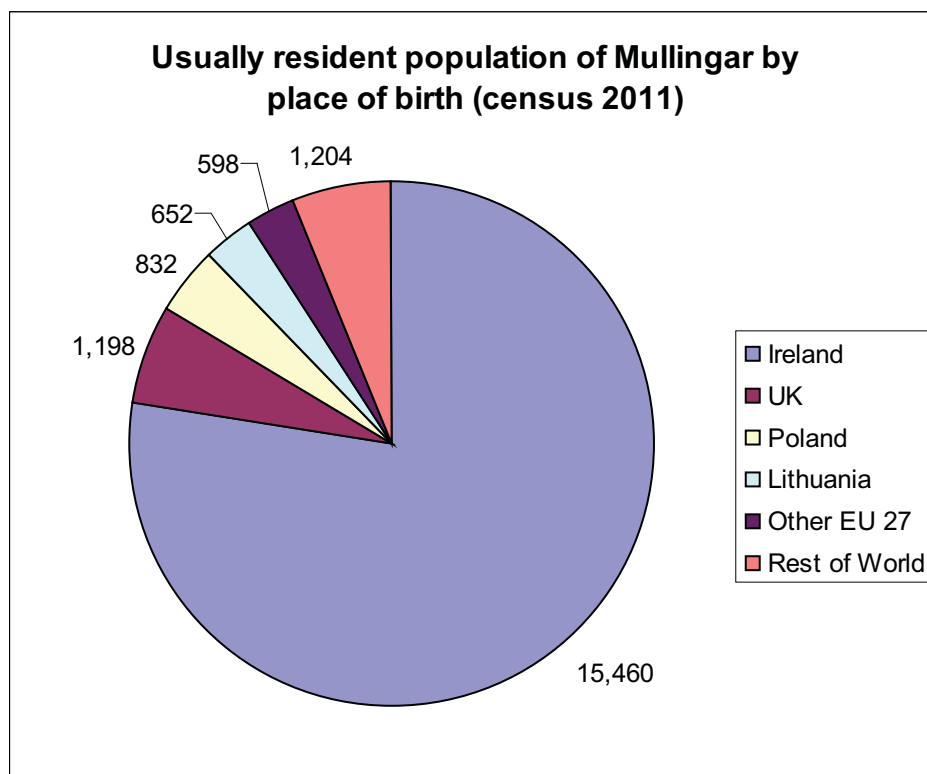
The impact of natural increase on the population of Mullingar is evident in Census 2011 detail on the age profile of Mullingar. The proportion of the population aged 10 and younger for the state is 16%, for Westmeath 17% and Mullingar 18%. CSO small population areas characterised by significant recent growth have up to 33% of the population under 10 years of age.

The effects of the population profile in Mullingar are in the first instance likely to be on the education infrastructure in the town, the following table makes the assumption that the number of 5 to 12 year olds corresponds to the primary going population and 13 to 18 year olds correspond to secondary school going population.

	Change in number 5-12 year olds in 2016 compared to 2011.	Total No. 5-12 year olds in 2011	% increase in 5-12 year olds from 2011 to 2016	Change in number of 13-18 year olds in 2020 compared 2011	Total No. 13-18 year olds in 2011	% increase in 13-18 year olds from 2011 to 2020	Total 2011 pop
Mullingar	436	2,351	19%	341	1,495	22%	20,103

Previous analysis carried out by Forward Planning section highlighted the current and ongoing deficit of Primary school places in Mullingar to meet demand arising from the urban area; it was also demonstrated that this demand has and continues to be met by rural Primary schools in the rural hinterland of the town, contributing to concerns regarding both sustainable transport and social implications.

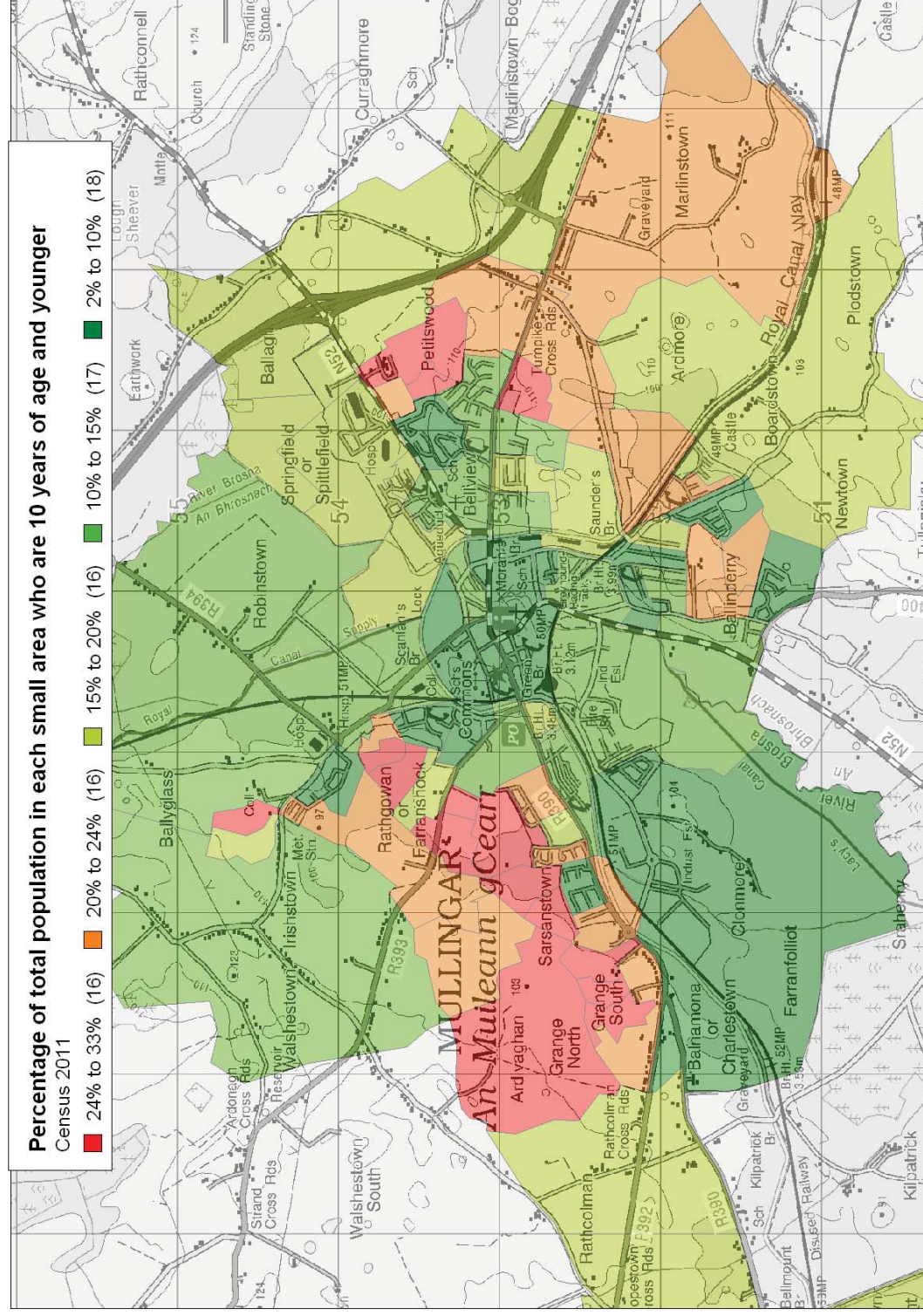
Census 2011 results show that 4484 (22.5%) of the population of Mullingar were not born in Ireland, the countries of birth for the population of Mullingar are set out below in graph 2.1.3.



Graph 2.1.3 Place of birth of Mullingar population

Distribution

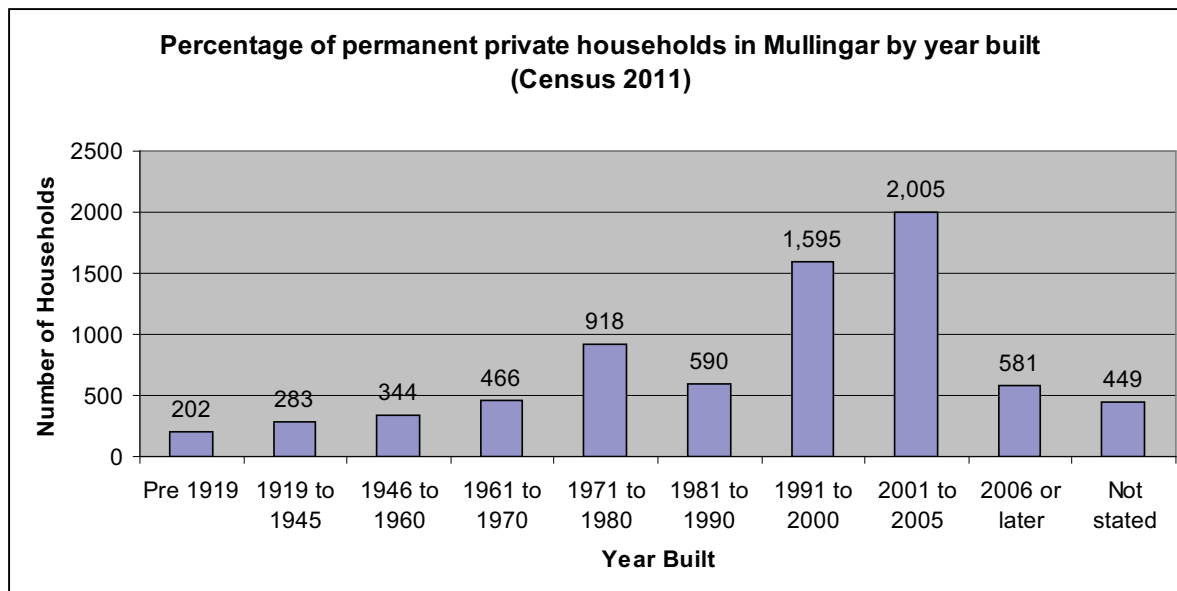
Recent population growth in Mullingar is concentrated in areas to the periphery of the town, primarily to the east and west due to the longstanding development constraints to the north and south of the town. The centres of recent population increase correspond with the areas with the youngest population, as shown in Map 2.2 below.



2.1.2 Households

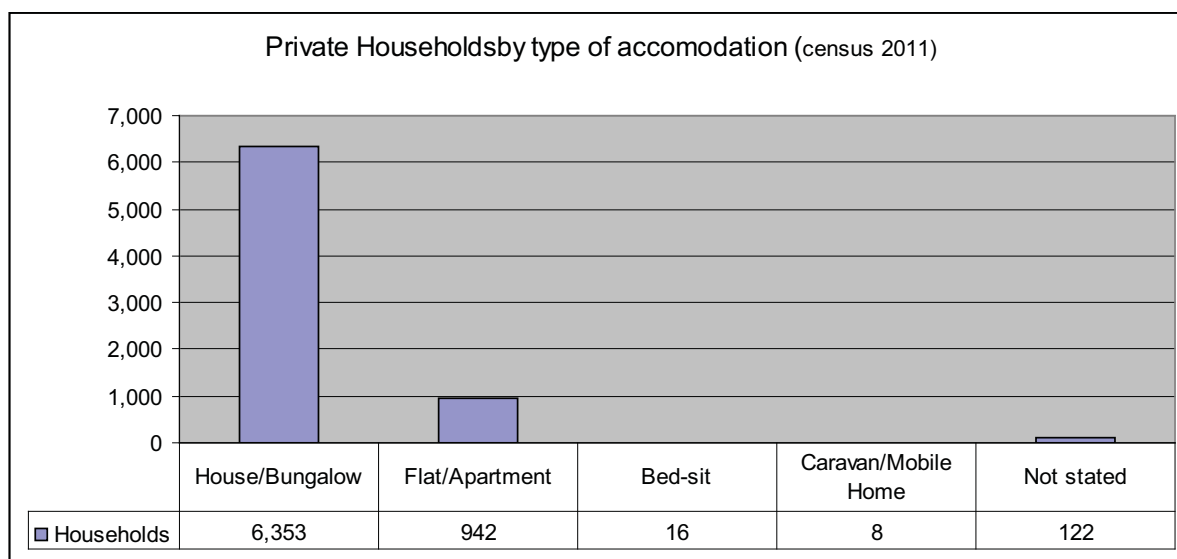
Census 2011 found that there were 8,733 permanent private dwellings in the settlement of Mullingar. Of these dwellings 7,469 were occupied and 1,264 (14.5%) were unoccupied.

Almost 35% of the housing stock was constructed after 2001 and 56% constructed after 1991. See graph 2.1.4.



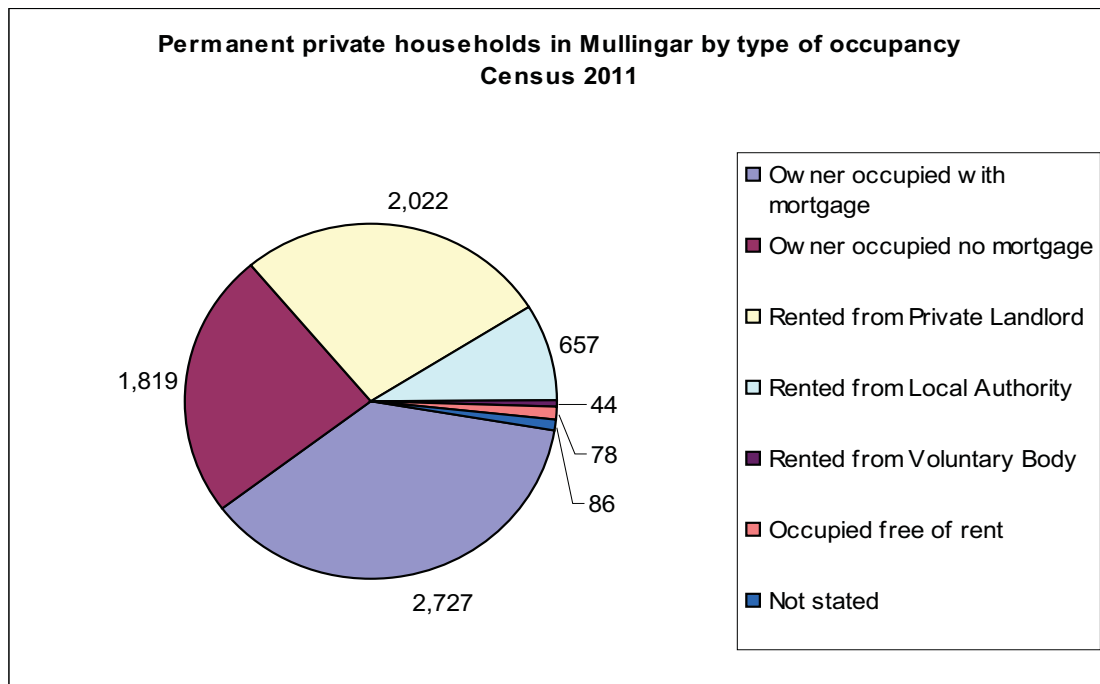
Graph 2.1.4

It is important to note that each period shown in the graph after 1961 is a period of 9 years up to the year 2000. In order to compare the number of houses built in the period after 2000 to the other periods set out the period of 2001-2005 and 2006 or later should be combined, which gives a total of 2,586 houses built in Mullingar after 2000.



