

VARIATION NO. 1 TO THE ROSCOMMON  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020  
& AREA PLANS OF CORTOBER, HODSON  
BAY/BARRYMORE, STROKESTOWN AND ELPHIN

Strategic Environmental Assessment  
Screening Report

**BSM**

Est.  
1968

**Brady Shipman  
Martin**

**Built.  
Environment.**

Strategic  
Assessment  
**Built  
Environment**

CLIENT: Roscommon County Council

DATE: May 2017

## Contents Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Revision	Description	Date	Prepared by	Checked by
01	00	RP-RCDP-SCR_WIP	20-03-2017	LO'G	TB
02	01	RP-RCDP-SCR	23-03-2017	LO'G	TB
03	02	RP-RCDP-SCR	04-05-2017	LO'G	TB

## Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Environmental Assessment.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Proposed Variation No. 1.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation under Article 13K of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended. ....</b>	<b>20</b>



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction and Background

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 was signed into law on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The Act has a number of components, all of which are collectively intended to incentivise urban regeneration and address housing supply related issues. The Act has six parts:

- Part 1 - Preliminary and General
- Part 2 – Vacant Site Levy
- Part 3 – Amendment to Section 23 of the Derelict Sites Act 1990
- Part 4 – Development Plans and Development Contributions
- Part 5 – Amendment of Part V of the Act of 2000 (Housing Supply)
- Part 6 – Amendment of Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009

The Urban Regeneration & Housing Act 2015 is cited as:

*‘An Act to make provision with respect to land in areas in which housing is required and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant, to establish a register of vacant sites in those areas, to provide for a vacant sites levy, to amend the Derelict Sites Act 1990, to amend Parts II, III and V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, to amend the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and to provide for related matters.*

The overall vacant site levy mechanism, which will primarily be orchestrated through the planning process, is intended to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which will “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”<sup>1</sup>

Roscommon County Council (the Planning Authority) is proposing Variation No.1 to the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 and the area plans of Cortober, Hodson Bay/Barrymore, Strokestown and Elphin to incorporate objectives to provide for the renewal of areas in need of regeneration as defined under Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. In addition to the amendments proposed concerning the introduction of the Vacant Sites Levy, other amendments recommended in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 concerning social and affordable housing also form part of the proposed Variation.

### 1.2 The Roscommon County Development Plan (CDP) and the Area Plans of Cortober, Hodson Bay/Barrymore, Strokestown and Elphin

The Roscommon County Development Plan (CDP) and the area plans of Cortober, Hodson Bay/Barrymore, Strokestown and Elphin came into effect on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and they set the agenda for the development, over a six year period, at a county level and within specific settlements.

The Roscommon CDP and its area plans underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the making of this plan and the Environmental Report documenting it concluded that, overall, the impact of implementation of many of the policies and objectives of the Roscommon County Development Plan (CDP) and the area plans would be positive for the environment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Circular letter PL6/2015, 31 August 2015.

Within the hierarchy of land use plans, the proposed Variation No.1 should comply with the aims and objectives of the Roscommon CDP, as well as the Regional and National Government Plans and Guidelines.

## 2.0 Environmental Assessment

### 2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for assessing the environmental consequences of implementing particular Plans or Programmes (PPs). The key focus of SEA is to ensure that environmental issues and in particular 'likely significant environmental effects' of a Plan or Programme are appropriately considered during the plan or programme-making process.

The requirement for SEA derives from the provisions of Directive 2001/42/EC (Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment) – also known as the 'SEA Directive' – as transposed into Irish legislation by:

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations
- and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations.

The overall objective of the SEA Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, programme or variations with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Article 13K of S.I. 436 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations (as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) sets out the process by which a determination of the need for strategic environmental assessment of a variation to a development plan is made. In particular, Article 13K of the regulations states that:

*'Where a planning authority proposes to make a variation of a development plan under section 13 of the Act, it shall, before giving notice under section 13(2) of the Act, consider whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A'*

Therefore, as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not a mandatory requirement for an variation to a development plan, this report comprises a screening of the requirement for SEA for Variation No.1 of the Roscommon CDP and its area plans, to incorporate the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015.

