



Appendix 5.1

County Development Plans and Biodiversity

Knockanarragh Wind Farm EIAR Volume 3

Knockanarragh Wind Farm Limited

15 August 2023

5.1 Westmeath County Development Plan

The following objectives from Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Chapter 12 'Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure' relate to biodiversity.

Table A-1: Westmeath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 Policies Relating to Biodiversity

County Policy Objective Number	Detail
12.1	Contribute as appropriate towards the protection of designated sites in compliance with relevant EU Directives and applicable national legislation.
12.2	Support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Biodiversity Plan, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and the National Peatlands Strategy.
12.3	Support the implementation of the Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2020 and any revisions made thereto.
12.4	Protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and candidate Special Protection Areas, designated under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives respectively.
12.9	Identify and provide appropriate buffer zones between Designated Sites and local biodiversity features and areas zoned for development.
12.13	Protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape and environment of County Westmeath, in recognition of its importance as both a non-renewable resource and a natural asset.
12.14	Require all new developments in the early pre-planning stage of the planning process to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (e.g., through provision of swift boxes, bat roost sites, green roofs, etc.) and provide links to the wider Green Infrastructure network as an essential part of the design process.
12.15	Support the protection of all native woodlands listed in the National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003 to 2008.
12.23	Seek to create and enhance ecological linkages and buffer zones from Development.
12.24	Protect and where possible enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features, natural lighting conditions, and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. Appropriate mitigation and/or compensation to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks will be required where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development
12.25	Recognise that nature conservation is not just confined to designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity.
12.27	Prevent the spread of invasive species within the plan area, including requiring landowners and developers to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species.

County Policy Objective Number	Detail
12.28	Ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are or were previously present, the applicant will be required to submit a control and management program for the particular invasive species as part of the planning process and to comply with the provisions of the European Communities Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011).
12.37	Preserve and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the County, by promoting the protection of trees, groups of trees and ancient woodlands, of significant amenity value, especially native and broadleaf species.
12.39	Discourage the felling of mature trees and hedgerow, particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows to facilitate development and seek Tree Management Plans to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and incorporated into the design of new developments.
12.40	Protect and preserve existing hedgerows in new developments, particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, and where their removal is necessary during the course of road works or other works seek their replacement with new hedgerows of native species indigenous to the area.
12.47	Support the preparation of a Tree Planting Policy for the County which promotes biodiversity and indigenous tree planting.
12.48	Resist development that would destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the County.
12.51	Protect floodplains, wetlands and watercourses, for their biodiversity and flood protection value.
12.52	Ensure that all proposed land zonings take cognisance of appropriate riparian setback distances that support the attainment of high ecological status for water bodies, the conservation of biodiversity and good ecosystem health, and buffer zones from flood plains.
12.54	Seek the continued improvement of water quality, bathing facilities and other recreational opportunities in waterways and to protect the ecology and wildlife thereof.
12.56	Protect the biodiversity of rivers, streams and other water courses and maintain them in an open state and discourage culverting and realignment.
12.58	Ensure that the County's watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the County's rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county.
12.66	Exercise control of peat extraction, both individually and cumulatively, which would have significant impacts on the environment, in accordance with legislative provisions, in the interest of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change.
12.69	Support collaboration between Local Authorities, the Bord na Mona Transition Team and relevant stakeholders in the development of partnership approaches to integrated peatland management for a just transition having regard to relevant policies and strategies such as the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Plan 2016-2021 and the national Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plans. This shall include support for the rehabilitation and/or re-wetting of suitable peatland habitats.

County Policy Objective Number	Detail
12.75	<p>Identify, protect and enhance existing and planned Green Infrastructure assets and to facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of Green Infrastructure that recognises the benefits that can be achieved with regards to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of open space amenities • Sustainable management of water • Protection and management of biodiversity • Protection of cultural heritage • Protection of protected landscape sensitivities

5.2 Meath County Development Plan

The following objectives from the Meath County Development Plan 2021 -2027 chapter 8 'Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy' relate to biodiversity.

Table A-2: Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 Policies Relating to Biodiversity

County Policy Objective Number	Detail
HER POL 27	To protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity where appropriate.
HER POL 28	To integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate.
HER POL 29	To raise public awareness and understanding of the County's natural heritage and biodiversity.
HER POL 30	To promote increased public participation in biodiversity conservation by supporting and encouraging community-led initiatives.
HER OBJ 30	To implement, in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 - 2021 which relate to the remit and functions of Meath County Council.
HER OBJ 31	To implement, in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of the County Meath Biodiversity Plan 2015-2020 and any revisions thereof.
HER OBJ 32	To actively support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 and any revisions thereof.
HER POL 32	To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves or those proposed to be designated over the period of the Plan, only where the development has been subject to the outcome of the Appropriate

County Policy Objective Number	Detail
	Assessment process and has been carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife.
HER POL 35	To ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites and to require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professional(s) to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.
HER OBJ 35	To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.
HER POL 37	To encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.
HER POL 43	To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out its functions in association with relevant authorities including TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.
HER POL 45	To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.
HER OBJ 40	To work in partnership with Waterways Ireland and relevant stakeholders to encourage best practice biodiversity management of canal and towpath habitats.
HER POL 49	To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, in assessing proposals for development.
HER OBJ 59	To identify and map green infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.



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