Graph 2.1.5

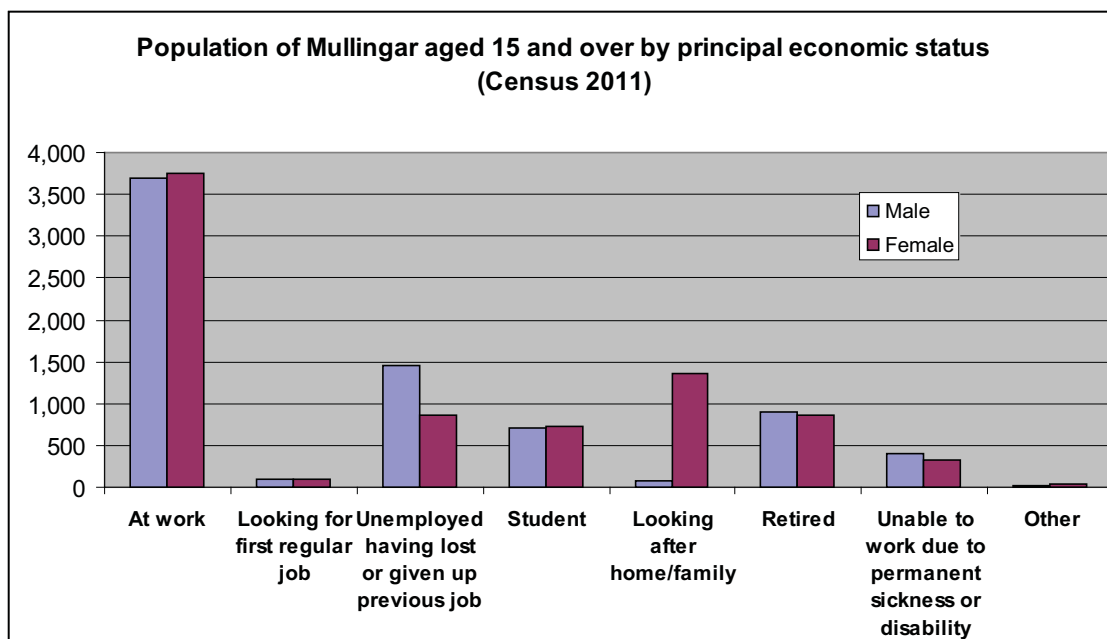
Census 2011 revealed that 4,546 (61%) of the permanent private households were owner occupied with or without mortgage, 2,022 households, 27% of the total were rented from a private landlord, occupancy of the remaining 865 12% was found to be as set out below in Graph 2.1.6.



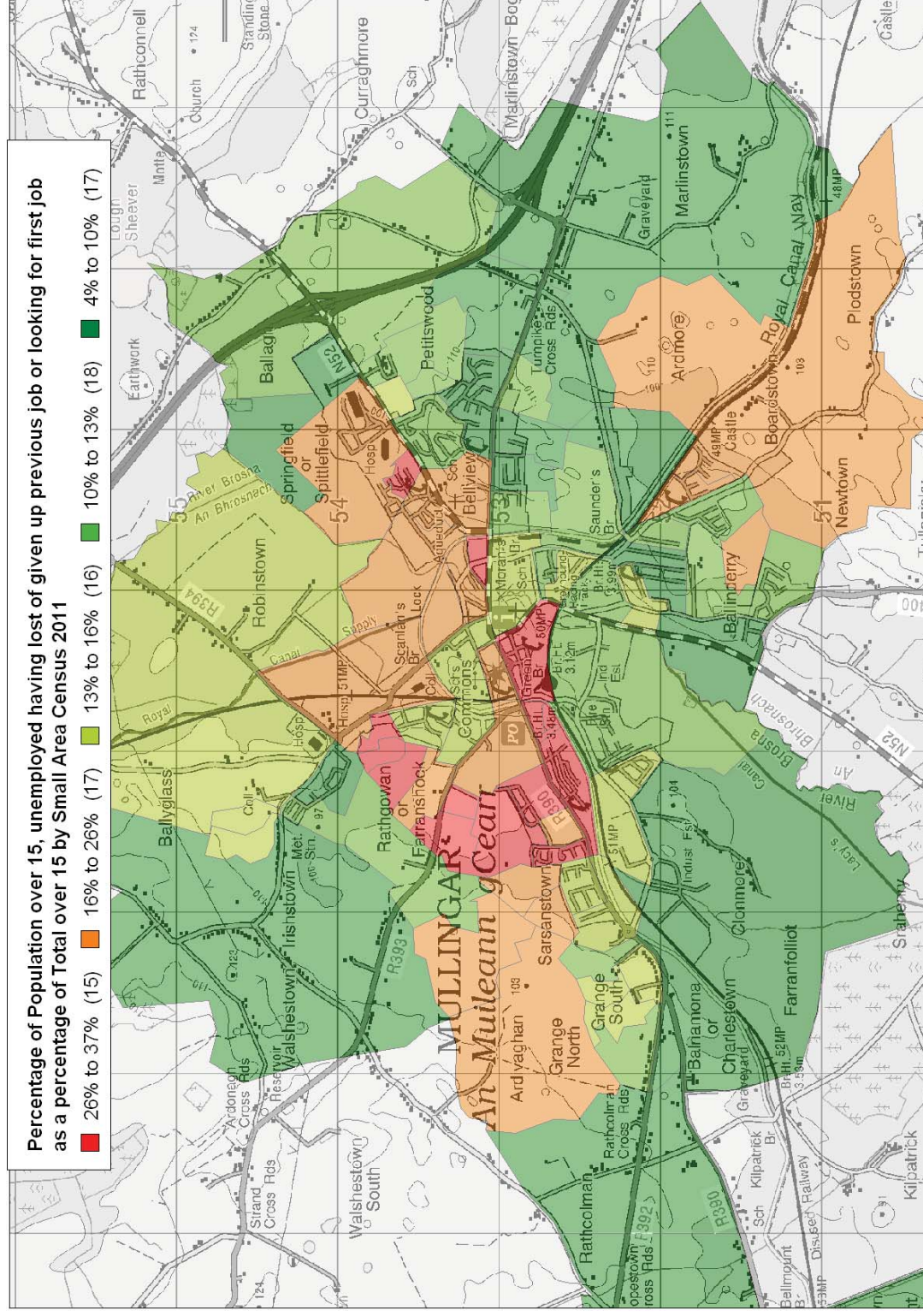
Graph 2.1.6

2.1.3 Employment:

As reported by 2011 Census figures, almost 75% of persons in Mullingar over 15 who are available to work are at work see graph 2.1.7 below. However Small Area Population Statistics reveal that there are locations in Mullingar which have concentrations of unemployment substantially above the average these are shown in Map 2.3 below.



Graph 2.1.7



2.2 Service Infrastructure

Having regard to the above and section 4.16 of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities No. 15 (June 2007) issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, it is unreasonable to consider the zoning of lands where services are not available and there is no reasonable expectation within a reasonable time frame.

Arising from the adoption of the River Basin Management Plans for the Eastern and Shannon Basins, along with recent regulatory changes regarding surface water and urban waste water, infrastructural capacity issues are likely to have become more acute since the adoption of the 2008-2014 Westmeath County Development Plan which was the Plan applicable to the area. In addition to consideration of the capacity of Waste Water Treatment Works, there is now an increased focus on the receiving waters, the assimilative capacity of which may be a significant consideration in allocation of both capital investments in infrastructure and in the consideration of settlement policy. The hard infrastructural capacity is dealt with in this Report under the heading Service Infrastructure. The assimilative/abstractive capacity issues are dealt with under the heading of Natural Heritage.

2.2.1 Waste Water Treatment Infrastructure

Mullingar Waste Water Treatment Plant was upgraded to 55,000 p.e. in 2009 along with significant investment in the collection network. The third Annual Environmental Report is the most recently available and was submitted by Director of Services Westmeath County Council to the EPA in May 2012 covering the period Jan to Dec 2011.

The design population equivalent (P.E.) of the Mullingar Wastewater Plant is 55,000 and the actual measured population equivalent for 2011 is 30,338. The sewer network serving the agglomeration is a combined sewer system with eight separate sub-catchments. The treatment plant located in Clonmore consists of an extended aeration, activated sludge process with de-nitrification and chemical phosphorus removal. The primary discharge from the treatment plant is to the River Brosna. The plant was upgraded under the Design, Build and Operate (D.B.O.) contract in 2000....

The discharges from the agglomeration were compliant with the consent limits of the licence up until 15/03/2011. There were 10 exceedences of monitored parameters from this date, with exceedences relating to Total Phosphorus (3), and Orthophosphate (7). The upgrade of the Mullingar Agglomeration Waste Water Treatment Plant has as expected, improved the wastewater treatment plant efficiency thus reducing the impact of the discharge on the receiving water.

2.2.2 Water Supply Infrastructure

Mullingar, along with a considerable portion of Westmeath, is provided with water abstracted from Lough Owel (abstraction limit of 22.7MLD) through water supply infrastructure with a treatment capacity of 22MLD current demand is reported as approximately 19MLD.

Mullingar Town and Environs are served by the Mullingar Town Independent Supply through some 120km of watermain. The reported average demand for Mullingar and Environs is 8.2MLD comprising 2MLD for metered non-domestic supply, based on 180l/day/person for the 2011 census population it has been estimated that a domestic supply is 3.5 MLD, there is approximately 0.5MLD known background losses leaving 2.2MLD as unaccounted for water, based on 180l/person/day

unaccounted for water has the capacity to supply 12,000 additional population with no allocation for employment or other uses ancillary to the policy provision for additional residential demand. The EIS for the Lough Ennell Water Abstraction (supply to Royal Canal) August 2011 contains the following summary of the current abstraction baseline for Lough Owel,

“The demand for water from Lough Owel is approaching 13 MGD (5 MGD each for the Canal and Westmeath County Council and 3MGD for the fish farm). In the context of a calculated safe yield from Lough Owel of 8 MGD, the abstractions now evolving are unsustainable.”

Although dealt with later in this Report it is worth noting that increased abstraction from Lough Owel is listed as a threat to the conservation interest of Lough Owel SAC and has been the subject of a number of SEA and AA assessments by Westmeath county council in the recent times.

Following adoption of Variation no 11 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014 the following objectives are currently in place in order to address this issue regarding water supply issues:

OCS2 *It is an objective of Westmeath County Council to prepare a detailed report within 12 months of adopting proposed Variation No 11 with a particular focus on Lough Lene and Lough Owel:*

- *Abstraction capacity limits taking account of conservation objectives of these European Sites.*
- *Measures for monitoring of potential environmental issues identified.*

OCS3 *In considering development proposals, Westmeath County Council shall, in determinations prescribed under S. 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011 (as may be amended) include potential for increased water abstraction to impact on the integrity of Lough Lene and Lough Owel European sites.*

2.2.3 Transportation Infrastructure

Mullingar is well served with both road and rail transportation infrastructure. National roads N4 and N52, along with a number of Regional routes pass by and through the town recently supplemented and enhanced by new road infrastructure including the Robinstown Link road, the C-ring and the Joe Dolan Bridge.

The development and shape of Mullingar has in no small part been influenced by transportation infrastructure. The Royal Canal, the railway and the N4 have all served to influence the development of Mullingar.

2.3 Natural heritage biodiversity, including flora and fauna, landscape water and soil.

Each of the aspects of natural heritage set out in the heading of this section are inherently interlinked, it is proposed therefore to deal with them in this combined section of the environmental baseline.

Mullingar is set within a glacial landscape in the catchment of the river Brosna between Lough Owel to the north and Lough Ennell to the south. The River Brosna flows through the centre of Mullingar, has had and continues to have a major influence on the development Mullingar and its setting.

The River Brosna drains the area surrounding Mullingar and flows through the town from the North East to the South, the course of the river is reflected in the characteristics of the surrounding landscape which has in turn shaped the historical and more recent development of the town.

Lands within the flood plain of the River Brosna are topographically the lowest and contain the highest level of diversity with regard to land cover. These areas have been subject to the least intensive agriculture and have been avoided with regard to expansion of the urban fabric of town for the same reasons.

The areas to the North (Robinstown) and South (Lynn) contain the greatest level of biodiversity within the boundary of Mullingar the LAP.

There are other areas of significant biodiversity value within the boundary of the Mullingar LAP including linear features such as the Royal Canal pNHA, the Railway line embankments and various pockets of open space in the grounds of schools, churches and other private and public and semi-public spaces.

2.3.1 Water

Issues surrounding the water Baseline for the Mullingar LAP include both quantitative and qualitative aspects in its multiple roles in both direct use and natural capital value in the longer term which can be considered as follows:

Provisioning fresh water:

- a source for existing domestic and commercial supply,
- a supply resource for future development

Regulating:

- a receptor for waste water treatment effluent
- flooding

Habitats

- For species
- For genetic diversity

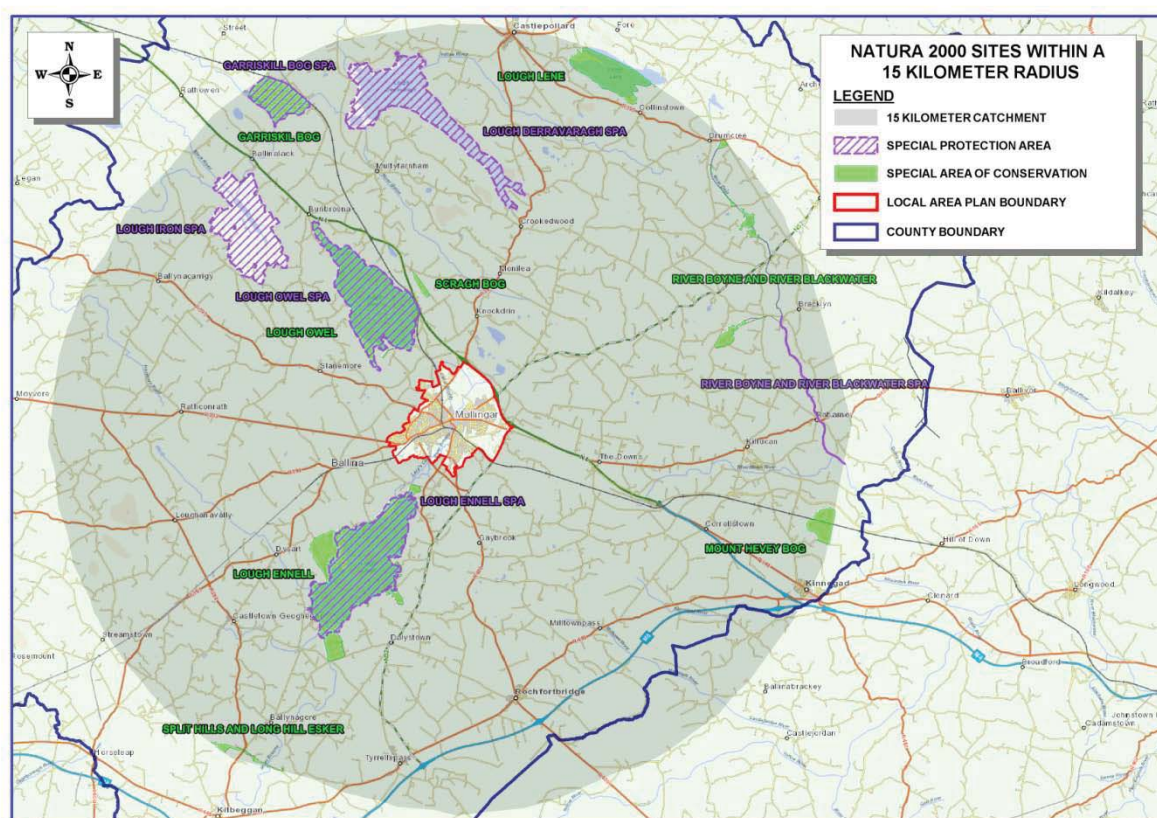
Cultural Services:

- For recreation
- For tourism
- For aesthetic appreciation

The existing capacity of the abstraction from Lough Owel and its capacity to meet future demand is unclear and has been considered in the assessment of the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020. Abstraction rates from this water body will be required to be within limits determined by scientific study and investigation.