### 2.2 Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that proposed plans and programmes (including amendments or variations) undergo screening for likely or potential effects on European Sites (also Natura 2000 sites) arising from their implementation.

Screening of the draft variation for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and determined that a full Stage 2 AA of the Variation will not be required for the proposed Variation No. 1.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report accompanies this document.

## **3.0 Proposed Variation No. 1**

### **3.1 Reading of the Proposed Variation No.1**

The document sets out the relevant chapter title and section heading in which proposed changes to the Plan are located. Proposed text additions are shown in blue font and deletions are denoted using a strikethrough.

Please note that this screening report for Proposed Variation No. 1 shows only the relevant sections of the Roscommon County Development Plan (CDP) and the area plans of Cortober, Hodson Bay/Barrymore, Strokestown and Elphin which it is proposed to change, not the entire Plan. Therefore it is advised that it is read in conjunction with the current Roscommon County Development Plan (CDP) and associated area plans.

### **3.2 SEA Screening Analysis of Proposed Variation No. 1**

Table 3.1 examines whether each part of the proposed Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects (and thus would have warranted the undertaking of SEA which provides details on the likely significant effects, if unmitigated, of implementing the Proposed Variation in combination with the Draft Variation. The full range of environmental effects, including cumulative effects are considered by this assessment.

**Table 3.1 SEA Screening of the Proposed Variation of Roscommon CDP**

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
<p>To add the following paragraph under <b>2.3 Settlement Strategy, 2.3.9 Key Challenges:</b></p> <p>One way in which the government has attempted to address the issue of vacancy, is through the introduction of a Vacant Site Levy. Part 2 of the Act, essentially provides for the introduction of a vacant site register within the functional area of each Local Authority. The levy will become payable by the owners of vacant sites on the register in 2018 and thereafter on an annual basis, whilst the site remains vacant.</p> <p>The Roscommon County Development Plan includes explanatory text and objectives concerning the introduction of the Levy and mapping provided within the Area Plans highlights those broad “regeneration” and “residential” areas within which individual sites, should they meet various criteria, attract the Vacant Site Levy.</p> <p>This forms part of the requirements as set out in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, signed into law on 28th July 2015.</p> <p>SI 364/2015 refers.</p>	<p>Much of this text does not comprise Plan provisions but sets the context for Plan provisions. As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>Add the following Core Policy in relation to <b>2.3 Settlement Strategy:</b></p> <p>Core Policy 2.8: To provide for the renewal of areas in need to regeneration in order to prevent—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,</li> <li>(ii) urban blight and decay,</li> <li>(iii) anti-social behaviour, or</li> <li>(iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.</li> </ul>	<p>Urban regeneration and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To include the following practical measure in <b>Chapter 3 Economic</b></p>	<p>There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant,</p>



