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Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

for

Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan

2021-2027

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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by **RPS Group Plc** for Water and Drainage Policy Division (WDPD) of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

Contents

Abbreviations.....	iv
1: Introduction	1
2: Purpose of The Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plans	2
2.1 The Floods Directive	2
2.2 Floods Directive Application in Northern Ireland	2
2.2.1 Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plans 2015-2021.....	3
2.2.2 Review of the Flood Risk Assessment	4
2.2.3 Development of the 2nd cycle Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027	5
3: Pre-Screening Check.....	7
4: Environmental Significance Screening.....	12
4.1 The Characteristics of the Plan	12
4.1.1 Criteria a	12
4.1.2 Criteria b	12
4.1.3 Criteria c.....	16
4.1.4 Criteria d.....	17
4.1.5 Criteria e	17
4.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area likely to be Affected.....	17
4.2.1 Criteria a	17
4.2.2 Criteria b	18
4.2.3 Criteria c.....	19
4.2.4 Criteria d.....	19
4.2.5 Criteria e	20
4.2.6 Criteria f.....	21
4.2.7 Criteria g.....	21
5: Conclusions	24
5.1 Post Consultation Update.....	24
6: References	26
Appendix A.....	27
Appendix B.....	29

Tables

Table 3-1 Proposed Measures, Types and Activities of the FRMPs 2021-2027	8
Table 4-1 Summary of Key Plans, Programmes and Legislation Relevant to the 2 nd cycle.....	13

Figures

Figure 2-1: Areas identified as APSFR and TAPSR in the NIFRA 2018	6
Figure 3-1: SEA Pre-Screening Check Decision Tree	11

Appendices

Appendix A : Measures, Types and Activities of the FRMPs 2015-2021.....	27
Appendix B : SEA Screening Consultee Responses	29

Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AFS	Areas for Further Study
AAAD	Aggregated Annual Average Damages
APSFR	Area(s) of Potential Significant Flood Risk
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dfi	Department for Infrastructure
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FAS	Flood Alleviation Scheme
FHRM	Flood Hazard and Risk Maps
FRMP	Flood Risk Management Plan
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IRBD	International River Basin Districts
NI	Northern Ireland
NIFRA	Northern Ireland Flood Risk Assessment
N2K	Natura 2000
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OPW	Office of Public Works
PFRA	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
RBD	River Basin District
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFRA	Significant Flood Risk Area (Synonymous with APSFR)
SPA	Special Protection Area
TAPSFR	Transitional Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk
WDPD	Water and Drainage Policy Division
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1: Introduction

This report is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Statement for the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) 2021-2027.

The screening process was conducted in accordance with The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004¹. The ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) 'Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (2005)² sets out the application of the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment³ (informally referred to as the SEA Directive) to plans and programmes. Assessment is required for certain categories of plans and programmes only where they are determined to have significant environmental effects. Regulation 5(6)(b) of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 states that an environmental assessment need not be carried out for a minor modification to a plan or programme..... unless it has been determined under Regulation 9(1) that the plan, programme or modification, as the case may be, is likely to have significant environmental effects. This SEA screening process focusses solely on the Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk (APSFR) contained within the 2nd cycle Northern Ireland FRMP for the period 2021-2027.

Screening criteria to be considered when evaluating the likelihood of significant environmental effects are outlined in the SEA Directive and described in the ODPM (2005) guide. The format of this screening report follows the process set out in the ODPM Practical Guide to the SEA Directive 2005, and takes into account the Irish EPA SEA Guidance 2003⁴. This methodology establishes whether the Plan must undergo a SEA, using a series of procedural tasks. Firstly, the overall characteristics of the Plan are considered to see if it falls within the requirements of the SEA Directive (pre-screening check). Secondly, the potential environmental significance of implementing the proposed Plan is gauged according to a series of significance criteria (environmental significance screening).

This report presents the following:

- A description of the purpose of the 2nd cycle Northern Ireland FRMP 2021-2027;
- The results of the pre-screening check and environmental significance screening;
- The next steps for the SEA process; and
- A contact point for stakeholder comments.

¹ [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2004](#)

² [ODPM A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)

³ [EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment](#)

⁴ [Development for Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland 2001](#)

2: Purpose of The Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plans

2.1 The Floods Directive

The EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks (2007/60/EC)⁵, known as the Floods Directive, came into force in 2007. This Directive requires Member States to establish a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks, with the aim of reducing the adverse consequences of flooding on human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. Member States must follow a certain process, namely:

- Undertake a National Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) by December 2011, to identify areas of existing or foreseeable future potentially significant flood risk (referred to in the PRFA as ‘Significant Flood Risk Areas’, or ‘SFRAs’, and synonymous with ‘Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk’ or ‘APsFR’);
- Prepare flood hazard and risk maps (FHRM) for the SFRAs by December 2013;
- Prepare flood risk management plans (FRMP) by December 2015, setting objectives for managing the flood risk within the SFRAs and setting out a prioritised set of measures for achieving those objectives; and,
- ***Review, and if necessary update, the PFRA, FHRM and FRMP by appropriate dates and every six years thereafter.***

The directive requires that the PFRAs, FHRMs and FRMPs are prepared in cooperation and coordination with neighbouring states in cross-border river basins, and with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD)⁶. The Floods Directive also requires that the PFRAs and FHRMs are published, and that public and stakeholder consultation and engagement is undertaken in the preparation of the FRMPs.

2.2 Floods Directive Application in Northern Ireland

The Floods Directive is implemented in Northern Ireland through ‘The Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009’⁷ and amendments⁸. These Regulations appointed the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) as the Competent Authority for implementation of the Floods Directive in Northern Ireland, a role which was fulfilled by the then Rivers Agency. In the period since the first FRMP planning cycle, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was formed, and responsibility for the 2nd cycle of Flood Risk Assessment and development of a FRMP for the 2021-2027 period now rests with the Water and Drainage Policy Division (WDPD) of this Department, which is now the competent authority (under The Water Environment (Floods Directive) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018)⁹.

⁵ [EU Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks](#)

⁶ [EU Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy](#)

⁷ [The Water Environment \(Floods Directive\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2009](#)

⁸ [The Water Environment \(Floods Directive\) \(Amendment No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2018](#)

⁹ [The Water Environment \(Floods Directive\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2018](#)

2.2.1 Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plans 2015-2021

DARD Rivers Agency completed a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) for River Basin Districts in December 2011¹⁰. The PFRA provided a high level strategic assessment of flood risk in Northern Ireland, based on information available at that time. The outcome of this assessment identified 20 SFRA as well as 49 Areas for Further Study (AFS). Flood Hazard and Risk Maps for these areas were published in 2013.