No issues have been identified with regard to existing levels of water treatment, however the protection of this important source (material asset) from point and diffuse pollution is a wider issue outside the boundaries of the Mullingar LAP and has been highlighted in the SEA and AA of the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020.

2.3.2 Sites considered to be of European and National importance (Natura 2000)



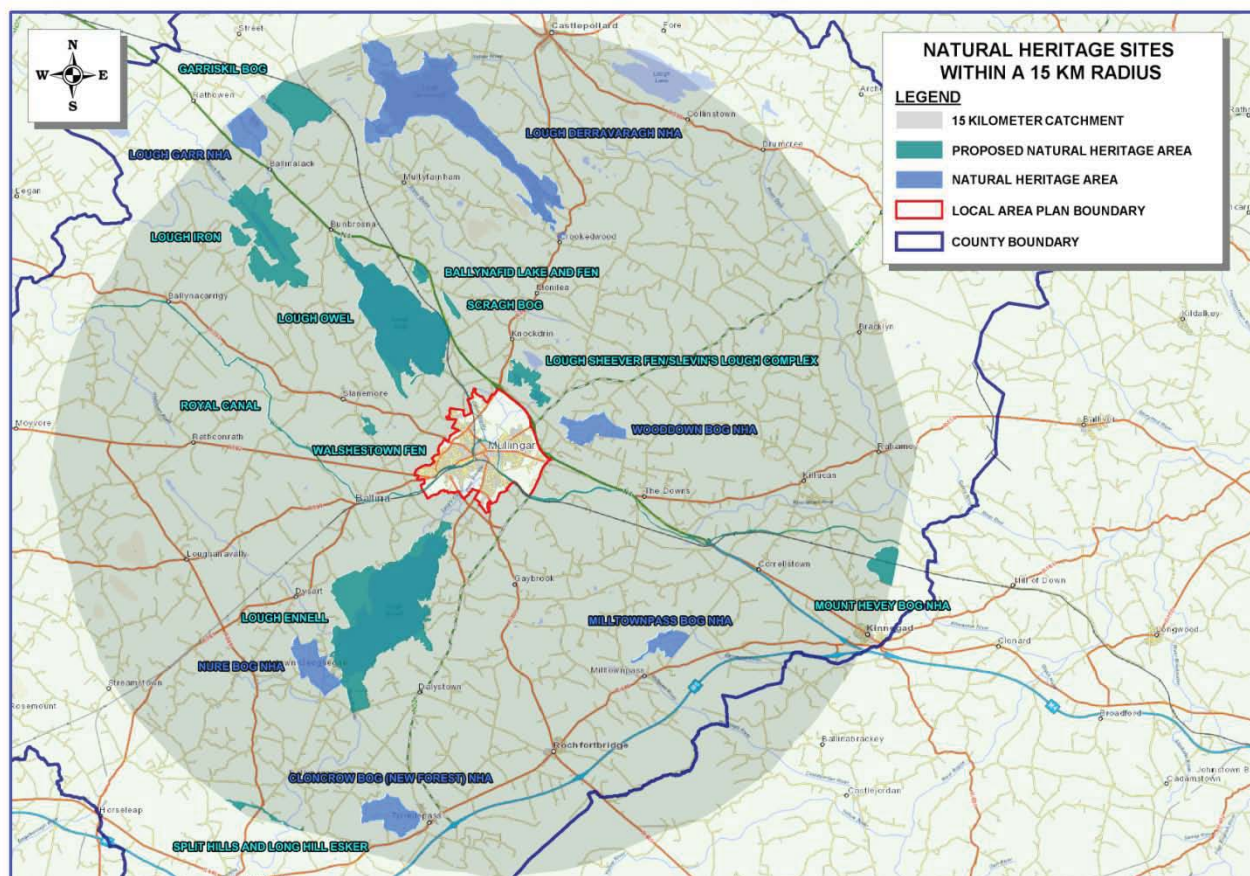
Map 4.5 Natura 2000 sites in 15km buffer

SAC's in and within 15km of Mullingar

	SITECODE	SITE_NAME	Site specific plans by the competent Authority (NPWS)
1	000679	Garriskil Bog	Generic Conservation Objectives
2	000685	Lough Ennell	Generic Conservation Objectives
3	000688	Lough Owel	Generic Conservation Objectives
4	000692	Scragh Bog	Generic Conservation Objectives
5	001831	Split Hills and Long Hill Esker	Generic Conservation Objectives
6	002121	Lough Lene	Conservation Plan 2005-2010 Generic Conservation Objectives
7	002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater	Generic Conservation Objectives
8	002342	Mount Hevey Bog	Generic Conservation Objectives

SPA's in and within 15km of Mullingar

	SITECODE	SITE_NAME	Site specific plans by the competent Authority (NPWS)
1	004017	Mongan Bog SPA	Standard data form only
2	004043	Lough Derravaragh SPA	Generic Conservation Objectives
3	004044	Lough Ennell SPA	Generic Conservation Objectives
5	004046	Lough Iron SPA	Generic Conservation Objectives
6	004047	Lough Owel SPA	Generic Conservation Objectives
7	004102	Garriskil Bog SPA	Standard data form only
8	004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	Generic Conservation Objectives



NHA's in and within 15km of Mullingar

	SITECODE	SITE_NAME
1	000677	Cloncrow Bog (New Forest) NHA
2	000684	Lough Derravaragh NHA
3	000694	Wooddown Bog NHA
4	001812	Lough Garr NHA
5	002323	Milltownpass Bog NHA

pNHA's in and within 15km of Mullingar

	SITECODE	SITE_NAME
1	000679	Garriskil Bog
2	000685	Lough Ennell
3	000687	Lough Iron
4	000688	Lough Owel
5	000690	Lough Sheever Fen/Slevin's Lough Complex
6	000692	Scragh Bog
7	001584	Mount Hevey Bog NHA
8	001731	Walshestown Fen
9	002103	Royal Canal

2.3.3 Sites/Habitats considered to be of Local and wider Biodiversity value with out the benefit of statutory protection

The extensive biodiversity assets both within and surrounding Mullingar are often overlooked. Of principal interest are those associated with the river Brosna, its tributaries and floodplains.

The importance of wetland habitats such as those in the Robinstown and Mullingar South Local Area Plans is becoming increasingly recognised for their function in sustainable human development as reflected in recent amendments to the Planning and Development 2000, as amended. Much of this high biodiversity value wetland area coincides with lands often subject to flooding and of poorer agricultural productivity.

In addition to these valuable wetland resources there are many mature trees and hedgerows, drains and banks within the Local Area Plan boundary and in locations which it is proposed policy to comprehensively develop.

There are areas of naturalised native woodland within the proposed LAP boundary which have become established within and adjacent to the railway corridor and on reclaimed peat.

It appears that there are areas of bog regenerating within the Robinstown Framework Plan adjacent to the N4.

2.4 Built and cultural Heritage

2.4.1 Archaeological

Mullingar has a rich archaeological heritage some of which has been identified, and some of which has been resolved.

As a consequence of its long history a large area of the town centre is designated as an urban zone of archaeological potential, there are numerous other sites and monuments recorded and protected outside of the zone of archaeological potential. Further monastic sites within Mullingar town are recorded on Ordnance Survey maps and in the Urban Archaeological Potential Report (Bradley) particularly at Blackhall, and Austin Friar Road.

2.4.2 Architectural

The majority of buildings the centre of Mullingar date from the eighteenth and nineteenth Century set in a typical Irish town layout. The limited major intervention to the building stock on the principal streets has helped to retain its vibrant market town character.

There are many buildings of particular note within Mullingar and these are included in the Record of Protected Structures in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008 a more extensive proposed Record of Protected Structures is set out in the Draft Westmeath County development plan 2014-2020.

2.5 Climatic Factors

2.5.1 Adaptation to climate change

Mullingar has developed over time in a manner by which it has avoided lower areas, expanding primarily on an east west axis.

The more flood prone areas to the North and South of Mullingar have now been examined in considerable detail with detailed flood studies carried out for both the Robinstown and Mullingar South LAP's.

In the course of carrying out the SFRA and justification tests for any lands on which a flood risk has been identified the issue of climate change shall be factored in as required in *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities Nov 2009*.

3 Spatial Policy Context, Targets and land use zoning objectives.

The 2010 – 2022 Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) have set a target population for Mullingar of 30,934 by 2020 subject to Section 4.5 *Policy Framework for Land Use Zoning* of the RPGs that this must be contingent on the provision of waste –water treatment systems that ensure no negative impact on receiving waters. The RPGs state that the population target figures shall be reviewed in the 2016 RPG review and may be revised following the 2011 census.

The total additional population target planned for in the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 derived from the RPG's is **10,831** persons.

The Core Strategy of the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 has set a target of 193 Ha as the zoning requirement for Mullingar to make housing provision for a population target of 10,831.

3.1 Description of zoning types

Provision is made on the proposed Mullingar Zoning Map for 14 categories of zoning. 12 Land Use Zoning categories are set out in Chapter 10 *Land Use Zoning*.

3.1.1 Open Space or Open Space / Amenity

The Open Space zoning is of particular interest to the SEA, described as opens space on the zoning map and as Open Space/Amenity in section 10.2.7 of the pLAP. The description of the land use zoning objective gives rise to concerns in relation to the implied objective of protecting the biodiversity value and natural functioning of riparian zones on water courses, flood plain functions and wetlands including flood attenuation.

The Open Space or Open Space / Amenity provision of the plan extends to over 200Ha.

3.1.2 Residential

Residential zoning has been divided in the proposed zoning map (and not in zoning objective) into 2 sub categories existing and proposed. There are 149 Ha of undeveloped residentially zoned lands in the proposed LAP and 345 Ha of developed residential zoned land.

There does not appear to be a distinction between the developed and undeveloped residential zonings from a land use policy perspective.

There are proposed road alignments and open space areas set out within the major areas of residential zoning which would appear to prescribe, or constrain the design of any future layout for the housing and the transportation network within these areas.

3.1.3 General Urban District

This is a zoning which was created in the drafting of the Robinstown Local Area Plan and has been included unamended into the Framework Plan, and is as described in section 10.2.12 primarily a residential zoning objective and extends to 17.7 Ha.

This zoning objective is notable in the context of the SEA that there appears to be a prescribed road layout determined for the area.

The location of this zoning objective is also notable in the context of section 9.6 of the Flood Risk Assessment carried out in for the Westmeath surface water policy. Survey work in the course of

preparing planning application 11/5040 revealed that the culvert under the feeder canal presents the biggest constraint to alleviation of the identified flood risk in this location is the undersized culvert under the feeder canal, this may present difficulties for the solution to flooding in this area proposed in the SFRA.

It is critical that the layout and location of infrastructure in this area does not compromise the water course as this scenario has the potential to lead to flooding up stream.

The area to which this zoning objective has been applied has been identified as being subject to a risk of pluvial flooding, is benefiting land and was identified in drafting the Robinstown Local area plan as containing Fen peat.

3.1.4 Mixed use

A Mixed Use land use zoning objective has been applied to 38.19Ha in the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan the majority of which applies to the town centre, there are pockets of Mixed Use zoning in the Local Area Plans and to the west of the town also.

There are no issues of concern to the SEA regarding the subject lands and proposed use.

3.1.5 Mixed use Urban Core

35.4 Ha of land in the Robinstown Framework Plan has been zoned for Mixed Use Urban Core. The objective is to provide for Community, Commercial and Retail uses, this area has been identified by the OPW as benefiting land.

3.1.6 Community and Institutional

Chapter 10 land use zonings refers to Educational/Institutional/Community and this is taken to be the same proposed zoning.

91.4 Ha of land in Mullingar is proposed to be zoned for this use with the majority of it already developed for these types of uses. There is an area to the south of the Robinstown link road zoned for community and Institutional uses which is affected by the Benefiting land designation.

3.1.7 Open Space

195 Ha of land has been zoned Open Space in the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan.

The zoning description in Chapter 10 of the pLAP is Open space /Amenity and appears to be more concentrated on the amenity aspect that would appear to be the intention of a number of the locations zoned for Open space, this is discussed further in other parts of this environmental report with recommendations.

3.1.8 Sport and Recreational

There were 62ha of land zones for Sports and Recreational use (Revision 3 15/05/13). There are locations where this zoning conflicts with the Strategic Environmental Objectives of the SEA.

3.1.9 Commercial

53 Ha has been zoned Commercial in the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan, there is one location with a risk of pluvial flooding.

3.1.10 Enterprise and Employment

173Ha is proposed for Enterprise and Employment use in the LAP, there are conflicts with benefiting land and with CFRAM's flood risk to the West of the Castlepollard Road and to the south west and Mullingar South Framework Plan.

3.1.11 Retail Warehousing

5.7 Ha of Retail Warehouse zoning has been provided in the proposed LAP. The SEA has raised no concerns with regard to these zonings.

3.1.12 Innovation and technology

84 Ha have been zoned for Innovation and Technology development in Mullingar in 2 locations one to the east of the Castlepollard Road and one to the east of the eastern ring road (N52) at and adjacent to the IDA park.

Issues relating to construction on fen peat soils in the body of the Robinstown Framework Plan create a difficulties in this regard see the assessment Matrices regarding the Robinstown Framework Plan.

3.1.13 Major Regeneration Opportunity site

Information regarding the land use zoning for these Opportunity Sites is included in Chapter 10 of the Plan.

This land use zoning objective has been applied to St. Lomans Hospital and to the former Army Barracks.

In the case of St. Lomans the area to the rear of the hospital which has been zoned includes an area which is subject to pluvial flooding and is composed in reclaimed peat, whereas the area to the north of St. Lomans, in the ownership of the HSE is not subject to these constraints.

3.1.14 Agricultural

80.5 Ha of land has been zoned for Agricultural use within the Proposed Local Area Plan. The objective is to protect agricultural land from development which would restrict its use.

3.2 Spatial and Environmental Policy Hierarchy Context of proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014 shall be informed and carried out in the context of the following Policies, Plans and Strategies as appropriate.