<p><b>Development, Section 3.1.1</b> on The contribution of Roscommon's Towns and Villages:</p> <p>To encourage the release of zoned land at key locations in order to stimulate economic development as well as the regeneration of existing vacant commercial urban sites</p>	<p>potential or uncertain) that cannot be mitigated by the SEA of the 2014 CDP, therefore SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To Amend <b>Policy 3.18</b> under <b>Section 3.3 of the RCDP, i.e. Retail Strategy:</b></p> <p>Encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict and vacant buildings and sites for retail/enterprise and mix of retail and residential uses in town centres with due regard to the Sequential Approach.</p>	<p>The proposed changes extends the land use areas that should be encouraged for reuse and regeneration recognising the need for regeneration in areas with a mix of retail and residential use. Positive effects will arise from the development of these sites.</p> <p>These changes would not result in significant environmental effects, as such, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To amend <b>Policy 3.21</b> under <b>Section 3.3 of the RCDP, i.e. Retail Strategy:</b></p> <p>Promote initiatives or programmes to enhance the character and urban design quality of the County's towns to ensure that they remain attractive for investment in commerce and in retailing, through, for example, the use of urban design frameworks and town enhancement plans to release state funding and the utilisation of site activation measures such as the Vacant Sites Levy.</p>	<p>The promotion of site activation measures and the preparation of Urban Design Frameworks allow for indepth focus on key regeneration areas, enhancement of the public realm working with the urban grain and environmental improvements.</p> <p>There are no adverse effects arising from the use of Urban Design Frameworks (significant, potential or uncertain) that cannot be mitigated by the SEA of the current 2014 Development Plan.</p>
<p>To amend and add the following text in <b>Chapter 5:</b></p> <p>5.2.1 <u>2017 Update: 2014 – 2020 Housing Strategy</u></p> <p>The Housing Strategy for County Roscommon shows that over the lifetime of the strategy approximately <del>6%</del> 11.6% of households in County Roscommon, about <del>144</del> 165 families, will face affordability problems in relation to renting or buying a home. The Council has a number of ways to help these families by providing a home for them through its existing housing stock, Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Housing Assistance Programme (HAP), new social housing provision from void works to existing housing as well as significant recent acquisitions or through voluntary and co-operative housing</p>	<p>This amendment updates the statistics for anticipated affordable housing requirements and sets the minimum requirement of 10% for social/affordable housing as detailed in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and details the methods of transfer of ownership. The proposed changes detail the changes to the procedural requirements for social and affordable housing which would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

<p>groups. <del>Given the Country's current economic circumstances it is unlikely that any large scale government funding will become available for social housing in the coming years. However, u</del>Under the new Part V arrangements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011 as amended, the Council will require that a minimum of <del>6%</del> 10% social/affordable housing is provided from each housing development on lands zoned for residential use or zoned for a mixture of residential and other uses.in one or more of the following ways, detailed in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <u>Transfer of ownership to the Local Authority (LA) of land which is the subject of a planning application.</u></li> <li>✓ <u>The building and transfer of ownership to the LA of completed social housing units on land, which is the subject of a planning application.</u></li> <li>✓ <u>Transfer to the ownership of the LA (or to other persons nominated by the Authority) of houses or any land within the functional area. This allows social housing units to be delivered in a more timely fashion in another location, in the event that the development which is the subject of the planning permission does not meet the social housing or mixed tenure needs of the LA.</u></li> <li>✓ <u>Part V obligation can now be fulfilled by developers through long term leasing of properties to the LA.</u></li> <li>✓ <u>A combination of Part V options above is also allowed.</u></li> </ul>	
<p><b>To amend the following policy:</b></p> <p><b>Policy 5.8:</b> Require that a minimum of <del>6%</del> 10% of land zoned for residential use (or for a mixture of residential and other uses) is reserved for the provision of housing referred to in Section 94(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Acts, <u>as amended by the provisions in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015</u>, in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Acts.</p>	<p>This amendment updates the minimum requirement to 10% for social/affordable housing as detailed in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. The proposed change will have positive effects on human beings.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p><b>To amend the following policy:</b></p>	<p>This change in text updates the reference to the Housing Strategy that the draft variation proposes to vary.</p>

<p><b>Policy 5.11</b> Secure the provision of social and affordable housing in accordance with the Housing Strategy 2014-2020, <i>as varied</i>, to meet the needs of all households currently not provided for.</p>	<p>This change would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To update the following policy: <b>Objective 5.6</b> Provide appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of Travellers including the use of particular areas for that purpose through the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009—2013 <i>2014–2018</i> and any future updates.</p>	<p>This change in text updates the reference to the Traveller Accommodation Programme currently in place. As this changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p><b>To add the following text to Chapter 9 Development Management Guidelines And Standards, Section 9.14:</b></p> <p><b>9.14.2 Vacant Sites Register and Levy</b></p> <p>The Council will maintain a Vacant Site Register and implement the Vacant Site Levy as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, as a mechanism to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which is intended to “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”<sup>2</sup></p> <p>The site activation measure aims to encourage the release of zoned lands at key locations in order to stimulate development, deliver housing at appropriate locations, and, stimulate the regeneration of vacant urban sites.</p>	<p>Any increase in site activation measures, including those which may arise as a result of the Register of Vacant Sites, will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Circular letter PL6/2015, 31 August 2015.