The FRMPs were coordinated at the River Basin District (RBD) level to align with the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) required by the WFD. The 20 SFRA identified by the PFRA and the RBD to which they belonged were as follows:

- **Neagh Bann International RBD:** Newry, Portadown, Warrenpoint, Banbridge, Lurgan, Glengormley & Mallusk, Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine;
- **North Western International RBD:** Londonderry, Omagh, Strabane; and,
- **North Eastern RBD:** Belfast, Newtownards, Carrickfergus & Kilroot Power Station, Bangor, Newcastle, Newtownabbey, Downpatrick, Dundonald.

The 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021¹¹ were focused on management of flood risk in the 20 SFRA. The Floods Directive sets out the aspects of flood risk management to be addressed, under the three main measures of **prevention, protection and preparedness**. Each of these measures encompasses a number of measure types, which can be considered either alone, or in combination, for the management of flood risk. These measure types, and the preferred option/measure activity for their implementation, are shown in **Appendix A**.

The Rivers Agency produced three FRMPs for Northern Ireland, one for each RBD, as used in the WFD River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures. The FRMPs contained specific objectives and measures for the 20 SFRA that were identified through the PFRA process, for managing the flood risk in the first 6 year planning cycle from 2015-2021. Depending on the specific flood risks for each SFRA, one or more measure types from **Appendix A** could be employed by DARD Rivers Agency in the Plans and the preferred approach could be taken in the short, medium or long term, depending on the circumstances.

¹⁰ [Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Methodology for the Identification of Significant Flood Risk Areas 2011](#)

¹¹ [Northern Ireland FRMPs 2015-2021 for the North Eastern, North Western and Neagh Bann River Basins](#)

2.2.2 Review of the Flood Risk Assessment

Article 14 of the Floods Directive requires that the PFRA 'shall be reviewed, and if necessary updated, by 22nd December 2018 and every six years thereafter', to ensure that flood risk is managed effectively and that it takes account of new information and changes in risk. A review of the 2011 PFRA was undertaken by Water and Drainage Policy Division (WDPD) of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), and an updated technical assessment 'The Northern Ireland Flood Risk Assessment (NIFRA) 2018'¹² was produced.

The main objectives of the Flood Risk Assessment review were:

- To update the existing analysis of locations within Northern Ireland identified during the 1st cycle of Flood Risk Management Planning to be Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk (APSFR) or Areas for Further Study (AFS); and,
- Utilising current flood hazard and flood risk mapping and available or readily derivable information, to produce a revised Flood Risk Assessment identifying those areas where the potential impact of flooding is most significant, i.e. APSFR.

The scope of the 2018 review was limited to the 20 APSFR and 49 AFS identified in the 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, based on updated information and more detailed flood hazard and risk mapping. Owing to developments and improvements in the understanding of flood risk since the 2011 assessment, the 2018 methodology differed in some aspects from that adopted in 2011. The key changes in methodology used for the 2018 assessment were the following:

- Strategic maps were used for the 2011 PFRA. More detailed fluvial and coastal flood hazard and flood risk maps had been developed since the 2011 assessment and these were used to review the flood risk in the 69 areas to be assessed;
- The effectiveness of existing flood defences and culverts in reducing flood risk was taken into account in the 2018 assessment. The 2011 PFRA did not consider the presence of flood defences when making a determination of flood risk. This effectively reduced fluvial and coastal damages from those derived in the 2011 PFRA; and
- The criteria to be used for determination of APSFR were reviewed. The 2018 assessment took pluvial (surface water) flooding into account in the consideration of Aggregated Annual Average Damages (AAAD) value (£); this flooding source did not form part of the assessment for identification of APSFR in the 2011 PFRA.

Based on the flood hazard and flood risk mapping currently available, the NIFRA (2018) considered:

- The sources of flooding - fluvial (rivers), coastal and pluvial (surface water);
- The probability of flood occurrence for different return periods and for different sources of flooding;
- The impacts on flood receptors for human health, environment, cultural heritage and economic activity in terms of severity, exposure and economic damages;

¹² [Northern Ireland Flood Risk Assessment Report 2018](#)

- Areas that should be identified as APSFR and which should be included in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027; and
- Areas that should no longer be identified as APSFR.

2.2.3 Development of the 2nd cycle Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027

The 2nd cycle FRMP for the period 2021-2027 will aim to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding within the 12 APSFR. The 12 APSFR identified by the NIFRA 2018 and the River Basin District (RBD) to which they belong are as follows:

- Neagh Bann International RBD: Newry, Portadown and Craigavon, Lurgan, Glengormley & Mallusk, Ballymena;
- North Western International RBD: Londonderry, Omagh; and,
- North Eastern RBD: Belfast, Carrickfergus, Bangor, Newtownabbey, Larne.

With the exception of Larne, all APSFR identified by NIFRA 2018 had previously been identified as SFRAs in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. The 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 will be made available for public consultation by 22 December 2020. In order to ensure continuity between the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 and the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027, and to enable the implementation of any outstanding commitments, a further 9 areas were classified as Transitional Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk (TAPSFR); these areas were included in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 as SFRAs, but are not now identified as APSFR in the second cycle and are listed below: Warrenpoint, Banbridge, Antrim, Coleraine, Strabane, Newtownards, Newcastle, Downpatrick and Dundonald. Areas identified as APSFR and TAPSFR in the NIFRA 2018 are shown in **Figure 2-1**.

Figure 2-1: Areas identified as APSFR and TAPSFR in the NIFRA 2018



3: Pre-Screening Check

DARD Rivers Agency carried out a SEA¹³ of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 in order to satisfy the requirements of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 and to ensure that any likely significant effects of the Plans were addressed as far as possible. Screening had determined that a SEA was required for the Plans owing to the following reasons:

- The Plans would be prepared for water management related development;
- The Plans would contain policies and proposals which could potentially give rise to significant environmental effects; and
- The Plans were prepared by DARD Rivers Agency for adoption at a national level.

For the purposes of SEA screening, the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 represents a minor modification to an existing Plan, the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. **Table 3-1** outlines the proposed measures, measure types and activities of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027; those measure activities that are supplementary to the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 are highlighted in **bold** text. No additional measure types are proposed for inclusion in the 2nd cycle of the Plan, above and beyond those outlined in the 1st cycle Plans. The supplementary measure activities highlighted in **Table 3-1** either expand upon measure types already assessed in the 1st cycle FRMPs (catchment based management) or represent additional flood prevention policies, and do not have the potential to provide a framework for development consent for projects listed in the European Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive).