International
Water Framework Directive & associated Directives
SEA Directive
Floods Directive
Groundwater Directive
Habitats Directive
Birds Directive
Freshwater Fish Directive
Shell fish Directive
Drinking Water Directive
Bathing Water Directive
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive

Seveso Directive
 Sewage Sludge Directive
 Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
 Waste Framework Directive
 Nitrates Directive
 Soils Directive
 Air Quality Directives including Framework Directive
 National Emissions Ceiling Directive
 Environmental Noise Directive
 Climate Change Programme (ECCP II)
 IPPC Directive
 EU Reach Initiative
 European Landscape Convention
 UN Convention of Biological Diversity, 1992
 Kyoto Protocol
 Stockholm Convention
 Valetta Convention
 Ramsar Convention
 OSPAR Convention
 MARPOL Convention
 Granada Convention
 Gothenburg Strategy

National

National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012
 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland - The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020
 National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
 National Development Plan 2007-2013
 Transport 21
 Smarter Travel
 Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland (1997)
 National Biodiversity Plan (2002)
 Guidance by DoECLG including those issued under Section 28 of Planning and Development Act:
 River Basin Management Planning, A practical Guide for Planning Authorities, June 2008
 Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Worship
 Best Practice Urban Design Manual (May 09) - Part 1
 Best Practice Urban Design Manual (May 09) - Part 2
 Childcare Facilities Guidelines)
 Design Standards for New Apartments
 Development Contribution Scheme for Planning Authorities - Circular PD 5/2007
 Development Contribution Scheme for Planning Authorities - Circular PD4/2003
 Development Management Guidelines -June 2007
 Development Plans Guidelines -June 2007
 Funfair Guidance
 Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines- Best Practice Guidance
 Implementation of new EPA Code of Practice on WasteWater Treatment and Disposal Systems
 Serving Single Houses - Circular PSSP1/10
 Landscape and Landscape Assessment
 Planning & Development(Amendment)(No2)Regulations 2011 - Circular PSSP 7/11
 Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 (Circular PPL 1/2010)
 Provision of Schools and the Planning System
 Quarries and Ancillary Activities

Redevelopment of Certain Lands in the Dublin area primarily for Affordable Housing
 Retail Planning Guidelines (April 2012)
 Retail Design Manual (April 2012)
 Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plans - Circular Letter SP/5/08
 Section 261A of Planning & Development Act 2000 Guidelines (January 2012)
 Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (Jan 2012)
 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
 Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines
 Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines - Map
 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (May 09)
 Taking in Charge of Housing Estates / Management Companies
 Taking in Charge of Residential Developments Circular Letter PD 1/08
 Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures
 The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Local Authorities (Nov 09)
 The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Technical Appendices (Nov 09)
 Tree Preservation Guidelines
 Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations - Circular PD 7/09
 Wind Energy Development
 Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities
 02/05/12 Minister's Hogan and O'Sullivan Publish New Retail Planning Guidelines to ensure that the planning process supports both competitiveness in the retail sector and healthy city and town centres
 Guidance for Planning Authorities on Drainage and Reclamation of Wetlands

Regional

Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010-2022
 Midlands Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 (current status unclear particularly with regard to SEA and AA).
 Shannon International River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015
 Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management Programme

Local

Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014
 Westmeath Draft County Development Plan 2014-2020
 Westmeath Local Authorities Retail Strategy 2007
 Westmeath Rural Design Guidelines 2005 inc Addendum 2008
 Westmeath Housing Strategy 2008-2014
 Westmeath Groundwater Protection Schemes
 Heritage Plan

3.3 Environmental Baseline Data Sources

Source Name	Date of Publication	Author
Brosna Water unit management Action Plan	30/04/2010	
Annual Environmental Report for Mullingar Waste Water Treatment Plant	Various	EPA
Census data	1991, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2011	CSO
Geodirectory	Quarterly releases 2003-2013	An Post
EIS for the Lough Ennell Water Abstraction (supply to Royal Canal)	August 2011	RPS Group/ Westmeath County Council

The Draft River Basin Management Plans, National summary Programme of Measures	December 2008	ESB International/Western river basin district
Eastern River Basin District Project titled Abstractions- National POM/Standards study revised risk assessment methodology for surface water abstractions from Lakes	January 2009	CDM/ Eastern river Basin district.
ABP, Inspector's Report, File Reference: 25.PW.3001.	September 2007	ABP inspector.
European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 Drinking Water Monitoring Program 2010 & Sampling Manual	2010	Water Services Westmeath County Council

4 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF POLICIES

4.1 Introduction

The use of Environmental Protection Objectives fulfils obligations set out in Section F, Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended. The Environmental Protection Objectives are distinct from the proposed Local Area Plan objectives and provide a standard against which the goals, policies and objectives of the County Development Plan can be measured in order to highlight those with the potential for environmental impact. They are used as a tool to cross check the policies of the Plan in order to maximise the environmental sustainability of the Plan. The cross checking process helps identify policies that will be likely to result in significant adverse impacts, so that alternatives may be considered or mitigation measures may be put in place.

The Environmental Protection Objectives for the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan have been generated from European, National and Regional Policy and Guidance. Sample objectives are given in Table 4B of the SEA Guidelines produced by the DoEHLG in 2004 and these were amended to reflect the specific issues that are considered relevant to this particular Plan and the range of issues that are significant within Mullingar. Scoping, public consultation processes and higher level policy informed the generation of appropriate objectives.

4.2 Environmental Protection Objectives

SEO	Indicators	Responsible Authority	Frequency of Monitoring	Targets
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna				
B1: Protect, conserve and enhance the diversity of habitats, species and areas of local, national or international importance, including aquatic habitats and species and promote the sustainable management of habitat networks	Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Art. 17 of the Habitats directive	NPWS	6 year cycle, next report due 2014	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under national and international legislation Compliance with WFD RBMPs
B2: Ensure that on implementation, any policy or objective not directly connected with or necessary for the management of a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination, shall not adversely affect the integrity of a European Site.				
Population and Human Health				
P1: Facilitate a high quality of life for Westmeath's population through ensuring high quality residential, recreational and working environments, encouraging sustainable transport patterns and minimising noise pollution	Data on commuting, education, employment and economy, housing and general health data from Census	Westmeath Council	5 year intervals	Reduction in average distance and time to travel to work school or college. Increase in educational access and opportunity Increase in general health as recorded

SEO	Indicators	Responsible Authority	Frequency of Monitoring	Targets
				by Census. Improved recreational amenity and open space provision. Increased sustainable employment opportunities
Water Resources				
W1: Promote water conservation and sustainable water use based population projections and long-term projections of available water resources.	Core Strategy and Water Service Strategic Plan shall set out detail at each CDP review	WCC	6 years	Abstractions existing and proposed to be maintained within the environmental carrying capacity of the water body.
W2: Protect the quality of surface and ground waters as sources of drinking water and as valuable assets for amenity and recreation and for the protection of habitats and species.	Water quality testing results for the full range of monitoring including WWDA's	EPA and WCC	Varies; many monthly with annual reporting and interim review/updates of RBMP's	Achieving good water status for all water bodies by 2015.
W3: Achieve and maintain required water quality standards and reduce discharges of pollutants or contaminants to waters as required under the River Basin Management Plans and the associated programme of measures and action programme.	WFD reporting and updates, WCC and EPA Monitoring results. RBMP's to be revised in 2015.	WCC, EPA		Achieving good water status for all water bodies by 2015.
S1: Maximise the use of brownfield lands and the existing built environment to reduce the need to develop greenfield lands. Prioritise the re-use of structures, over demolition and replacement wherever possible	Quantity of Greenfield land developed. HLA returns and Core Strategy	WCC	HLA annual Core Strategy 6 year cycle	Prioritise brownfield development in Urban Areas.

SEO	Indicators	Responsible Authority	Frequency of Monitoring	Targets
S2: Maintain the quality of and access to assets such as aquifers, aggregates, motorways, open spaces, water courses and all other physical, social and green infrastructure.				
S3: Avoid flood risk in selecting sites for development and mitigate the effects of floods.	Properties and zoned lands affected by flooding or flood risk	WCC and OPW	Intermittent	No new properties to be effected by flooding.
Cultural Heritage and Landscape				
C1: Protect and conserve the integrity and setting of features of architectural and archaeological heritage and identify other features of merit for protection where appropriate.	Proportion of NIAH recommendations on RPS	WCC WCC	At 2 and 4 year CDP review	All ministerial recommendations to be included in RPS.
C2: Conserve and enhance valued natural and historic landscape features.	Landscape character assessment completed in accordance with the European landscape convention			All parts of the county characterised.
C3: Enhance landscape and townscape quality and minimise negative visual impacts from development.	No. of ACA's			Additional ACA Designations
C4: Protect and enhance the quality, character and features of waterways.	Lake management plans	WCC		All Major Lakes to Have Management Plans.
C5: Protect and conserve the quality, character and distinctiveness of geological and geomorphological systems, sites and features.	To have a list of geomorphological sites included in the CDP for protection.	GSI/NPWS/WCC	At 2 and 4 year CDP review	To appropriately assess all applications affecting geomorphological sites
Air and Climatic Factors				
A1: Reduce the need to travel.	CSO census data on travel time to school/college/work	WCC	Each Census	Reduction in total numbers of long

SEO	Indicators	Responsible Authority	Frequency of Monitoring	Targets
				journeys
A2: Support Implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy.			Annual Returns	As above and increase in public transport use.
A3: Encourage energy efficiency in building design and maximise the use of renewable energy forms.			SEAI Recommendations	SEAI Targets

4.3 Use of Strategic Environmental Protection Objectives

The above Environmental Protection Objectives have been used to carry out the SEA in accordance with legislation. They provide a standard against which the policies of the Development Plan are measured for their environmental sustainability. A crosschecking process has been used whereby the Draft Plan policies were proofed against the Strategic Environmental Protection Objectives such that any policies with the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts were highlighted in addition to significant positive impacts. Alternative strategic options are considered below or mitigation measures proposed to counteract any adverse environmental effects highlighted, thereby maximising the environmental sustainability of the Proposed Local Area Plan.

4.4 Methodology for Assessment and Determination of Significance of Effects

Matrices are the mechanism by which conflicts or potential conflicts between the policies of the County Development Plan and the strategic environmental objectives have been identified. These matrices are provided in Appendix to this Environmental Report. The likely significant effects of policies contained in the Plan on implementation would be likely to have on the environment were identified in this process.

The DoEHLG SEA Guidelines (Nov 2004) suggest that the assessment of likely significant effects on the environment should be carried out by the Development Plan team as a whole, preferably involving some external specialist advice. It was considered that advice would be best provided through the resources and expertise available from within the Council, Environmental Authorities and Prescribed Bodies.

The following stages were followed to ensure a robust and defensible determination of significance, particularly in difficult cases such as cumulative effect of single houses, or increased wastewater generation of particular settlements.

- Consultation with the public and relevant Authorities and gathering of baseline data was carried out to determine the significant issues facing the County and the conclusions reached were presented to the Steering Group and the EPA and approved
- A set of Strategic Environmental Objectives were prepared within the Forward Planning Section, which are in accordance with National and International policy and guidance and also reflective of the significant issues facing Westmeath. (The environmental objectives are the standard against which the policy of the Plan will be measured)
- Each Policy and Objective proposed for inclusion in the Plan was assessed against the agreed SEA objectives. This was carried out during the preparation of the Plan and changes were made as issues arose to make the Plan produced more environmentally sustainable.
- The Plan produced was formally assessed using the matrix (see Appendix). The assessment of each was assigned a symbol;
 - o compatible (+),
 - o conflicting (-),
 - o no relationship or insignificant impact (/),
 - o possibly compatible or conflicting (?)
- All major issues arising in the assessment of the policies and objectives were raised for discussion with the Steering Group to ensure that significant issues were not missed or given undue consideration
- Evaluation of significance requires consideration of various questions, which will establish the importance, or “significance”, of the predicted impact:
 1. Will the measure in the policy lead to a risk of environmental standards being breached?

2. Could it lead to failure to achieve environmental policies or targets?
3. Will it affect environmental resources, which are protected by laws or policies, e.g. Natura 2000 habitats, species, landscapes, water resources, agricultural resources and cultural sites, etc.?
4. Could it lead to impacts on environmental resources, which, although not legally protected, are important or valuable?

As a follow on from the preparation and evaluation of the previous sections of the Report, ie baseline data and trends, existing significant issues, types and scale of development likely to impact on the environment, environmental vulnerabilities, the above questions were considered in determining significance of environmental effects identified

- Where the strategic objective or policy included in the Draft Plan emanates from a higher level or parallel plan; where the nature of the impact depends on decisions that have been made or will be made at;
 - a higher policy level the symbol ↑ was used (e.g. NSS, RPG, NDP, etc.)
 - a lower policy level the symbol ↓ was used (e.g. LAP, AAP, Habitat Management Plans etc.)
 - parallel policy from other plans, the symbol → will be used. (e.g. Rural Water Programme, Waste Management Plan, County Development Board Strategy, etc.)
- The assessment matrices for the Draft Plan were presented to Development Plan team for consideration during final editing of the Plan.

5 Potentially significant Environmental impacts on implementation of the Mullingar Local Area Plan

This section sets out the response from the statutory consultees to the scoping document along with outputs from the assessment matrices considered to be of significance.

5.1 Response to scoping document from statutory consultees

5.1.1 Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht

The Department recommends that the new Plan contain policies and objectives on the following:

1. Adherence to the requirements of the Habitats Directive
2. It should be a policy of Westmeath County Council to consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service through this Department in regard to all small, medium and large developments proposed by Westmeath County Council which have any implications for conservation or the environment, particularly those close to or within proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Nature Reserves.
3. Protection of water and air quality.
4. Encouraging the enforcement of legislation- Air, Water, Noise, Waste and Litter Acts, the Planning and Development Acts including the new Planning and Development (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2011 and the European Communities (Agricultural Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 which requires planning permission and screening for EIA, is required for reclamation or damage to wetlands of 0.1 hectare or greater.
5. Protection of lake, river and canals from over abstraction of water. In particular any further planned development of the town should be subject to the outcome of the proposed detailed report on abstraction capacity limits taking account of conservation objectives of Lough Owel, as outlined on page 18 of SEA and on outcome of Natura Impact screening.
6. Protection of floodplains.
7. Reduction of light pollution and appropriate use of lighting to reduce the impact on bats
8. Protection of hedgerows, trees, earthen banks, and stone walls and wetlands.
9. Ensuring badger sett surveys are carried out before developments proceed on green field sites.
10. Consultation with NPWS of this Department in regard to any roofing works proposed for buildings including protected structures within the town. These buildings support common swift (*Apus apus*) nest sites. These can easily be lost during renovation/ demolition works.
11. Protection of riparian zones and retention of wildlife corridors through out the town
12. Retention of habitats within developments including hedgerows.
13. Use of native trees and shrubs of local provenance especially in natural and semi natural areas.
14. Enhancement of town parks and public spaces to increase biodiversity and encourage wildlife.
15. Enhancement of public buildings including County Buildings for biodiversity and incorporation of biodiversity within buildings generally.
16. Protection of the semi-natural habitats areas along the Dublin-Sligo rail line and on the old Mullingar to Athlone rail line.
17. The appropriate siting of electric power lines, overhead cables and wind turbines, in order to protect areas of high biodiversity and important bird flight lines.
18. To control the spread and appropriate management of invasive species.
19. Protection of all statutory and proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Nature Reserves and protected flora and fauna.
20. Avoidance and discouragement of the unnecessary destruction of vegetation including trimming of hedgerows during the period 1st of March to 31st of August.

21. Adherence to the actions outlined in the proposed Local Biodiversity Action Plan when completed.

5.1.2 EPA

Specific Comments to be considered

A number of key aspects to be considered are outlined below and should be taken into account in the draft Plan and SEA.