**Table 3.2 SEA Screening of the Proposed Variation of Cortober Area Plan 2014-2020**

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
<p>To add the following text to Section 3.4 Further Development within the Area Plan:</p> <p>The Council will maintain a Vacant Site Register and implement the Vacant Site Levy as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, as a mechanism to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which is intended to “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”</p> <p>The site activation measure aims to encourage the release of zoned lands at key locations in order to stimulate development, deliver housing at appropriate locations, and, stimulate the regeneration of vacant urban sites.</p>	<p>Any increase in site activation measures, including those which may arise as a result of the Register of Vacant Sites, will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following policy in Section 3.4 Further Development within the Area Plan:</p> <p><b>Policy 3.11:</b> Identify and facilitate the development and renewal of vacant and derelict sites and derelict buildings in a manner appropriate to the area, in order to prevent—</p> <p>(i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,</p> <p>(ii) urban blight and decay,</p> <p>(iii) anti-social behaviour, or</p> <p>(iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.</p> <p>Those properties listed on the Vacant Sites Register are of particular</p>	<p>Urban regeneration and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

relevance.	
<p>To amend the following policy in Section 9, Built Heritage, 9.1 Strategic Goals:</p> <p><b>Policy 9.3:</b> Take all necessary actions to minimise the occurrence of unsightly and wasteful <b>vacant and</b> derelict sites in the area through appropriate refurbishment or reconstruction. <b>Those listed on the Vacant Sites Register and Derelict Sites Register are of particular relevance.</b></p>	<p>The proposed changes allow for the introduction of another site activation measure to stimulate regeneration and renewal within the LA area.</p> <p>This will result in positive benefits for settlements and will not result in any adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following text into <b>Section 11, Land use Zoning</b> Objectives:</p> <p><b>In addition, explanatory maps have been provided which apply specific hatching over the Land Use Zones for "Residential" lands to give effect to the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. The hatching applies to lands where the Vacant Site Levy may apply.</b></p>	<p>The proposed change in text references land use zoning maps where hatching has been introduced to indicate "residential" lands where the Vacant Sites Levy may apply.</p> <p>These changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

**Table 3.3 SEA Screening of the Proposed Variation of Hodson Bay/Barrymore Area Plan 2014 - 2020**

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
<p>The Council will maintain a Vacant Site Register and implement the Vacant Site Levy as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, as a mechanism to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which is intended to “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”</p> <p>The site activation measure aims to encourage the release of zoned lands at key locations in order to stimulate development, deliver housing at appropriate locations, and, stimulate the regeneration of vacant urban sites.</p>	<p>Any increase in site activation measures, including those which may arise as a result of the Register of Vacant Sites, will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following policy for <b>residential development</b>:</p> <p><b>Policy 4.8:</b> Identify and facilitate the development and renewal of vacant and derelict sites and derelict buildings in a manner appropriate to the area, in order to prevent—</p> <p>(i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,</p> <p>(ii) urban blight and decay,</p> <p>(iii) anti-social behaviour, or</p> <p>(iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.</p> <p>Those properties listed on the Vacant Sites Register are of particular relevance.</p>	<p>Urban regeneration and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following text into <b>Section 10, Land use Zoning</b> Objectives:</p> <p>In addition, explanatory maps have been provided which apply specific hatching over the Land Use Zones for “Residential” and “Regeneration” lands to give effect to the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. The hatching applies to lands where the Vacant Site Levy may apply.</p>	<p>The proposed change in text references land use zoning maps where hatching has been introduced to indicate “residential” lands where the Vacant Sites Levy may apply.</p> <p>These changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