Owing to the updated Flood Risk Assessment undertaken in the NIFRA 2018, one new area, Larne, has been included as an APSFR in the 2nd cycle Plan. This area was not taken into account in the SEA of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. A SEA screening process must therefore be undertaken, focussing solely on this modification, and including any potential for combined or cumulative effects.

The first step of the screening process is to undertake a pre-screening check using the decision tree presented in **Figure 2** of the ODPM Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (**Figure 3-1**). The decision tree is based on a series of administrative questions that allows rapid screening–out of plans and programmes that clearly will not result in any environmental impacts, and screening-in of those that definitely do require a SEA.

The outcomes of the pre-screening stage for the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 are as follows:

- The Plan is subject to preparation and adoption by a national authority, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI);
- The Plan is required under the Floods Directive, as implemented in Northern Ireland through The Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009' and amendments;
- The Plan is prepared for water management;

¹³ [SEA Environmental Report for NI FRMPs 2015-2021](#)

- The 2nd cycle 2021-2027 Plan is a minor modification of the 1st cycle 2015-2021 Plan, with the potential to provide a framework for development consent for projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive. As no additional measures are included in the 2nd cycle FRMP, above and beyond those outlined in the 1st cycle Plans, the potential for the Plan modification to provide a framework for development consent for projects subject to EIA relates solely to the inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR in the updated Plan.

This final point leads to Box 8 of **Figure 3-1** ‘Is the modification to the Plan likely to have a significant effect on the environment?’ Environmental significance screening must therefore be undertaken in order to establish the environmental significance of this Plan modification.

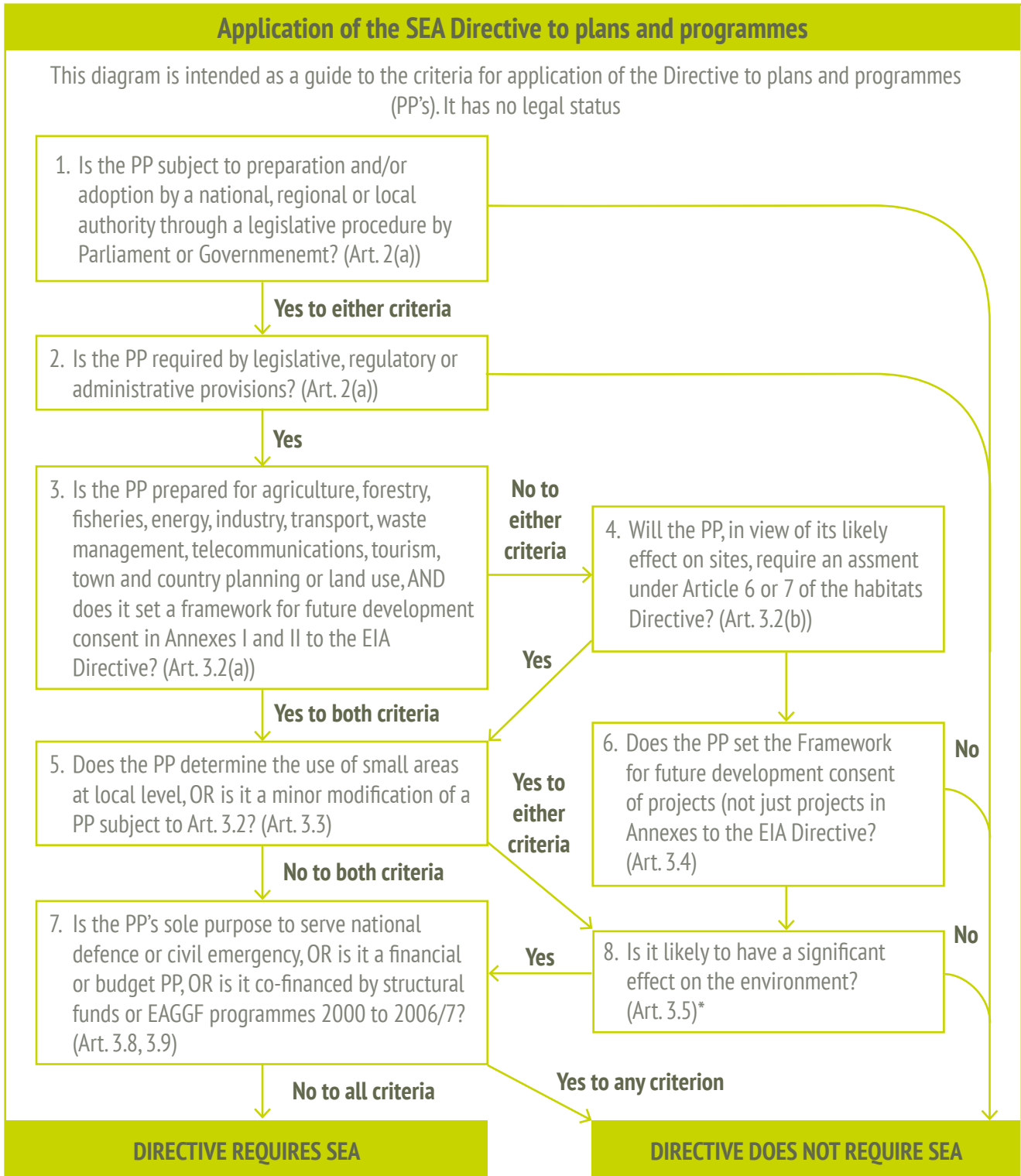
Table 3-1: Proposed Measures, Types and Activities of the FRMPs 2021-2027

Measures	Measures Type	Measures Activities
Flood Prevention	Keep new development outside Flood Risk Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to planning authorities to ensure that new zonings are located outside flood risk areas. • Provide advice to planning authorities to ensure that individual applications are located outside flood risk areas. • Include appropriate consideration of Climate Change in information and advice to planning authorities. UKCP18 to be considered in 2nd cycle FRMP.
	Ensure new development within Flood Risk Areas is suitably constructed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with Planning Policy Advice aim to ensure that any development which is located “by exception” in flood risk areas is appropriately built with flood resistance/resilience measures. • All proposed development applications are accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Assessment.
	Surface Water Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the application of SuDS to all new developments. • Develop Enhanced Drainage Area Plans for all APSFR.
Flood Protection	Maintenance of Existing Drainage and Flood Defence Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to Inspect and maintain designated watercourse grilles, road gullies as appropriate and as funding allows. • Continue to regularly inspect the condition of all Drainage and Flood Defence Assets. • Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works for the maintenance of all Drainage Assets and Flood Defence Assets. • Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works for the maintenance of public sewers and storm drainage systems.
	New Flood Alleviation and Drainage Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to carry out feasibility studies to identify viable solutions. • Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works of flood defence and flood alleviation schemes. • Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works of integrated surface water drainage schemes. • Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works to separate surface water systems from combined sewer systems liaising with other drainage bodies.