1. • Sustainable Drinking Water Abstraction from Lough Ennell and Lough Owel
2. • Flood Risk and appropriate land use zoning and development
3. • Protection / Improvement of surface and groundwater quality as relevant and appropriate
4. • Protection / Conservation of designated national / international conservation sites, including Lough Ennell (SAC/SPA/NHA) and Lough Owel (NHA, SPA/SAC/NHA's).
5. • Consistency with the objectives/policies of the Regional Planning Guidelines and County Development Plan and other key plans / programmes, including the Shannon CFRAMS.
6. • Compliance with the Shannon International River Basin Management Plan, and Flood Risk Management Guidelines.
7. • The LAP Boundary should be clearly outlined in the context of what the Plan can and cannot do, and its relationship with other on-going Plans/Programmes should be also considered.
8. • Incorporation of green infrastructure into the Plan
9. • Prioritisation of development of brownfield over greenfield sites
10. • The 'unsustainable commuting patterns' identified in the Scoping Report should be addressed in the Plan
11. • The '*Bioregions project*' referred to should be described in greater details. In the context of promoting renewable energy developments within the County and the Plan area, consideration should be given to establishing a Renewable Energy Strategy for the County. This would allow potential renewable energy developments to be assessed in an integrated and coordinated manner. The requirements of the SEA Directive and Habitats Directive in particular should be taken into account in this regard.

5.2 Water Infrastructure and Water Quality

5.2.1 Waste Water Treatment

Mullingar Wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 55,000, the 2011 measured average loading was 30,338 arising from an existing residential population connected to public sewers estimated to be in the region of 18,500. Commercial loadings in Mullingar appear to represent a relatively small proportion of the current loading relative to the residential population. Given the development aspirations contained in the current and draft Westmeath County Development Plan's and that which is set out in the proposed Local Area Plan for Mullingar it is likely that the current ratio of commercial to residential loading in the Mullingar waste water treatment plant is currently at its lowest anticipated/projected.

Notwithstanding the findings in the 2011 AER, section 6.10 of the proposed Local Area Plan states that it is considered that the additional proposed loading on implementation of the plan can be accommodated within the EPA license consent limits.

On-site waste water treatment:

Census 2011 recorded the following within the CSO Mullingar Settlement boundary;

Permanent private households by sewerage facility	
Public scheme	6,881
Individual septic tank	209
Other individual treatment	13
Other	14
No sewerage facility	2
Not stated	314
Total	7,433

There are 222 properties in Mullingar served by on-site waste water treatment. It is likely that the location/reasons for this situation and potential appropriate actions shall become clear as data becomes available in the process of registration of these systems.

5.2.2 Water Supply

Adequacy of existing supply

There is published evidence questioning the quantitative adequacy of the existing abstraction serving the Mullingar area.

Predicted future capacity and predicted future requirement

There are concerns regarding the adequacy of the existing supply, it is therefore not possible to predict that there shall be adequate supply to serve the increased population planned for in regional and county level targets.

The EIS for the Lough Ennell Water Abstraction (supply to Royal Canal) August 2011 contains the following summary of the current abstraction baseline for Lough Owel,

“The demand for water from Lough Owel is approaching 13 MGD (5 MGD each for the Canal and Westmeath County Council and 3MGD for the fish farm). In the context of a calculated safe yield from Lough Owel of 8 MGD, the abstractions now evolving are unsustainable.”

Approval has been granted for an abstraction order by An Bord Pleanála for an abstraction from Lough Ennell to supply the Royal Canal subject to a number of conditions. This along with the anticipated Dublin supply scheme may have an impact on the predicted future capacity.

The Site Synopsis for Lough Owel SAC includes the following statement:

Potential threats to the conservation interest of the lake include the increasing level of water supply to Mullingar, overfishing, eutrophication caused by local farming practices and pressure from amenity uses such as boating and fishing.

This raises concern regarding the population target and associated land use zoning objectives for Mullingar, cumulatively and in combination with other parts of the county supplied from this abstraction, having particular regard to the policies and objectives of the 2008 and/or Draft 2014 County Development Plan

A document titled The Draft River Basin Management Plans, National summary Programme of Measures dated December 2008 provides for a Supplementary Measure relating to Abstraction “*Restrict development if abstraction already at capacity*”

The conclusion of the Eastern River Basin District Project titled Abstractions- National POM/Standards study revised risk assessment methodology for surface water abstractions from Lakes January 2009, concluded that Lough Owel should continue to be monitored and reviewed in the context of environmental supporting conditions for important ecological habitats.

Arising from Variation 11 to the Westmeath County Development plan 2008-2014 (adopted 24 September 2012). the following objective was included in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014:

OCS2 It is an objective of Westmeath County Council to prepare a detailed report within 12 months of adopting proposed Variation No 11 with a particular focus on Lough Lene and Lough Owel:

- Abstraction capacity limits taking account of conservation objectives of these European Sites.
- Measures for monitoring of potential environmental issues identified.

The Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 includes the following objective in this regard:

Objective O-WT6 To prepare a detailed report within 12 months of adopting of the Plan with a particular focus on Lough Lene and Lough Owel: Abstraction capacity limits taking account of conservation objectives of these European Sites.

The Westmeath County Development plan 2014-2020 is scheduled for adoption in February 2014.

The following objective has been included in the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan

Objective O-WT6 To prepare a detailed report within 12 months of adopting of the Plan with a particular focus on abstraction limits of Lough Owel, taking account of conservation objectives of these European Sites

The ongoing development of Mullingar as envisaged in the 2014-2020 County Development Plan and Regional Planning Guidelines shall require increased abstraction. Notwithstanding the determination and conclusion of the SEA Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 this issue remains a critical element of both the environmental report for SEA and the Natura Impact Assessment for AA of the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan.¹

¹ The Environmental Report for the Draft county Development Plan determined that the population increase planned for could be accommodated through water conservation measures, the Lough Ennell abstraction scheme, the south Westmeath supply scheme, and potentially the Dublin water supply scheme.

5.2.3 Water courses/surface water quality

Details of ambient monitoring of the Receiving Water of the 2011 the Annual Environmental Report (AER) for Mullingar Waste Water Treatment Plant as set out in section 2.2.1 raise concerns regarding the assimilative capacity of the River Brosna given

Nutrient Conditions

The Total Ammonia (mg N/l) shows a significant increase from 0.15 to 0.39, which classifies the Brosna River outside the 'Good status' classification of the river water body in respect to total Ammonia. The Brosna River is not complying with the '**Good status**' category of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009) for river bodies both upstream and downstream of the discharge point however the WWTP is showing significant negative impact on the receiving waters in respect to Ammonia discharges.

In relation to the Molybdate Reactive Phosphorus (MRP) (mg P/l) the Brosna River shows a slight increase from 0.06 to 0.08mg/l, indicating that the WWTP is having a slight to negligible impact on the receiving waters in respect to Phosphorus discharges.

Where the current loadings are having a measurable impact deemed to be significantly negative, the implications of implementing County Development Plan and LAP policy for further development need to be considered in this assessment.

Notwithstanding the findings in the 2011 AER, section 6.10 of the proposed Local Area Plan states that it is considered that the additional proposed loading on implementation of the plan can be accommodated within the EPA license consent limits.

Based on the ambient monitoring results in the 2011 AER for the Mullingar WWTP further measures may be advisable in the policy and objectives contained in the Mullingar LAP relating to potential impacts on water quality in the Brosna, including consideration of CSO from St. Lomans Hospital.

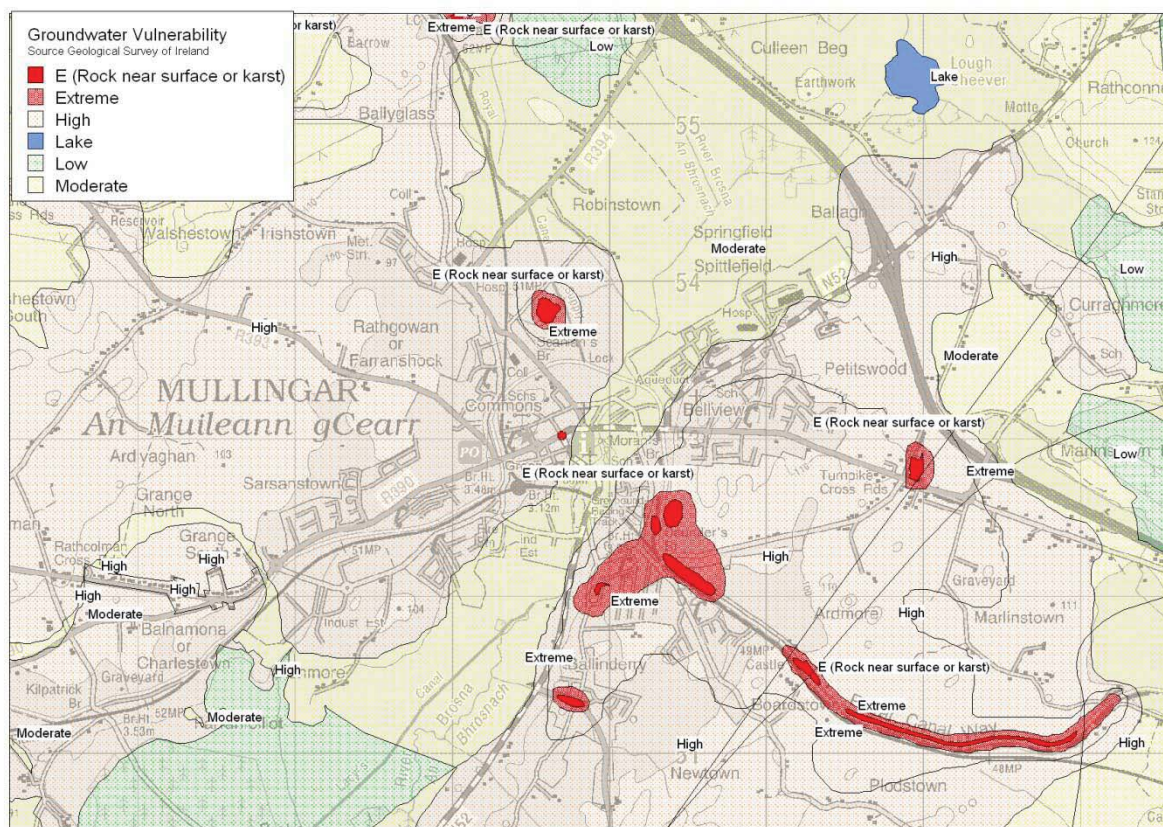
5.2.4 Groundwater

Groundwater is, at the core of the WFD. While the focus on groundwater in the past has been mainly concerned with its use for drinking water, the environmental value of groundwater, as well as its value as a water supply reservoir, has been recognised by the ecological objectives of the WFD. Groundwater plays an essential role in the hydrological cycle and is critical for maintaining river flows and surface water ecosystems such as wetlands.

Groundwater vulnerability mapping has been completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland which provides baseline data with regard to the characterisation of the various ground water bodies in Westmeath, groundwater vulnerability in the area of Mullingar is set out below in Map 4.1.4.

It can be determined easily from the map based data that groundwater in the Brosna flood plain (north and south) is considered to be of moderate vulnerability with the east and west of the town being generally classified as high groundwater vulnerability with smaller areas of extreme and extreme Karst.

Unserviced sites zoned for residential development such as those proposed on the Castlepollard road pose a particular problem for Groundwater given the unsuitability of ground conditions for on-site waste water treatment. (See SEA for Variation no.3 of the 2008-2014 County Plan)



Map 4.1.4 Groundwater Vulnerability

5.2.5 WFD River Basin District

The River Basin Management Plans set out a range of dates by which all water bodies must reach “Good Status”. The implementation of spatial policy creates the potential for impact on the achievement of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plans. Consideration must be given to Article 4.7 of the Water Framework Directive in this regard which makes provision for circumstances where failure to achieve certain objectives of the Water Framework Directive are permitted.

The Interim Report required under section 15(3) of the WFD is expected to provide the data required with regard to the programme of measures and implementation.

The role of the Planning Authority is highlighted in linking water services, transport and environmental sections of the Local Authority in the provision of the Supporting Key Actions, for the achievement of the Basic Measures of RBMP's. Further detail is set out in section 5.1 of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 on the role of development planning in the achievement of the programme of measures for the Shannon IRBD.

5.2.6 Flooding

Issues with flooding are addressed in the Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 in appendix 4 of the pLAP.

The SFRA proposes improvement of the drainage of a number of locations of wetland for development purposes, in effect transferring the attenuation from a natural system to an engineered solution, the area proposed for additional drainage includes an area identified in the soil survey conducted at the drafting of the Robinstown Local area Plan as being of fen peat.

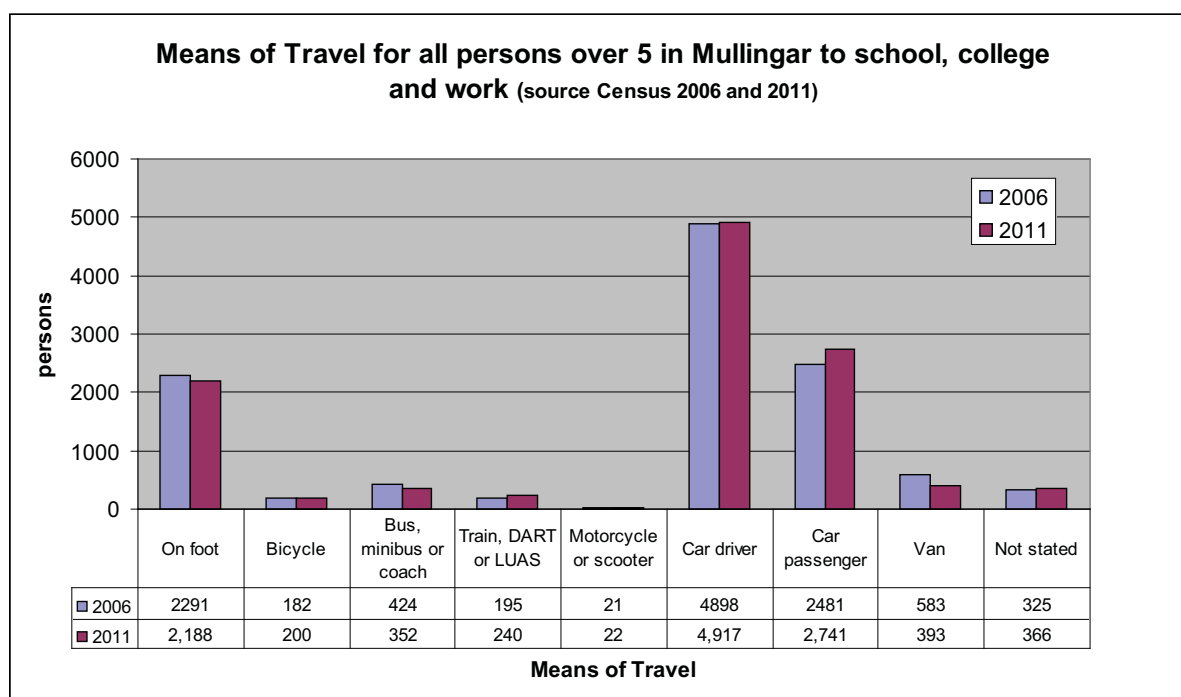
The fundamental principle in The Planning System and Flood Risk Management is the avoidance of risk, where this is not possible and where the proposed uses are of high vulnerability a procedure is prescribed.