**Table 3.4 SEA Screening of the Proposed Variation of Strokestown Area Plan**

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
<p>To introduce the following policy in Section 2:</p> <p><b>Policy 2.8</b> Identify and facilitate, as a priority, the development and renewal of obsolete areas, <a href="#">vacant and derelict sites</a> and <a href="#">vacant derelict buildings</a> in a manner appropriate to the area, <a href="#">in order to prevent—</a></p> <p>(i) <a href="#">adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,</a></p> <p>(ii) <a href="#">urban blight and decay,</a></p> <p>(iii) <a href="#">anti-social behaviour, or</a></p> <p>(iv) <a href="#">a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Those properties listed on the Vacant Sites Register are of particular relevance.</a></p>	<p>Urban regeneration and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following policy in Section 5:</p> <p><b>Policy 5.1</b> Identify infill brownfield sites that allow for appropriate development of the urban fabric of the town compatible with assigned zoning objectives. Prioritise, in as far as is practicable, the re-occupation and redevelopment of <a href="#">vacant, derelict and semi derelict building stock</a>. <a href="#">Those properties listed on the Vacant Sites Register and Derelict Sites Register are of particular relevance.</a></p>	<p>The proposed changes allow for the introduction of another site activation measure to stimulate regeneration and renewal within the LA area.</p> <p>This will result in positive benefits for settlements and will not result in any adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, SEA is not required.</p>
<p><b>Land Use Zoning Objectives</b></p> <p>This plan identifies specific areas for specific types of land use in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development <a href="#">and the Land Use Zoning Maps reflect this detail</a>. <a href="#">In addition, explanatory maps have been provided which apply specific hatching over the Land Use Zones for “Residential” and “Regeneration” lands to give effect to the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. The hatching applies to lands where</a></p>	<p>The proposed change in text references land use zoning maps where hatching has been introduced to indicate “residential” and “regeneration” lands where the Vacant Sites Levy may apply. A portion of these lands are centrally located within the Town Centre, are brownfield sites and would contribute to urban regeneration and renewal.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

the Vacant Site Levy may apply.

**Table 3.5 SEA Screening of the Proposed Variation of Elphin Area Plan**

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
Encourage revitalisation, as a priority, and occupation of vacant and derelict or semi-derelict buildings, especially those that are an integral part of the established town centre. <a href="#">Those properties listed on the Vacant Sites Register and Derelict Sites Register would be relevant in relation to this.</a>	<p>The proposed changes allow for the introduction of another site activation measure to stimulate regeneration and renewal within the LA area.</p> <p>This will result in positive benefits for settlements and will not result in any adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following policy in <b>Section 2:</b> Identify and facilitate, <a href="#">as a priority</a>, the development and renewal of obsolete areas, <a href="#">vacant and derelict sites</a> and <a href="#">vacant derelict buildings</a> in a manner appropriate to the area, <a href="#">in order to prevent—</a></p> <p>(i) <a href="#">adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,</a> (ii) <a href="#">urban blight and decay,</a> (iii) <a href="#">anti-social behaviour, or</a> (iv) <a href="#">a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.</a> <a href="#">Those properties listed on the Vacant Sites Register are of particular relevance.</a></p>	<p>Urban regeneration and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To introduce the following <b>land zoning objective:</b></p> <p>This plan identifies specific areas for specific types of land use in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development <a href="#">and the Land Use Zoning Maps reflect this detail.</a></p> <p><a href="#">In addition, explanatory maps have been provided which apply specific hatching over the Land Use Zones for “Residential” and “Regeneration” lands to give effect to the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. The hatching applies to lands where the Vacant Site</a></p>	<p>The proposed change in text references land use zoning maps where hatching has been introduced to indicate “residential” and “regeneration” lands where the Vacant Sites Levy may apply. A portion of these lands are centrally located within the Town Centre, are brownfield sites and would contribute to urban regeneration and renewal.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>



Levy may apply.	
-----------------	--

## 4.0 Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment

### 4.1 Introduction

‘Screening’ is a process for deciding whether a particular plan, variation or amendment, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would warrant SEA<sup>3</sup>. The criteria for determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental impacts, regard must be made to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as inserted by Article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004.

Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 set out two main criteria for determining whether a plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects:

- Characteristics of a Plan;
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

Section 4.2 below presents the SEA Screening Assessment by assessing the available information in relation to the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 against the criteria provided in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011.