Measures	Measures Type	Measures Activities
Flood Protection	Catchment Based Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with others through partnership arrangements to progress measures that deliver multiple benefits for flood risk, climate change adaptation, water quality and biodiversity. Initiate discussions with DAERA on how future agricultural and land support measures may include flood risk management options Consider if there may be possible groundwater flood risk in APSFR.
Flood Preparedness	Flood Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with other responsible bodies on identifying local flooding hotspots and co-ordination of response procedures along with Blue Light responders. Continue to prepare and engage with other responders on multi Agency flood emergency response plans to those areas at known flood risk, e.g. coastal flood response plans. Continue to engage with local communities in those areas of known flood risk. Continue to test emergency response plans through Multi Agency 'Exercising'. Continue to work with Co responders in line with Flood Emergency Response "Best Practice Guidelines".
	Flood Warning and Informing suitable for NI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal engagement with the Met Office in a 'partnering' approach to better inform the impact assessment of National Severe Weather Warnings for heavy rainfall. Ensuring adequate 'Informing' in relation to flood risk through community engagement Public dissemination of water level information. This includes the use of River level text warnings, where these are likely to be beneficial. Review and Development.
	Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with the other drainage agencies, the emergency services, local government, NIHE, Red Cross, Consumer Council, Met Office, etc., to develop and establish a consistent approach to flood warning and informing activities across Northern Ireland.
	Communication of Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with communities to facilitate the informing aspect of 'Flood Warning and Information' proposals. Continue to update and improve flood risk information on the Flood Maps (NI). Continue to improve information on flooding on the NI Direct Website. Continue to work with NI Direct in the development of the Flooding Incident Line (FIL). Continue to consult with communities and stakeholders to make them aware of their roles and responsibilities in assessing and managing flood risk. Seek to issue timely media messages to inform the Public of significant flooding events.
	Individual Property Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Pilot scheme for grant aiding Individual Property Protection is currently operating. Eligibility is assessed on the likelihood of future flooding and the frequency of past flooding events.

Measures	Measures Type	Measures Activities
Flood Preparedness	Flood Recovery, Welfare and Insurance Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to carry out and contribute to flood investigations to gather information and improve knowledge and action on future flood events.• Continue to work with Councils and local communities at flood risk in providing advice and information to aid recovery after a flood event.• Continue to engage and work with voluntary sector organisations such as the Red Cross in providing Welfare Support.• Continue to work with the insurance industry with respect to flood insurance issues, including “FloodRe” in NI, to help address long term flood insurance affordability issues.

Figure 3-1: SEA Pre-Screening Check Decision Tree



* The Directive requires Member /States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

4: Environmental Significance Screening

The pre-screening process indicated that a SEA may be required for the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027. The pre-screening check indicated that the inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR in the updated Plan had the potential to provide a framework for development consent for projects subject to EIA.

Therefore this Plan modification must be further assessed by querying against the environmental criteria contained in Schedule 1 of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. These Criteria relate to the specific characteristics of the Plan modification and are detailed in Section 4.1 below.

4.1 The Characteristics of the Plan

4.1.1 Criteria a

The degree to which the modification to the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.

Larne was identified as a new APSFR in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027; this area was not included as a SFRA in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 and, as such, was not included in the SEA of the 1st cycle Plans. However, the SEA of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 did not examine site-specific impacts, as the Plans did not include details of specific measure types to manage flood risk on a geographic basis. Instead it examined the *range of measures* proposed and their potential impact on the SEA topics at a strategic level. The 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 also does not detail the specific measure types to be applied for each APSFR and no new measures (including structural measures) are proposed.

At the SEA level, the details of any measures to be included for Larne APSFR are not yet known in relation to their location, nature, size or impact upon operating conditions or the potential resultant impact upon the allocation of resources. It is therefore only possible to assess such measures generically, relating them to the SEA objectives. This level of assessment was carried out as part of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. Therefore the approach taken for the SEA of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 remains valid, and the inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 does not change the types of effects that may arise from the Plan implementation and therefore **does not affect the outcomes of the 1st cycle FRMPs SEA assessment.**

4.1.2 Criteria b

The degree to which the modification to the Plan influences other plans including those in a hierarchy.

The 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 is a National level Plan, as demonstrated in **Table 4.1**. The Plan is influenced by overarching European and National policies and legislation, while it will influence lower tiered Plans at the sub-regional and local level, such as Local Area Plans. No additional measures are proposed for inclusion in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027. The inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 represents the sole modification to the Plan,

and is only likely to influence sub-regional and local level plans. This minor modification to the FRMP could not be considered to be a significant influence upon these plans, or any plans that may be derived from them in the future, over and above the statutory requirement to comply with EC legislation and in particular the Floods Directive and the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021, which were the subject of a full SEA.

Table 4-1 Summary of Key Plans, Programmes and Legislation Relevant to the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027