5.3 Transport

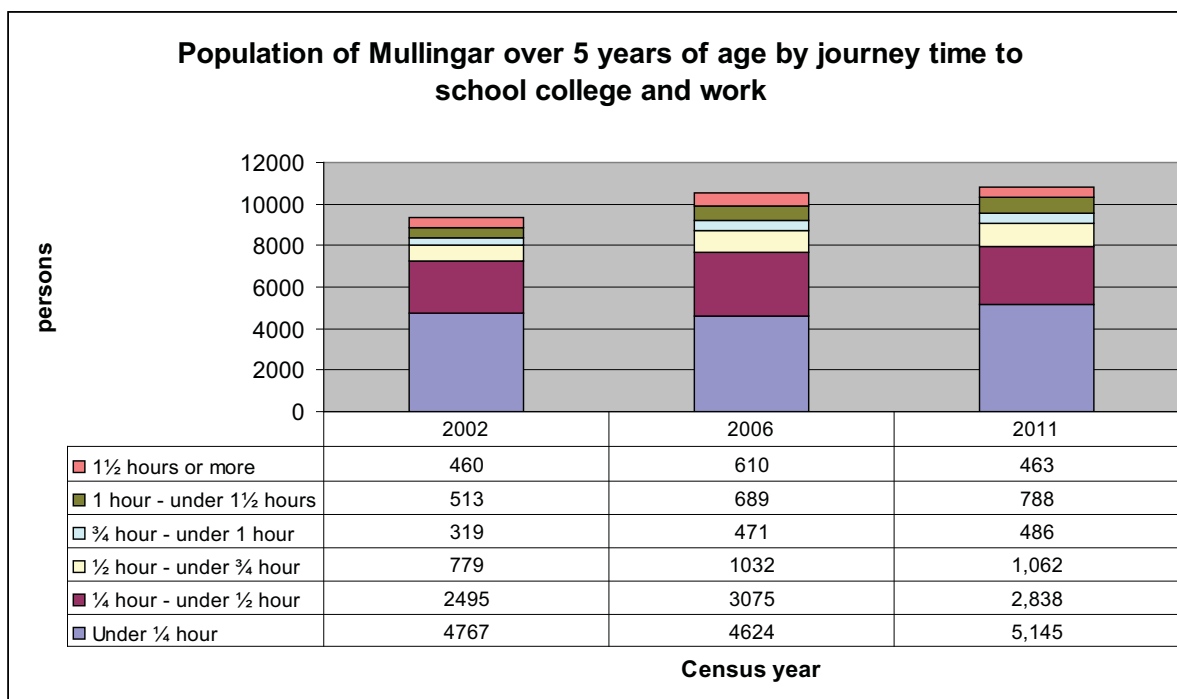
5.3.1 Commuting patterns

Sustainable transport proposals in Mullingar have received considerable attention in recent years with proposals for a range of initiatives. Mullingar lends itself to sustainable commuting patterns within the town due to its high population density of 1758 person per square kilometre (higher than Galway, Limerick or Cork) combined with the compact nature of services and facilities within the town.

The proportion of the population recorded in Census 2011 undertaking significant commutes each day has fallen significantly as demonstrated in graph no. 4.2.2. The 33% increase in persons travelling in excess of 90 mins to work school and college between 2002 and 2006 was followed by a decrease of 24% between 2006 and 2011, it is likely that this fall in long distance commuting will continue with the prevailing national economic situation and increasing transportation costs.



Graph 4.2.1



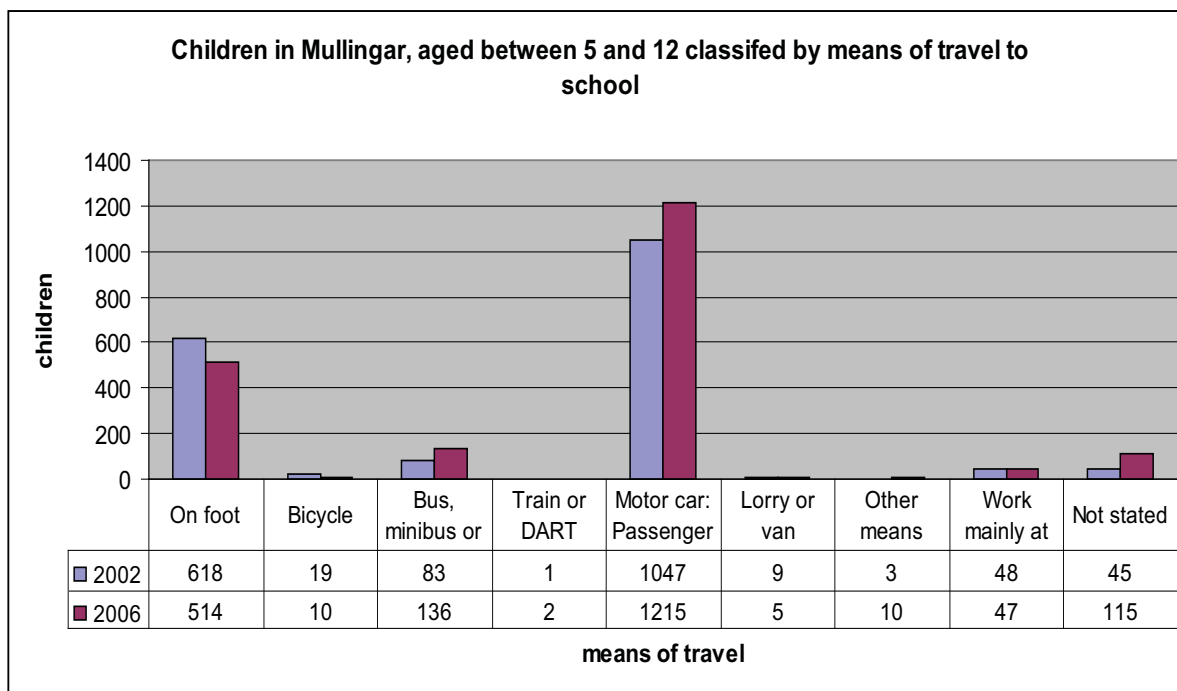
Graph 4.2.2

5.3.2 Transport and education

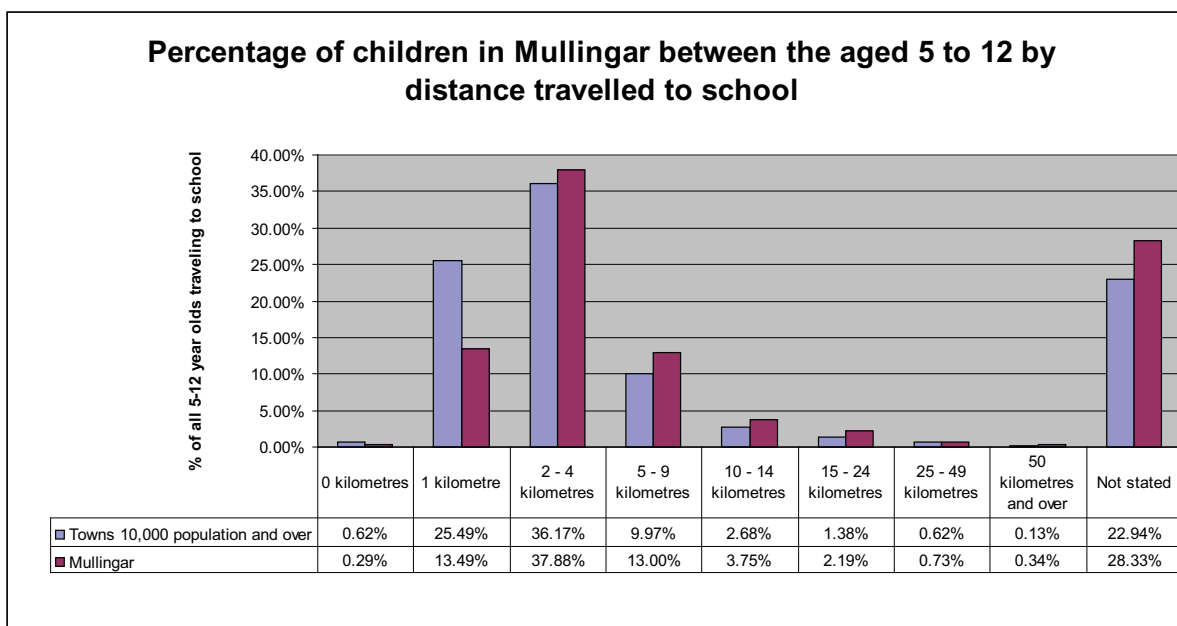
A significant environmental issue which has arisen in the consideration of education provision in Mullingar is the growth in demand for Primary school places in urban Mullingar and the corresponding growth of supply of Primary school places in the rural hinterland of Mullingar.

In the period of 2002 to 2006 the number of 5 to 12 year old children in Mullingar increased by 180 and between 2006 and 2011 a further increase of 269. The number of Primary school children enrolled in schools in the period 2005/2006 to 2011/2012 in urban Mullingar increased by 127.

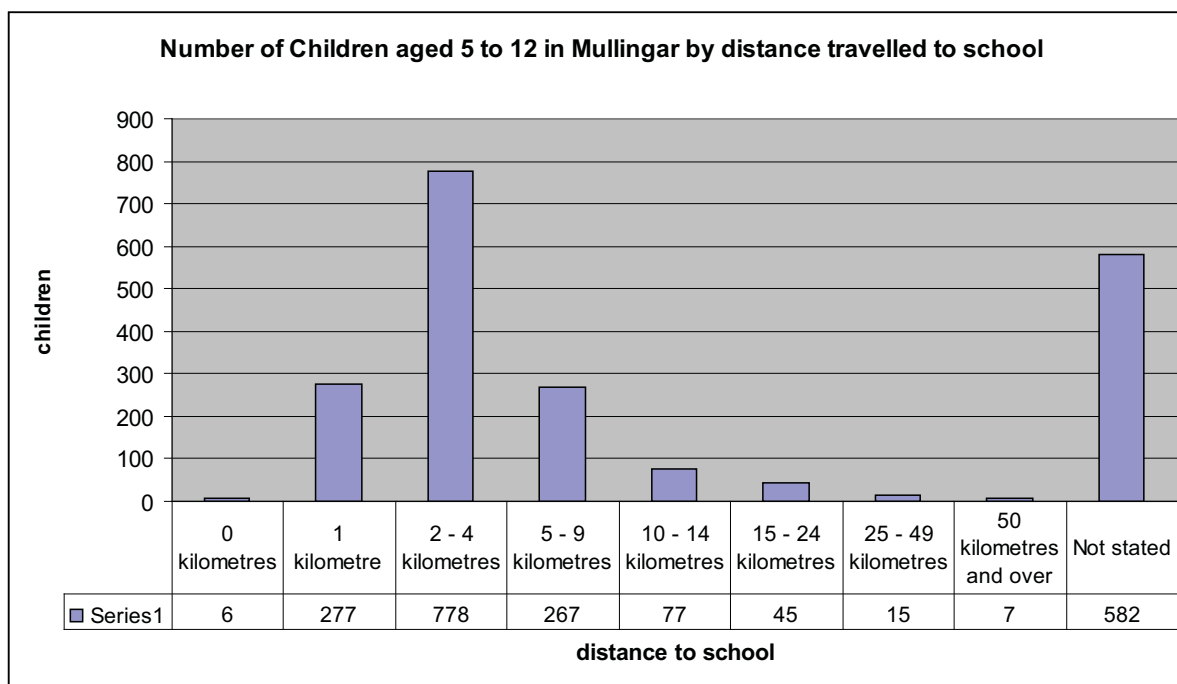
Specific data regarding transport is available for the Primary school age groups in Census 2002 and 2006 (graph 4.2.3), however this information has not been made available from Census 2011 results to date. Taking this data gap into account and order to contextualise available data for Mullingar, combined data for all settlements in Ireland with a population over 10,000 have been utilised in the data presented in graph 4.2.4 below to highlight any deviation in Mullingar from the national averages. Data from 2002 and 2006 census are included to demonstrate the historic trend with regard means of transport.



Graph 4.2.3

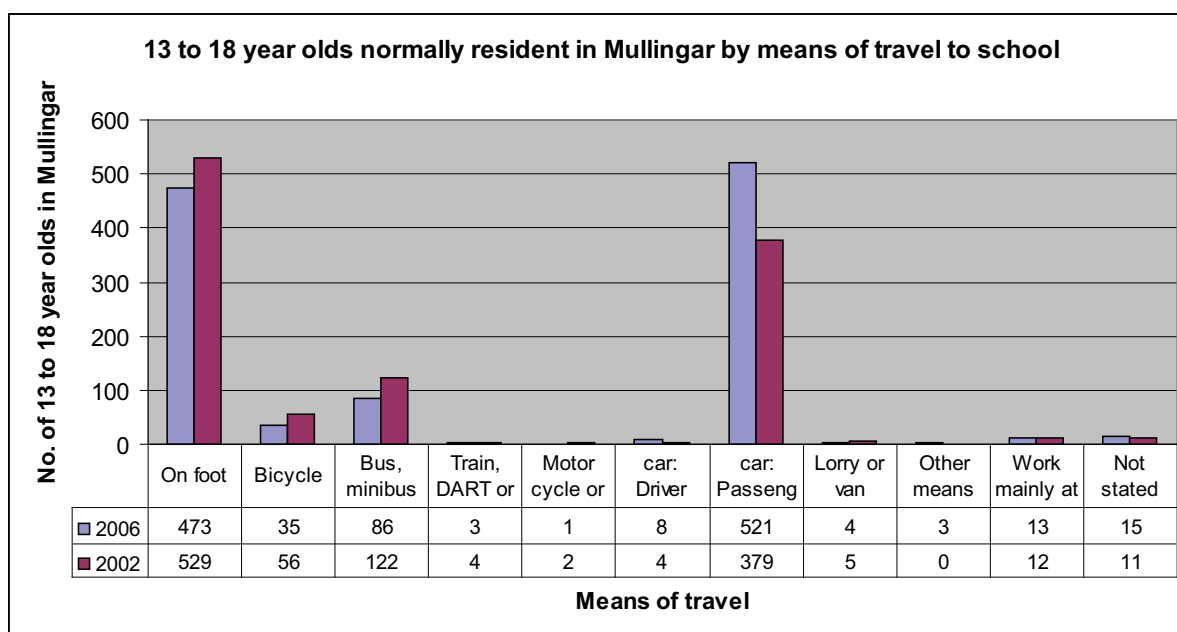


Graph 4.2.4



Graph 4.2.5

Concerning trends are evident in graph no. 4.2.6 below in comparing 2002 and 2006 census data on means of travel for second level students in Mullingar with a significant increase in the incidence of car use and decreased incidence of walking and cycling to school.



Graph 4.2.6

There are little or no urban residential areas in Mullingar that are in excess of 4km from multiple Primary and Secondary schools.

The projections of additional demand arising due to natural increase in Mullingar as set out in graph 2.1 above confirm that spatial issues surrounding the provision of Primary and Secondary school

places in Mullingar will have significant knock on effects on sustainable transportation during the life time of this proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan.

Transport, including analysis of spatial aspects of local and wider projected demand should form an integral part of the school site selection process. The level of analysis or the evidence base for the selection of the 2 school sites is unclear from the proposed Local Area Plan in its current form.