### 4.2 The Characteristics of the Plan

The following assessment (Table 4.1) has been conducted in accordance with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004). Thus the Screening provides an assessment as to whether, having regard to the characteristics of the plan, the incorporation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act for the Roscommon CDP and the Area Plans is likely to have significant impacts on the environment.

---

<sup>3</sup> Implementation of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effect of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2004)

**Table 4.1: Assessment of proposed Variation No. 1 of Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 & associated Area Plans against Schedule 2a of S.I. 436 Of 2004 Planning And Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended.**

Assessment Criterion	Description
<b>The characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
— the degree to which the plan or programme (variation) sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The Proposed Variation No.1 to the Roscommon CDP and the Area Plans incorporates objectives to provide for the renewal of areas in need of regeneration as defined under Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning And Development Act 2000, as amended. In addition to the amendments proposed concerning the introduction of the Vacant Sites Levy, other amendments recommended in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 concerning social and affordable housing also form part of the proposed Variation. Maps have been included which show hatching over zoned lands which indicate “residential” and “regeneration” lands where the Vacant Sites Levy may apply.</p> <p>The Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 &amp; Associated Area Plans already provides for the development of lands for residential use, business use, commercial and retail etc. This proposed variation to the RCDP does not alter the zoning of lands and simply indicates where the Vacant Sites Levy may apply to “regeneration” and “residential” lands . It also encourages the renewal and regeneration of lands within the County. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change.</p> <p>Taking the above and the examination of the Proposed Variation No.1 provided under Section 3.2 into account, and considering the RCDP and Area Plans set a framework for projects and development within the County, the proposed Variation will positively contribute to that end and would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p>
— the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy	The proposed Variation is being made to the existing County Development Plan and associated area plans which is influenced by higher level legislation, plans and programmes and can influence lower tier action plans, frameworks or strategies. Considering the RCDP and Area Plans set a framework for projects and development within the County, the proposed Variation will positively contribute to that end and would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.
— the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to	<p>Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.</p> <p>The Roscommon CDP and associated area plans to which the proposed Variation relates has undergone</p>

Assessment Criterion	Description
<b>The characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
promoting sustainable development	<p>SEA. This process integrated environmental considerations into the Plan and found that the Plan contributes to environmental protection and management and sustainable development.</p> <p>Taking the above and the examination of the proposed Variation provided under Section 3.2 into account, and considering the RCDP and Area Plans set a framework for projects and development within the County, the proposed Variation will positively contribute to that end and would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p>
— environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.</p> <p>Taking the above and the examination of the proposed Variation provided under Section 3.2 into account, and considering the RCDP and Area Plans set a framework for projects and development within the County, the proposed Variation will positively contribute to that end and would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p>
— the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).	<p>A number of policies and objectives in the Roscommon CDP and associated area plans focus on the implementation of EU environmental legislation, for example, those relevant to the Habitats Directives and the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Taking into account the constituent parts of the proposed Variation, it is considered that proposed Variation will not affect the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment and will therefore, not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p>
— the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The characteristics of the effects of Proposed Variation No.1 in terms of probability, duration, frequency and reversibility will be the same as the adopted plan and are anticipated to be positive and of lengthy duration. In terms of reversibility and frequency, the effects, due to their positive nature should be regarded as positive on the surrounding environment and therefore would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p>
— the cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The Proposed Variation is not envisaged to contribute to significant adverse effects on the environment, is therefore not anticipated to result in cumulative effects, in combination with other plans and programmes.</p> <p>As a consequence of the proposed Variation, it is possible that some positive effects will result in positive</p>