Level	Plan/Programme/Legislation
International and EU Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Floods Directive [2007/60/EC] • Habitats Directive [92/43/EEC] • Birds Directive [2009/147/EC] • Bonn Convention [L210, 19/07/1982 (1983)] • Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Valletta1992) • Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada1985) • Drinking Water Directive [98/83/EC] • EIA Directive [85/337/EEC] [2014/52/EU] • Environmental Liability Directive [2004/35/EC] • Environmental Quality Standards Directive [2008/105/EC] • EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 [COM(2011)244] • European Landscape Convention [ETS No. 176] • Groundwater Directive [80/68/EEC] and Daughter Directive [2006/118/EC] • Marine Strategy Framework Directive [2008/56/EC] • Maritime Spatial Planning Directive [2014/89/EU] • Nitrates Directive [91/676/EEC] • Renewable Energy Directive [2009/28/EC] • SEA Directive [2001/42/EC] • Second European Climate Change Programme [ECCP II] 2005. • Sewage Sludge Directive [86/278/EEC] • Soils Thematic Strategy [COM(2006) 231] • Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive [91/271/EEC] • Water Framework Directive [2000/60/EC] • Bathing Water Directive [2006/7/EC] • World Heritage Convention [WHC-2005/WS/02] • Environmental Noise Directive [2002/49/EC] • The EU REACH Initiative Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH) • OSPAR Convention – Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the NE Atlantic • Ramsar Convention - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971 (amended 1982 and 1987) • UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) • Aarhus Convention • The Stockholm Convention (2001) • UN Kyoto Protocol • Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol • The United Nations Framework • Integrated Energy and Climate change package 2007 • UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Level	Plan/Programme/Legislation
National Level	<p>United Kingdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Post 2012 Biodiversity Framework • Civil Contingencies Act 2004 • Pollution and Prevention and Control Act 1999 (Integrates Directive (96/61/EC) • Coast Protection Act 1949 • UK Marine Policy Statement • Climate Change Act 2008 • National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 (including Adaption Framework) • Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act <p>Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI FRMP 2015-2021 • 'The Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009' (SR 376/2009) • The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 • The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 and amendments. • Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (S.I. 2007/184) • The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order 1985 (NCALCO) as amended in the Environment Order (NI) 2002 • The Environment (NI) Order 2002 • The Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (NI) 1995 • Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2002 (including NI Species and Habitat Action Plan and Departmental Biodiversity Implementation Plan) • Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 • Shaping Our Future – Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025, DRD, September 2001 and Shaping Our Future – Adjustments to the Regional Development Strategy – 2025, June 2008 • The Water (NI) Order 1999 • Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 • Control Of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (NI) 2010 • The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 • The Surface Waters (Dangerous Substances) (Classification) Regulations (NI) 1998 (SR 397 of 1998) • The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1990 • The Groundwater Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 • The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and Nitrates Action Programme and Phosphorus Regulations 2011-2014 • The Industrial Pollution Control (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (No. 2777 (N.I. 18)) • The Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (No. 662 (N.I. 6)) • The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Level	Plan/Programme/Legislation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 • The Urban The Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 • Revised Planning Policy Statement 15 – Planning and Flood Risk • Living with Water Programme • Sustainable Water – A long Term Strategy for Northern Ireland (2016) • Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 • The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland • Marine Act (NI) 2013 • Climate Change Risk Assessment for Northern Ireland (2012) • Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Action Plan • NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme (2014) • Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 • PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage • Article 42 (1) of the Planning Order 1991 – Listed Buildings • A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (DOE, 1993) • Strategic Planning Policy Statement (DfI, September 2015) • PPS 1 - General Principles (DOE, March 1998) • PPS 2 - Planning and Nature Conservation (DOE, June 1997) • PPS 4: Planning and Economic Development (DOE, November 2010) • PPS 8 -Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (DOE, 2004) • PPS 13 – Transportation and Land Use (DRD, February 2005) • PPS 21- Sustainable Development in the Countryside (DOE, June, 2010) <p>Republic of Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inland Fisheries Act 2010 (No. 10 of 2010) • Flora Protection Order 1999 • The Wildlife Act 1976 and The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 • Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 • Water Quality Standards for Phosphorus) Regulations 1998 (SI 258 of 1998) • Water Quality in Ireland 2005: Key indicators of the Aquatic Environment • The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland: A Report for the Year 2011 • Towards setting guideline values for the protection of groundwater in Ireland (2003) • The Waste Management Act 1996 and amendments

Level	Plan/Programme/Legislation
Sub-Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antrim Area Plan • Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 • Armagh Area Plan 2004 • Ballymacoss Local Plan • Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 • Ballymoney Town Centre Local Plan 1991-2002 • Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 • Bangor Town Centre Plan • Belfast Harbour Local Plan 1990-2005 • Belfast Metropolitan Area Draft Plan 2015 • Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 • Carickfergus Area Plan 2001 • Carryduff Local Area Plan 1988-1993 • Cookstown Area Plan 2010 • Craigavon Area Plan 2010 • Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designation Plan 2010 • Derry Area Plan 2011 • Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010 • Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 • Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015 • Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005 • Larne Area Plan 1984-2010 • Limavady Area Plan 1984-1999 • Limavady District Hamlet Subject Plan 1989-1999 • Limavady Local Plan (South East Lands) 1998-1999 • Lisburn Area Plan 2001 • Lisburn Town Centre Local Plan • Magherafelt Area Plan 2015 • Newtownabbey Draft Area Plan 2005 • North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 • North East Area Plan 1987-2002 • Northern Area Plan 2016 • Omagh Area Plan 1987-2002 • Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001

4.1.3 Criteria c

The relevance of the modification to the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The measures proposed in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 advocated for future sustainable development by aiming to prevent unsustainable development within flood zones. The measures in the Plans also promoted greater resilience to, and preparedness for, flooding, which makes communities more sustainable.

At the SEA level, the details of any measures to be included for Larne APSFR are not yet known. It is therefore only possible to assess such measures generically, relating them to the SEA objectives. This level of assessment was carried out as part of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. The SEA for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 assessed the integration of environmental considerations into any potential development at a strategic level. It examined the **range of measures** proposed (including structural measures) and their potential impact on the SEA topics at a strategic level rather than a site-specific approach, and therefore the inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR in the 2nd cycle FRMPs 2021-2027 does not change the types of effects that may arise from the Plan implementation and therefore **does not affect the outcomes of the 1st cycle FRMPs SEA assessment.**

4.1.4 Criteria d

Environmental problems relevant to the modification to the Plan.

The 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 were anticipated to have the potential for environmental problems from the development and maintenance of flood risk management measures that could potentially impact upon biodiversity, flora, fauna, population, human health, soils, water, climate, material assets, cultural heritage, architectural heritage and archaeological heritage and landscape.

The SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 outlined the potential for significant environmental effects on SEA topics arising from implementation of the potential flood risk management measures, and suggested mitigatory measures for these. As no new measures are proposed in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 that could set the framework for development into which environmental considerations should be integrated, the inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR does not affect the outcomes of the 1st cycle SEA assessment. The 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 modification **is not regarded as having the potential to have a significant environmental effect.**

4.1.5 Criteria e

The relevance of the modification to the Plan for the implementation of European Union Legislation on the Environment (e.g. Plans linked to Waste-management or Water Protection)

As the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 updates the existing 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021, which are statutory documents produced as a requirement of the Floods Directive, the minor modification (inclusion of Larne as an APSFR) to the updated Plan is directly relevant to the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment.