5.4 Built Environment

The maintenance of the relatively high population density of Mullingar relative to comparable towns will continue to be a challenge for the proper planning and sustainable development of Mullingar.

The successful application of an evaluation framework for the selection of appropriate locations for future residential and retail development in particular including the evaluation considerations set out in Box 5.2 in section 5.3 of the National Spatial Strategy are likely to be a significant environmental issue in the drafting of the proposed Local Area Plan.

The primary issue to be dealt with in the Mullingar Local Area Plan regarding the Built Heritage of the town is likely to be the future use of St. Lomans Hospital and the former Army Barracks. The ongoing issue of erosion of character in the town through minor works to existing historic building stock is likely to be ongoing.

The redevelopment of brownfield sites close to and within the Town Centre may pose a threat to the character of existing fabric and its setting

5.5 Amenity

There are a number of policies and objectives in the proposed Local Area Plan to maximise the recreation and amenity functions particularly adjacent to water courses there are significant biodiversity assets associated with these water courses and policy and objectives of the plan have been considered and amended where necessary in undertaking the assessment against the Strategic Environmental Objectives

5.6 Biodiversity

5.6.1 Water abstraction impacts on biodiversity

See section 5.2. above.

5.6.2 Wastewater treatment impacts on biodiversity

See section 5.2. above

5.6.3 Recreation and amenity impacts on biodiversity

There are a number of locations within the pLAP boundary which are of considerable biodiversity value including in Robinstown and Mullingar South, these have been zoned for either Open Space or Sport recreational. The zoning objectives associated with Open Space and Sports and recreation would on implementation create a potential conflict with the Strategic Environmental Objectives of the SEA.

5.6.4 Water Courses/Surface water impacts on biodiversity

The protection of natural corridors in the form of the Brosna, other natural water courses, the Royal Canal, the feeder canal, Laceys canal and the railway corridor, along with the wetland areas to the North and South of the town within the Brosna flood plain are likely to be the most significant environmental issues arising with regard to Biodiversity in the LAP. The consideration of these areas outside of the Natura 2000 network would be in accordance with Art. 10 of the Habitats Directive.

5.6.5 Invasive species impacts on biodiversity

There are a number of locations within the town boundary where invasive species are well established and expanding. The Local Area Plan contains an objective in relation to control of invasive species.

5.7 Landscape

The position of Mullingar within its high quality landscape setting with particular reference to the major and minor lakes, making and enhancing those connections poses particular challenges for the Local Area Plan.

5.8 Air/Climate

The achievement of sustainable development in Mullingar with integrated residential, employment and social development within the LAP minimising the need to travel is a significant environmental issue which would work towards the reduction of Air and Climate impacts.

5.9 Tourism

Increased recreational use of the lakes watercourses and wetland areas/flood plains around Mullingar has potential significant environmental impacts.

5.10 Material Assets

Material Assets for the purposes of the SEA Environmental Report include Water Resources, both the natural surface water resources and assimilative capacity resources, combined with the engineering infrastructure which represents a significant material asset to be protected in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development. Other Material Assets of importance include transport infrastructure, public land and buildings, and zoned serviced lands. The protection of these Material Assets and the economic use of past and future public investment are critical to the proper planning and sustainable development of Mullingar with reservations in each for future employment generation an important aspect.

5.11 Interactions between the above

The interactions of each of these potentially significant environmental impacts on implementation of the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan are dominated by implications of water supply and waste water disposal on the proposed Plan.

6 Alternative policies and reason for selected option

6.1 Alternative 1 continuation of historical development trends

On the basis of the growth between 2002 and 2011 and the continuation of historical trends an increase in population from 2011 to 2020 would lead to a projected population of 25,932 (lower than the target population). This would be facilitated by new medium to low density in housing estates extending to the east and west of the town in discrete, largely unconnected groups, with housing constructed in the absence of any social, educational or employment infrastructure.

This is a development led model allowing all physical and social services to cater for the increasing demand to arise following the demand being created.

6.2 Alternative 2 A Settlement Plan Having Regard to social and employment infrastructure and Environmental Carrying Capacity at Development Control Level. (development led)

In this scenario policy facilitates a development led system with consideration of environmental carrying capacity opportunities and constraints, and the provision of necessary supporting physical and social infrastructure at development control stage.

In this scenario the analysis of existing and future environmental conditions and required social infrastructure are less onerous at policy formulation than that set out in a Plan led system.

It is possible in this scenario that development potential is indicated in the Plan in locations where none may exist and that residential development is facilitated without the benefit of planned, coordinated, social and physical infrastructure.

In this scenario it is not possible to consider cumulative, in combination and wider impacts of development at a town, county or regional scale it is also unlikely that the maximum return can be gained from past and future investment of public money. This scenario is therefore contrary to the intention and spirit of the SEA Directive and process and the proper planning and the development of the area.

6.3 Alternative 3 - A Plan Strategy Designed With Regard to Environmental Carrying Capacity and planned social and employment infrastructural provision. (Plan led)

In this scenario the environmental carrying capacity is a basic determinant in drafting of policy regarding the quantum and distribution of policy\objectives\intentions providing for development in Mullingar.

The available capacity regarding water resources were identified in the course of conducting the SEA as the most critical of the environmental issues in Mullingar.

Water supply baselines with regard to supply and demand would be required along with projected demand arising from the policy and objectives of the plan.

The limits of the existing resources, natural and infrastructural being utilised for water supply and waste water treatment, should be established, the development potential of existing and new resources estimated and the potential for demand to exceed safe supply in various development and investment scenarios considered.

These aspects are likely to be assembled in the preparation of a Water Services Strategic Plan as set out in S. 36 of the Water Services Act 2007.

This scenario settlement strategy is consistent with the policy framework for Land Use Zoning set out in table 4.4 in section 4.5 of the Midland Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2020. Policy prioritises planned expansion of the Gateway towns subject to the feasibility of waste water treatment.

There is a facility provided for in Article 4.7 of the Water Framework Directive to allow for a member state not to be in breach of the directive where it is as a result of new sustainable human development activities subject meeting conditions set out in subsection a to d of the that article.

6.4 Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Strategy

The proposed Mulligan Local Area plan was drafted with combining elements of Alternative 2 and 3 which was selected primarily with regard to availability of data and resources to the preparation of the Plan.

7 Summary of how input from consultees was taken into account

Submissions in response to the scoping documents were received from the DAHG and the EPA on 20th and 11th of March respectively. These were considered in the drafting of the proposed Local Area Plan.

Issues raised in Submissions are set out in section 4.1 of this report.

7.1 Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Point 1: See AA documentation

Point 2: A policy for Westmeath County Council to consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service as set out in point 2 of the submission has not been located in the proposed LAP

Point 3: Policy and Objectives are contained in the Draft relating protection against water and air pollution.

Point 4: No policy has been located encouraging enforcement of the legislation listed.

Point 5: Policy has been contained in the pLAP in this regard

Pont 6: Should be dealt with in SFRA this section can be finalised on receipt

Point 7: Policy has been contained in the pLAP in this regard

Point 8: Policy has been contained in the pLAP in this regard however there appears to be conflicting policies particularly in Chapter 8.

Point 9: No policy contained in pLAP in this regard.

Point 10: No policy contained in pLAP in this regard

Point 11: An arbitrary buffer has been zoned as open space on a number of the larger water courses these do not appear to be comprehensive it is unclear as to rationale for the extent of the buffer.

Point 12: Policy has been included seeking to retain habitats including hedgerows

Point 13: The Plan contains a range of policies and objectives in relation to biodiversity, including the preparation of a Local Biodiversity Plan.

Point 14: This point has been taken into account in the pLAP

Point 15: The Plan contains a range of policies and objectives in relation to biodiversity, including the preparation of a Local Biodiversity Plan.

Point 16: The Plan contains a range of policies and objectives in relation to biodiversity, including the preparation of a Local Biodiversity Plan.

Point 17: This point is not reflected in the pLAP

Point 18: This point is reflected in the pLAP

Point 19: This point has been taken account of in drafting the pLAP

Point 20: This point has been taken account of in drafting the pLAP

Point 21: The Plan contains a range of policies and objectives in relation to biodiversity, including the preparation of a Local Biodiversity Plan.

EPA

Point 1: can be addressed on receipt of the relevant section of the pLAP.

Point 2: can be addressed on receipt of the relevant section of the pLAP

Point 3: No particular issue identified in the LAP area, objective to connect waste water to municipal system where possible in the Plan.

Point 4: This point has been taken account of in drafting the pLAP

Point 5: Issues are identified and discussed elsewhere in this Environmental Report

Point 6: Can be addressed on receipt of the relevant section of the pLAP

Point 7: This point has been taken account of in drafting the pLAP

Point 8: A section on green infrastructure has been included in Chapter 5 Social infrastructure

Point 9: This point has been taken account of in drafting the pLAP

Point 11: This point is not reflected in the pLAP

8 Monitoring

The 2 year review of the County Development Plan under Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended shall be the main point of monitoring progress on implementation of the plan.

Further elements of monitoring are set out in section 4.2 of this report.

8.1 Progress since Adoption of 2008-2014 Westmeath County Development Plan and Accompanying SEA Environmental Report.

The waste water collection and treatment system in Mullingar has been completed resulting in significant increase in treatment capacity and resultant qualitative improvements in the receiving waters.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Amendments which have been made to the pLAP to prevent, reduce or offset conflicts with SEO's

9.1.1 Waste Water Treatment

Following concerns being raised arising from the published 2011 AER data the text of the LAP was amended to provide additional confidence that the capacity for extra loading required to implement the proposed LAP was available without causing an adverse impact on water quality.

9.1.2 Water supply capacity

Objective O-WT6 was included in the pLAP following concerns raised in the course of conducting the SEA in an effort to address the concerns set out elsewhere in this report:

Objective O-WT6 To prepare a detailed Report within 12 months of adopting of the Plan with a particular focus on abstraction limits of Lough Owel, taking account of conservation objectives of these European Sites

If this Objective is implemented it has the potential to address some of the information deficit, and a move towards understanding Lough Owel and its habitats of conservation interest.

9.1.3 Amenity and Recreation/Tourism.

A number of policies and objectives seeking to create and enhance recreational access to the canal network, rivers, lakes and other areas of local biodiversity value have been amended following assessment against the strategic environmental objectives in the SEA Matrices to ensure account is taken of biodiversity assets.

9.1.4 Specific amendments

Each of the Policies and Objectives which have been amended is set out in the Matrices.

9.2 Further recommendations arising from SEA for measures to prevent, reduce or offset conflicts with SEO's

A range of issues were highlighted at scoping stage by the EPA and NPWS a number of which remain relevant to the proposed LAP as assessed. Reference should be had to section 4.1 above for details and Section 7 for a summary of how these were taken into consideration or otherwise.

9.2.1 Water supply capacity

If Objective O-WT6 of the Proposed Local Area Plan for Mullingar is implemented it has the potential to address some of the information deficit, and a move towards understanding Lough Owel, its habitats of conservation interest and their protection, however in the interest of consistency the recommendation of the SEA ER for proposed Variations 11 and 12 of the 2008 County Development Plan and those of the Draft County Development Plan is recommended for inclusion in the Proposed Local Area Plan for Mullingar in this regard as follows:

In the consideration of proposals with a public water supply requirement Westmeath County Council shall, in determinations prescribed under S. 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011 (as may be amended) take fully into account the potential for increased abstraction to impact on Lough Owel European Sites and capacity limits set out in the report due for completion in September 2013 arising from adoption of Variation No. 11 to the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014.

9.2.2 Flooding

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been produced for Mullingar Local Area Plan, and contains recommendations for restricting the zoning in a number of locations.

The SFRA also proposes to improve drainage and effectively substitute natural attenuation provided by existing wetland areas for engineered solutions with attenuation in alternative locations. In proposing/justifying the drainage of a number of areas of wetlands the justification test prescribed by the Flood risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities has not been directly followed.

Areas of identified flood risk should be excluded from the zoning objectives in the absence of a justification test having been carried out.

Specific provision should be made in the Local Area Plan for attenuation in accordance with the Westmeath County Council Surface Water Management Policy (part 1) Flood Risk Assessment Commissioned by Westmeath County Council in June 2008.

Specific reference should be made to the conveyance capacity of the culvert under the canal supply in the justification for the area subject to the General Urban District Zoning.

9.2.3 Invasive Species

A policy should be drafted and included in the proposed LAP regarding invasive spp. as requested in the pre-draft submission/scoping response from NPWS see section 4.1 and section 6. With particular reference to the chronic infestation on the banks of the river Brosna immediately downstream of the Canal Culvert, in the railway corridor adjacent to County Buildings and any other identified locations.

9.2.4 Material Assets

The available infrastructural and environmental carrying capacity should be quantified, opportunities and constraints identified and allocations made to facilitate the sustainable development of Mullingar ensuring maximum return on past and future capital expenditure.

9.2.5 Proposed Land Use zoning objectives

The prescriptive nature of road layouts and open space zonings which do not reflect the existing landscape character or field patterns particularly in the Ardmore Marlinstown, Mullingar South and Robinstown framework plans may have the effect of constraining design of future development, making it difficult to retain and incorporate existing trees, hedgerows, water courses and topographical features of the landscape. The potential for the land use zoning objectives of the plan to contribute to damage to local biodiversity assets would be reduced by their removal.

The general Urban District zoning presents a particular difficulty with regard to flood risk, these lands with an identified flood risk should be de-zoned or a justification test should be undertaken with regard to the zoning of this land.

There are parcels of Enterprise and Employment land which are affected by an identified flood risk, these locations should be de-zoned or a justification test should be undertaken for them.

In each location where it is the intention to protect biodiversity through the use of an open space zoning the zoning should be altered to a zoning consistent with G3 as set out in section 3 of the Department of Environment Community and Local Government, Guidance for Local Authorities on Data Upload 30 November 2012 as opposed to the general Open Space zoning as described in chapter 10 of the proposed Local Area Plan.

9.3 Concluding statement

A number of potentially significant environmental issues were identified at the outset of drafting the Proposed Local Area Plan for Mullingar and were set out in the SEA Scoping Documents and public consultation material, further issues have been identified in the course of conducting the detailed assessment of the policies and objectives contained by means of matrices.

The majority of the identified issues have been addressed by means of amendment or omission of policy or objectives where conflicts were identified. All of the potential impacts relevant to SEA of the proposed Local Area Plan for Mullingar are clearly set out in this Environmental Report facilitating the fundamental objective of SEA, being informed consent by decision makers.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment
Addendum
to the
Environmental Report
of the**

Proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020

Following proposed Amendments



1 Introduction to and purpose of the Addendum

The proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan was subjected to an assessment of the potential significant environmental effects on implementation, the output of this assessment was the Environmental Report (ER) which was put on public display.

This report, an Addendum to the Environmental Report was prepared in October 2013 for the purpose of assessing Material Amendments proposed to the proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 in the Managers Report under Section 20(3)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (PDA) and Amendments proposed by resolution of the members under section 20(3)(e) of the PDA at meetings of Westmeath County Council in September 2013.

It is intended that this addendum shall not repeat or revisit any of the baseline and significant environmental issues sections of the parent Report.