Assessment Criterion	Description
<b>The characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
	cumulative effects on the environment due to the preference to use vacant underutilised sites as well as to regenerate central brownfield sites over selecting greenfield areas, which are most likely to be in the periphery of settlements. Therefore, taking the above into account it is considered that Proposed Variation No. 1 would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.
— the transboundary nature of the effects,	The constituent parts of the Proposed Variation No.1 are legislative measures to give effect to a sustainable urban form. The characteristics of the trans-boundary nature of the effects of Proposed Variation No.1 will be the same as the adopted plan.  Proposed Variation No.1 would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.
— the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),	The Proposed Variation No.1 comprises legislative measures to give effect to a sustainable urban form and therefore are not likely to result in significant environmental impacts or risks to human health.
— the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Proposed Variation No. 1 applies to lands already zoned in the Roscommon CDP and associated plans and would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.
special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,	The Proposed Variation No.1 would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.
exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values	The Proposed Variation No.1 would not be likely to result in significant environmental quality standards or limit values being exceeded.
intensive land-use,	The Proposed Variation No. 1 will not result in the value and vulnerability of the area being affected by intensive land use.
— the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.	The Proposed Variation No. 1 would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

## 5.0 Consultations

As part of the screening process, environmental authorities were notified that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not implementation of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment could be made to the Council. The authorities were invited to make a submission to the Planning Authority between the period 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

The environmental authorities in this instance comprised the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Galway County Council, Leitrim County Council, Longford County Council, Mayo County Council, Offaly County Council, Sligo County Council and Westmeath County Council,

One submission was received from the Environmental Protection Agency and the issues raised in this submission are summarised below:

- The development of lands associated with this Variation should be linked to the ability to provide appropriate critical service infrastructure to support further development. Additionally, the Variation should ensure that environmental sensitivities/vulnerabilities are taken into consideration.
- A commitment should be made to ensure that the relevant CFRAMS will be taken into account, and also that the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (OPW / DEHLG, 2009) will also be reflected in the implementation of the Variation.
- It is worth noting that a number of key plans are currently being prepared (and undergoing SEA), which should be taken into account in implementing the Variation. These include:
  - National Planning Framework (DHPCLG)
  - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (Regional Authorities)
  - 2nd Cycle of Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans (DHPCLG)
- The EPA has recently published our latest 'State of the Environment Report' - *Ireland's Environment 2016 – An Assessment* (EPA, 2016). The recommendations, key issues and challenges described within this report should be taken into account, as relevant and appropriate to the Plan area. This report can be consulted at: <http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/stateoftheenvironmentreport/>
- Roscommon County Council should determine whether or not any future proposed Variations / Amendments would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment should take account of the SEA Regulations Schedule 2A Criteria (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).
- Under the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, notice should also be given to the following:
  - The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (now the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government)
  - Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources (now the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment), where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment

- where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (now the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs), and
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

In response to the EPA submission, the following points of clarity are provided:

- The provision of critical infrastructure to support further development is provided for in policies and objectives already contained in the existing plans.
- The Variation does not propose any zoning changes and environmental sensitivities were taken into consideration in the Draft of the original plans.
- Various policies and objectives are included in the plans already which address requirements as part of various pieces of legislation and guidelines produced by government.  
This Variation is only to give effect to changes required as part of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015
- Once the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies are adopted Land Use plans will need to be varied to take these new policies into consideration.
- Environmental Screening reports will be prepared each time Variations to the RCDP are prepared and their extent is known.

## 6.0 Recommendation under Article 13K of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended.

Having regard to the Criteria set out in Schedule 2A to the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended, this screening assessment has concluded that no significant environmental effects are likely as a consequence of the proposed Variation No. 1 to the Roscommon CDP 2014-2020 and the area plans of Cortober, Hodson Bay/Barrymore, Strokestown and Elphin.

This screening assessment of the proposed Variation No. 1 is referred to Roscommon County Council for SEA Screening Determination.

## **APPENDIX 1 – MAP 5b: REGENERATION & RESIDENTIAL LANDS IN CORTOBER**



## **APPENDIX 2 – MAP 3(b): REGENERATION & RESIDENTIAL LANDS IN HODSON BAY/BARRYMORE**

## **APPENDIX 3 – MAP 4b: REGENERATION & RESIDENTIAL LANDS IN STROKESTOWN**

## **APPENDIX 4 – MAP 4b: REGENERATION & RESIDENTIAL LANDS IN ELPHIN**