The generic range of measures outlined in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 have the potential for significant effects on the environment, and these potential effects were the subject of SEA as part of the production of the Plans. The minor modification of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 to include Larne as an APSFR does not change the types of effects at a strategic level.

4.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area likely to be Affected

4.2.1 Criteria a

The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The SEA of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 did not examine site-specific impacts, as the Plans did not include details of specific measure types to manage flood risk on a geographic basis (while 'Protection' measures may include site-specific structural measures, at Plan stage there is not a focus on spatial measures). Instead it examined the potential impact of generic measures, and measure types, and provided an overview of the likely impacts of protection activity types, which could then be developed and refined on a site-specific basis. The characteristics of potential effects on SEA topics were outlined in Table 10 and Appendix 3 of the SEA Environmental Report¹⁴, along with proposed mitigation measures to address any adverse potential effects (including Plan-level actions and EIA guidance and suggested project-level mitigation).

The minor modification of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 to be screened for likely significant effects is the inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR; this area was not included as a SFRA in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 and, as such, was not included in the SEA of these Plans. However, the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 also does not detail the specific measures or measure types to be applied for Larne APSFR, including the location, nature or size of any potential structural Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS), and therefore the site-specific characteristics of any effects arising from the inclusion of Larne as an APSFR cannot be known at this time. It is therefore only possible to assess the potential effects of such measures and measure types generically, as was carried out as part of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. None of the measure types proposed for the management of flood risk in APSFR have changed from those outlined in the 1st cycle FRMPs. These measures were all assessed nationally in the SEA Environmental Report prepared for the 1st cycle Plans, and therefore there is nothing additional to be assessed for the updated Plan for Larne APSFR.

The next stage of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 implementation will require further assessment at APSFR level. Any project-level FAS proposed for individual APSFR, including Larne, may be subject to a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment implemented by DfI Rivers or other responsible implementing bodies. The EIA process will assess the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any potential adverse environmental effects and develop these mitigation measures at a project level for any FAS proposed for Larne APSFR. This follows the same approach as the 1st cycle SEA assessment.

¹⁴ [SEA Environmental Report for the NI FRMPs 2015-2021](#)

4.2.2 Criteria b

The cumulative nature of the effects

The SEA Environmental Report of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 assessed the cumulative effects of the Plans (all preferred options) across the entire study area on each SEA topic, e.g. assessed the total effect on water quality that is likely to result from the implementation of the Plans. The inclusion of Larne as a new APSFR is a minor modification of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021, and will not result in any additional cumulative effects on SEA topics at Plan level, as no new measure types are included in the updated Plan, above and beyond those already assessed in the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021.

Any project-level FAS proposed for individual APSFR, including Larne, may be subject to a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment implemented by DfI Rivers or other responsible implementing bodies. The EIA process will assess any potential for cumulative effects at project level. This follows the same approach as the 1st cycle SEA assessment.

4.2.3 Criteria c

The transboundary nature of the effects

The objectives and preferred options identified in the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 were focused on Northern Ireland (the jurisdiction for DARD Rivers Agency, and now for the WDPD of DfI). Proposals within the Plans were limited to Northern Ireland, with a close liaison with the Office of Public Works (OPW), as the Competent Authority in the Republic of Ireland, for the two International River Basin Districts (IRBDs) (Neagh Bann and North Western). As measures in the Plans to address flood risk will essentially be located within Northern Ireland, and also because, with the exception of the Erne system (in the North Western IRBD), for the most part cross border river catchments drain into Northern Ireland and not towards the RoI. It was not anticipated that any measures would result in significant transboundary effects or additional SEA topics.

The minor modification to the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 includes Larne as an APSFR. As any measures proposed to address flood risk in Larne will also be located within the North Eastern RBD which is fully contained in Northern Ireland, there will be no transboundary impacts. However, if during the course of implementing the FRMP, other significant environmental impacts seem likely, the scope of the assessment will be expanded accordingly.

4.2.4 Criteria d

The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

The SEA Environmental Report of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 assessed the potential for significant impacts on human health and the environment as SEA topics. It did not examine site-specific impacts, as the Plans did not include details of specific measure types to manage flood risk on a geographic basis, but instead examined the potential impact of generic measures, and measure types, and provided an overview of the likely impacts of protection activity types on SEA topics. The potential effects on human health and the environment were outlined in

Table 10 and Appendix 3 of the SEA Environmental Report¹⁵, along with proposed mitigation measures to address any adverse potential effects (including Plan-level actions, EIA guidance and suggested project-level mitigation).

The minor modification to the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 includes Larne as an APSFR. However, the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 also does not detail the specific measures or measure types to be applied for Larne APSFR, including the location, nature or size of any potential structural FAS, and therefore the site-specific characteristics of any effects arising from the inclusion of Larne as an APSFR cannot be known at this time. It is therefore only possible to assess the potential effects on human health and the environment of such measures and measure types generically, as was carried out as part of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. None of the measure types proposed for the management of flood risk in APSFR have changed from those outlined in the 1st cycle FRMPs. These measure types were all assessed nationally in the SEA Environmental Report prepared for the 1st cycle Plans, and therefore there is nothing additional to be assessed for the updated Plan for Larne APSFR. The next stage of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 implementation will require further assessment at APSFR level. Any project-level FAS proposed for individual APSFR, including Larne, may be subject to a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment implemented by DfI Rivers or other responsible implementing bodies. The EIA process will assess any potential for adverse effects on human health and the environment, and develop these mitigation measures at a project level for any FAS proposed for Larne APSFR. This follows the same approach as the 1st cycle SEA assessment.

4.2.5 Criteria e

The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The SEA Environmental Report of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 did not examine site-specific impacts, as the Plans did not include details of specific measure types to manage flood risk on a geographic basis (while 'Protection' measures may include site-specific structural measures, at Plan stage there is not a focus on spatial measures). Instead it examined the potential impact of generic measures, and measure types, and provided an overview of the likely impacts of protection activity types, which could then be honed on a site-specific basis. The characteristics of potential effects on SEA topics were outlined in Table 10 and Appendix 3 of the SEA Environmental Report¹⁶, along with proposed mitigation measures to address any adverse potential effects (including Plan-level actions and EIA guidance and suggested project-level mitigation).