It is intended that this Addendum shall assess each of the proposed Amendments against the Strategic Environmental Objectives in summary form followed by any necessary cross referencing to the Draft County Development Plan (dCDP) Environmental Report followed by recommendations/options to the Development Plan team as to how to proceed in keeping with the objectives of the Strategic Environmental Objectives and the SEA process.

2 Appropriate Assessment

It is intended that this SEA addendum shall act in a limited extent as a further Appropriate Assessment screening, some comment may be made within this SEA addendum regarding Appropriate Assessment, however consideration of AA and the proposed Material Amendments is presented under separate cover.

3 Proposed Material Amendments

3.1 Chapter 1

3.1.1 Proposed Material Amendment 1a

Managers Amendment:

1. The Plan will include a Section addressing the need to provide a Framework for monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the achievement of objectives in the LAP.

Comment:

The Material changes to Chapter 1 are considered to represent aspirational policy as described in the Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report as follows:

Due to the diverse nature of Plan Policy the Policies and objectives of the Plan can be grouped into two broad sub categories:

- *those of a more strategic nature which relate to political aspirations or general intentions, and*
- *policies and objectives which are specific statements to carry out a specific plan, project or programme to follow a particular course of action.*

Consideration given to the political aspirational type of policies has been in many instances of a different character to that given to those of a more specific nature.

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental report recommendations required

3.2 Chapter 2

3.2.1 Proposed Material Amendment 2a

Manager's Amendment:

1. A Table will be inserted in Chapter 2 of the Plan indicating that the population projections, housing and housing lands allocation for Mullingar aligns with those of the Core Strategy for County Westmeath.

Comment:

This Amendment is not considered to have a potentially significant environmental effect and does not require further assessment.

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

3.2.2 Proposed Material Amendment 2b

Manager's Amendment:

1. A new policy will be inserted in Section 2.20 (P-VUH3) in the plan as follows:
"To prioritise and promote the occupation of vacant residential units within the town and to take account of this available housing supply in the overall assessment of future housing need"

Comment:

As for section 3.1.1.

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

3.3 Chapter 3

3.3.1 Proposed Material Amendment 3a

Manager's Amendment:

1. Objective O-EC1 provides for the preparation of a Master Plan for the Innovation Technology Zone in Robinstown. This objective shall be supplemented as follows:
"To require a Strategic Level Traffic and Transport Assessment to be carried out to assess an appropriate junction and access strategy for the lands, having regard to the proximity of the lands to the National Road Mainline and the junction with the R394"

O-EC1 revised in this regard

The revised Objective appears in the amended draft of the proposed is as follows:

O-EC1 To promote and facilitate the development of an Innovation Technology Zone at Robinstown. This zone shall be subject to a detailed master plan to be agreed by the Planning Authority and shall include: a high quality innovate design, permeable layouts and comprehensive landscaping scheme. The overall development shall integrate well with the existing and natural built form and deliver a high quality built environment which is attractive to customers, employees and other users of the built environment. The master plan shall have regard to:

- *Visual Impact*
- *Landscape and habitat considerations*
- *Building Design and Sustainability*
- *Sustainable Transport including pedestrian and cycle linkages*
- *Ancillary uses such as community, recreational etc*

The Master Plan shall be subject to a Strategic Level Traffic and Transport Assessment, which shall assess an appropriate junction and access strategy for the lands, having regard to the proximity of the lands to the National Road Mainline and the junction with the R394. In addition, the Masterplan shall be subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Comment:

In assessment against the Strategic Environmental Objectives it was concluded that the Masterplan would be carried out after the LAP was adopted and that it would be subject to both SEA and AA and as such no further comment was made.

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental report recommendations are proposed by this addendum.

**3.3.2 Proposed Material Amendment 3b
Manager's Amendment.**

1. Details of zoned serviced land for Enterprise and Employment, developed, undeveloped, vacant and unoccupied will be provided.

Zoning (Ha)	Enterprise & Employment Developed	Enterprise & Employment Undeveloped	Retail Warehousing Developed
Mullingar	78.502	95.774	5.755

Reference to the above included in Section 3.4.1 and Section 3.17

Comment:

The Amendments to the text of these sections do not appear to have any implications for SEA.

Recommendation:

No Amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

**3.3.3 Proposed Material Amendment 3c
Manager's Amendment.**

The designation of the Mullingar Shopping Centre as a Neighbourhood Centre, as prescribed in the Westmeath Retail Strategy shall be reiterated in the Plan.

The Amendments to the text of these sections do not appear to have any implications for SEA.

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

3.4 Chapter 6**3.4.1 Proposed Material Amendment 6a
Manager's Amendment.**

1. DoECLG submission Development scenarios are assessed in the SEA and should be referred to in the Plan in order to explain the selected combination of a development led and a Plan led development strategy (options 1 and 2) for the town, the environmental carrying capacity having being noted in the SEA as the basis for the decision. Within the chapter on Infrastructure, the Council is advised to refer to the SEA and NIR in which the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts attributable to services are considered in order to provide clearer context as regards any possible scope for potential constraints to future development on zoned lands particularly in relation to the augmentation of the potable water supply for the town.

References will be included in Chapter 6 in relation to the adopted Development Strategy and the impact of environmental constraints identified in the SEA and NIR. There is a potential constraint to future development of zoned lands, particularly in relation to the augmentation of the potable water supply for the town is referred to Section above.

Comment:

The proposed amendments made to the proposed Plan arising from the above statements, are considered to be aspirational in nature.

Recommendation:

No Amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

3.5 Chapter 7

**3.5.1 Proposed Material Amendment 7a
Managers Amendment**

Reference to the Táin Trail will be made in the Plan in terms of its important cultural and heritage value.

Comment:

No such amendment has been made to the amended Draft of the Proposed Local Area Plan.

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

3.6 Chapter 8

**3.6.1 Proposed Material Amendment 8a
Managers Amendment:**

A statement shall be included in Section 8.13.13 and 8.13.15 in relation to the requirement for any significant new development application to be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment, including assessment of impacts on the N52 and the existing roundabout serving the Innovation Technology Zone.

Comment:

This Amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan has no consequences for the SEA

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental Report recommendations are proposed by this addendum.

**3.6.2 Proposed Material Amendment 8b
Managers Amendment:**

An objective shall be inserted in Section 8.13.13 and 8.13.15 of the Ardmore Marlinstown Framework Plan and Section 8.20 of the Robinstown Framework Plan as follows:

“To ensure that future applications resulting in the intensification of development at the N52/N4 junction should be subject to Traffic and Transport Assessment, to ensure that the strategic function of the National Road Network in the area is not compromised by local development pressures”.

Comment:

This amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan has no consequences for the SEA

Recommendation:

No amendment to the Proposed Local Area Plan Environmental report recommendations are proposed by this Addendum.

3.7 Amendments to Land use zoning maps

3.7.1 Proposed Land use Zoning Amendment a

Managers Amendment:

Change zoning of Penn site from Commercial to Education and Institutional (MLAP12)

Comment:

This Amendment has removed the open space zoning which formed part of a buffer to the riparian zone of the River Brosna and part of the proposed Mullingar Greenway. This gives rise to a conflict with strategic Environmental Objectives, B1, W2, S2, possibly S3, C3, and C4.

Recommendation:

Replace the Open Space zoning as shown in the Proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan prior to this proposed amendment.

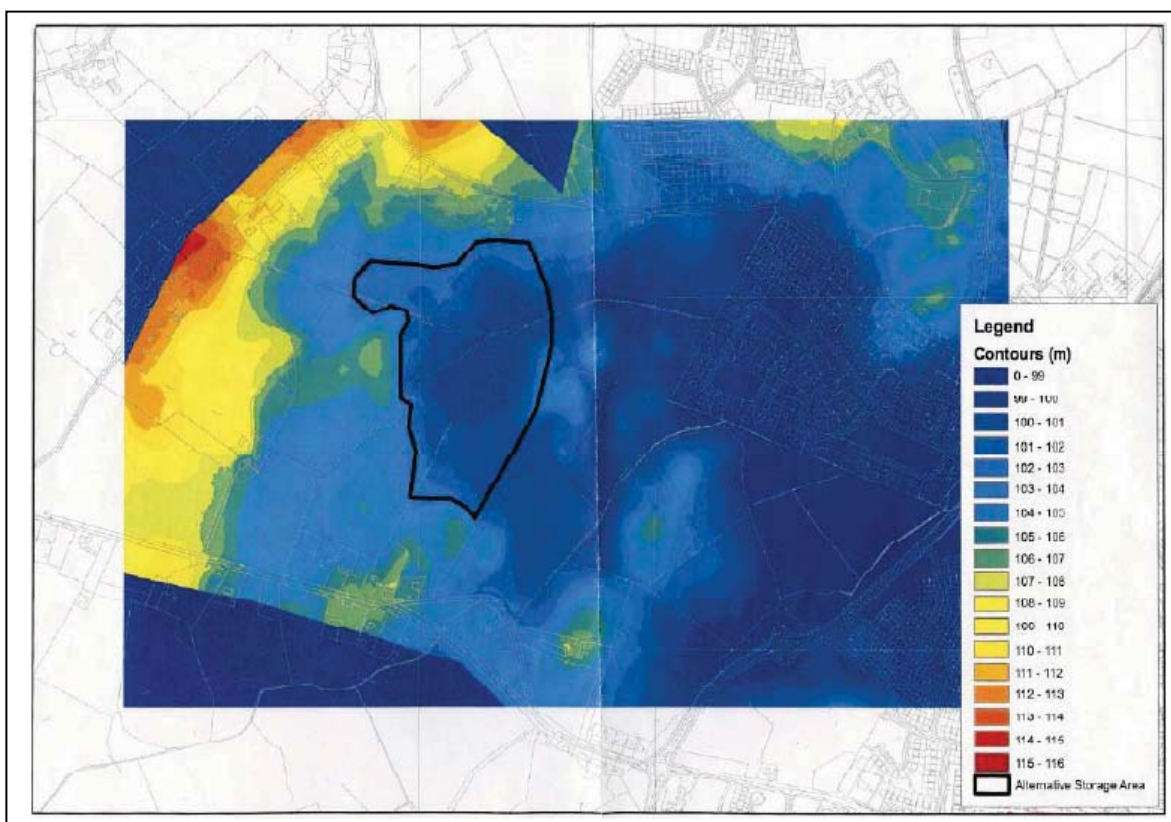
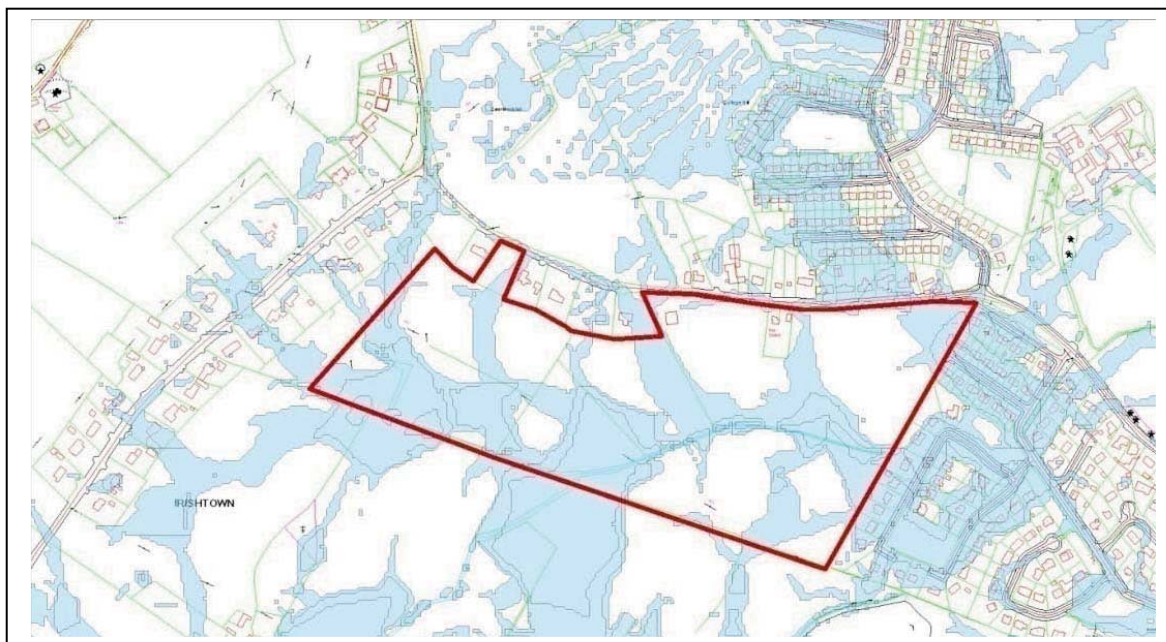
3.7.2 Proposed Land use Zoning Amendment a

Members Amendment:

Submission MLAP5 and MLAP7, Cllr Cooney proposed that lands identified in these submissions are zoned for Residential development. (Map submitted)

Comment:

The subject site forms a critical part of the Westmeath County Council Surface Water Management policy document and is of importance in considering potential flooding of the Brookfield estate, Ashfield estate and the hospital, part of the subject lands are proposed as one of 2 possible attenuation areas, which combined with other measures were proposed to protect the hospital from flooding in future extreme storm events. The Council has identified the second site adjacent to the C-Link as attenuation with the added advantage that the area can be landscaped as a Park. However, until drainage works have been undertaken, there is a flood risk associated with the development of these lands.



Extract from Westmeath County Council Surface Water Management policy document

Recommendation:

Do not zone the subject land.

3.7.3 Proposed Land use Zoning Amendment b

Members Amendment:

- MLAP9 and MLAP14, Cllr Davitt proposed that the zoning on the site of the Former Westmeath Motors is changed from Commercial to Mixed Use/Town Centre

Comment:

No requirement for further consideration in SEA or AA.

Recommendation:

None.

3.7.4 Proposed Land use Zoning Amendment c

Members Amendment:

MLAP1, and in particular the site to the rear of Tesco's, Cllr Dollard requested that half of the site is zoned for OPD's and the remainder of the site for Open Space. Map provided

Comment:

The 1000year return flood as calculated by ARUP in preparation of the Westmeath County Council Surface Water Management policy affects the subject site.

Recommendation:

Option 1:

A justification test is required prior to the zoning of the subject lands in accordance with "The Planning system and Flood Risk Management" Guidelines for Planning Authorities November 2009 issued under section 28 of the planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

Option 2:

Do not zone the subject land for vulnerable uses.

3.7.5 Proposed Land use Zoning Amendment d

Members Amendment:

Submission MLAP13, Cllr Penrose proposed that the site be zoned for Retail Warehousing.

Comment:

No further consideration by SEA or AA necessary.

Recommendation:

None

3.7.6 Proposed Land use Zoning Amendment e

Members Amendment:

Zoning change from residential to Open Space to the open space between Lynn Avenue and Lynnderry Court.

Comment:

A small portion of this site is affected by an identified risk of Pluvial flooding, however this is not considered to be of significance in the context of the SEA process particularly as the proposal is for an open space zoning. No further consideration required from SEA or AA.

Recommendation:

None.

4 How the input of the Environmental Authorities has been incorporated into the current stage of the LAP review.**4.1 EPA submission**

The Proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan and Environmental Report were referred to the EPA.

4.2 NPWS submission

The Proposed Mullingar Local Area Plan and Environmental Report were not referred to NPWS therefore no response was received.