The minor modification to the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 includes Larne as an APSFR. However, the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 also does not detail the specific measures or measure types to be applied for Larne APSFR, including the location, nature or size of any potential structural FAS, and therefore the site-specific magnitude and spatial extent of any effects arising from the inclusion of Larne as an APSFR cannot be known at this time. It is therefore only possible to assess the potential effects of such measures and measure types generically, as was carried out as part of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. None of the measure types proposed for the management of flood risk in APSFR have changed from those

¹⁵ [SEA Environmental Report for the NI FRMPs 2015-2021](#)

¹⁶ [SEA Environmental Report for the NI FRMPs 2015-2021](#)

outlined in the 1st cycle FRMPs. These measure types were all assessed nationally in the SEA Environmental Report prepared for the 1st cycle Plans, and therefore there is nothing additional to be assessed for the updated Plan for Larne APSFR.

The next stage of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 implementation will require further assessment at APSFR level. Any project-level FAS proposed for individual APSFR, including Larne, may be subject to a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment implemented by DfI Rivers or other responsible implementing bodies. The EIA process will assess the magnitude and spatial extent of any potential adverse environmental effects, and develop these mitigation measures at a project level for any FAS proposed for Larne APSFR. This follows the same approach as the 1st cycle SEA assessment.

4.2.6 Criteria f

The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

- a) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
- b) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; and
- c) Intensive land-use

As discussed above, the SEA Environmental Report of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021 did not examine site-specific impacts, as the Plans did not include details of specific measure types to manage flood risk on a geographic basis (while 'Protection' measures may include site-specific structural measures, at Plan stage there is not a focus on spatial measures). Instead it examined the potential impact of generic measures, and measure types, and provided an overview of the likely impacts of protection activity types, which could then be honed on a site-specific basis. The characteristics of potential effects on SEA topics were outlined in Table 10 and Appendix 3 of the SEA Environmental Report¹⁷, along with proposed mitigation measures to address any adverse potential effects (including Plan-level actions and EIA guidance and suggested project-level mitigation).

The minor modification to the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 includes Larne as an APSFR. However, the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 also does not detail the specific measures or measure types to be applied for Larne APSFR, including the location, nature or size of any potential structural FAS, and therefore the site-specific value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by any effects arising from the inclusion of Larne as an APSFR cannot be known at this time. It is therefore only possible to assess the potential effects of such measures and measure types generically, as was carried out as part of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. These measure types were all assessed nationally in the SEA Environmental Report prepared for the 1st cycle Plans, and therefore there is nothing additional to be assessed for the updated Plan for Larne APSFR.

The next stage of the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 implementation will require further assessment at APSFR level. Any project-level FAS proposed for individual APSFR, including Larne, may be subject to a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment implemented by DfI Rivers or other responsible implementing bodies. The EIA process will assess the site-specific value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by any potential adverse environmental effects, and develop these mitigation measures at a project level for any FAS proposed for Larne APSFR.

¹⁷ [SEA Environmental Report for the NI FRMPs 2015-2021](#)

This follows the same approach as the 1st cycle SEA assessment.

4.2.7 Criteria g

The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

The area covered by the 2nd cycle FRMPs 2021-2027 contains a variety of habitats and species of conservation concern which are protected under a number of European and national designations. Areas which have been designated for the protection of habitats and species include the following:

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated in accordance with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) for the conservation of certain habitats and species and protected by the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (NI) 1995. There are currently 58 sites designated as SACs in Northern Ireland. Species listed on Annex II or Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and afforded protection through the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (NI) 1995 may also be present outside of designated sites within this area.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) for the protection of birds of conservation concern and protected by the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (NI) 1995. Together with SACs these European sites form part of the Natura 2000 or N2K Network. There are currently 16 sites designated as SPAs in Northern Ireland.

Ramsar Sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance for the protection of wetland areas (which are important feeding habitats for birds). All Ramsar Sites are also recognised as SPAs and/or SACs and so are afforded protection by the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (NI) 1995. There are currently 23 sites designated as Ramsar Sites in Northern Ireland.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) are designated under the Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002, as they are considered important wildlife and geological sites. There are currently 394 sites designated as ASSIs in Northern Ireland.

Nature Reserves are identified as being important habitats to support wildlife and are protected under Ministerial Order. There are 48 National Nature Reserves in Northern Ireland.

There are 2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites within Northern Ireland, the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site and the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was carried out, as required by 'The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)' to test for likely significance of any impacts of the measures proposed in the 2nd cycle FRMPs 2021-2027 on designated European sites (European Natura 2000 or N2K sites, including SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites). The HRA was considered in the context of the N2K sites identified within the potential zone of influence of the FRMP 2021-2027 measures, their Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests and any conservation objectives which have been set. From the findings of the HRA exercise, it was concluded that the proposed FRMP 2021-2027:

- Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any N2K site;
- Having applied measures appropriate at a plan level intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the implementation of the Plan on N2K sites; and taking into consideration the safeguarding regime of lower level screening for appropriate assessment or appropriate assessment as the case may be at a project level for any flood protection projects brought forward from the FRMP 2021-2027 prior to those projects being consented under the planning code; it is concluded that implementation of the FRMP 2021-2027 will not adversely affect the integrity of any N2K site, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of those sites.

5: Conclusions

No additional measure types are proposed for inclusion in the 2nd cycle FRMP, above and beyond those described and assessed in the 1st cycle Plans. Supplementary measure activities either expand upon measure types already assessed in the 1st cycle FRMPs (catchment based management) or represent additional flood prevention policies, and do not have the potential to provide a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive.

The only minor modification contained within the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 is the change of risk category for some of the 'at risk' areas. Larne is now included as an APSFR, and therefore measures have been proposed in the 2nd cycle FRMP to manage the flood risk in this area. As this site was not included in the 1st cycle FRMPs, this minor modification was screened in this report. None of the measures proposed for the management of flood risk in APSFR have changed from those outlined in the 1st cycle FRMPs. These measures were all assessed nationally in the SEA Environmental Report prepared for the 1st cycle Plans, and therefore there is nothing additional to be assessed for the updated Plan. Should any potential for likely significant effects be identified at the project stage for any APSFR, these can be fully assessed through the requirement for a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment implemented by DfI Rivers or other responsible implementing bodies.

Given that the SEA Screening and HRA have determined that the minor modifications proposed in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 do not have the potential for significant effects on the environment or on designated N2K sites at the Plan level, no further SEA or HRA steps are proposed to be undertaken for the updated Plan. The updated Plan will however need to consider the outcomes and recommendations of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs, as these remain valid. This SEA Screening and accompanying HRA will be provided to the statutory consultees for SEA in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland for review. These consultees are:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG);
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM);
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment (DCCA), and
- Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht (DCHG).

A timescale of 5 weeks is proposed for these consultees to respond with their views on the SEA Screening and HRA of the 2nd cycle FRMPs 2021-2027.

5.1 Post Consultation Update

Responses to the SEA Screening were received from the following consultees:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), and
- Office of Public Works

These responses are provided in Appendix B of this report.

The consultees agreed with the conclusion that there was no requirement to complete a full SEA for the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027, as this was considered a minor modification to the 1st cycle Plans. The proposed measures were all assessed nationally in the SEA Environmental Report (2015) prepared for the 1st cycle Plans, and therefore there is nothing additional to be assessed for the updated Plan. The updated Plan will however need to consider the outcomes and recommendations of the SEA Environmental Report for the 1st cycle FRMPs, as these remain valid. Detailed recommendations were provided by the consultees which have been incorporated into this report, the SEA Monitoring Report, the HRA and the draft Plan where applicable.

DAERA recommended that DfI should undertake a full HRA consideration for all Flood Risk Areas before adoption, as new N2K sites have been designated since the 1st cycle FRMP and indicate if there are any significant changes to context over time (such as any new designations, significant changes to conservation status or policy context) which would amend the conclusions of the original assessment. It was recommended that the previous HRA for the 1st cycle could be used as the basis of the new HRA (alongside the detailed consideration of the new modification). Following this recommendation a full HRA was undertaken, which concluded that having applied measures appropriate at a plan level intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the implementation of the Plan on N2K sites; and taking into consideration the safeguarding regime of lower level screening for AA, or AA as the case may be, at a project level for any flood protection projects brought forward from the NI FRMP prior to those projects being consented under the planning code; it is concluded that implementation of the NI FRMP 2021-2027 will not adversely affect the integrity of any N2K site.

The draft NI FRMP 2021 – 2027 will be published for public consultation, along with this SEA Screening Report, the SEA Monitoring Report, the HRA, and the SEA Environmental Report (2015). Note, following this SEA Screening consultation the Proposed Measures, Types and Activities of the FRMP 2021-2027, which are provided in Table 3-1 of this report, have had their descriptions slightly updated for clarity purposes within the draft Plan, however the measures, measure types and activities are essentially the same as those screened in this assessment.

6: References

- Council Directive 2007/60/EC on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks.
- Council Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment and Effects of Certain Plans or Programmes on the Environment.
- ODPM (2005). A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
- Scott, P. and Marsden, P. (2003). Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland.
- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.
- The Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

Appendix A

Measures, Types and Activities of the FRMPs 2015-2021

Measures	Measure Type	Measure Activities
Flood Prevention	Keep new development outside Flood Risk Areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to ensure that new zonings are located outside flood risk areas. Try to ensure that individual applications are located outside flood risk areas.
	Ensure new development within Flood Risk Areas is suitably constructed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with PPS 15 try to ensure that any development which is located “by exception” in flood risk areas is appropriately built with flood resistance/resilience measures. All proposed development applications are accompanied by a Flood Risk or Drainage Assessment.
	Surface Water Management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the application of SuDS to all new developments.
Flood Protection	Maintenance of the Existing Drainage and Flood Defence Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to inspect and maintain designated watercourse grilles as appropriate and as funding allows. Continue to regularly inspect the condition of all drainage and Flood Defence Assets. Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works for the maintenance of all drainage and Flood Defence Assets. Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works for the maintenance of public sewer schemes.
	New Flood Alleviation Schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to carry out feasibility studies to identify viable solutions. Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works of flood defence and culvert alleviation schemes. Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works of integrated surface water drainage schemes. Continue to implement a prioritised programme of works to separate surface water systems from combined sewer systems.
	Catchment Based Management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for opportunities to work with others through partnership arrangements.
Flood Preparedness	Flood Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to engage with other responsible bodies on identifying local flooding hotspots and co-ordination of response procedures along with Blue Light responders. We will continue to prepare and engage with other responders on multi Agency flood emergency response plans to those areas at known flood risk, e.g. coastal flood response plans. We will continue to engage with local Communities in those areas at known flood risk. We will continue to test emergency response plans through Multi Agency ‘Exercising’. We will continue to work with Co-responders in line with Flood Emergency Response “Best Practice Guidelines”.

Measures	Measure Type	Measure Activities
Flood Preparedness	Flood Warning and Informing suitable for NI	<p>4 Stage Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal engagement with the Met Office in a ‘partnering’ approach to better inform the impact assessment of National Severe Weather Warnings for heavy rainfall. Ensuring adequate ‘Informing’ in relation to flood risk to enable responders and the public to be effective in dealing with flooding. Public dissemination of water level information. This includes the use of River level text warnings, where these are likely to be beneficial. Review and Development.
	Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers Agency is working with the other drainage agencies, the emergency services, local government, NIHE, Red Cross, Consumer Council, Met Office, etc., to develop and establish a consistent approach to flood warning and informing activities across Northern Ireland.
	Communication of Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to engage with communities to facilitate the informing aspect of ‘Flood Warning and Information’ proposals. We will continue to update and improve flood risk information on the Flood Maps (NI). We will continue to improve information on flooding on the NI Direct Website. We will continue to work with NI Direct in the development of the Flooding Incident Line (FIL). Continue to consult and hold flood forums with stakeholders and others to make them aware of their role and responsibilities in assessing and managing flood risk. Seek to issue timely media messages to inform the Public of significant flooding events.
	Individual Property Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A proposed scheme for grant aiding Individual Property Protection is currently being progressed. Eligibility will be assessed on the likelihood of future flooding and the frequency of past flooding events. The introduction of such a scheme would be a significant step forward and be a key ‘building block’ in enhancing community resilience to flooding.
	Flood Recovery, Welfare and Insurance Issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to carry out and contribute to post flood investigations to gather information and improve knowledge and action on future flood events. We will continue to work with Councils and local communities at flood risk in providing advice and information to aid recovery after a flood event. We will continue to engage and work with voluntary section organisations such as the Red Cross in providing Welfare Support. We will continue to work with the insurance industry to assist them in introducing “FloodRe” to NI to help address long term flood insurance affordability issues.

Appendix B

SEA Screening Consultee Responses



Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 Natural Environment Division
 Klondyke Building
 Cromac Avenue
 Gasworks Business Park
 Malone Lower
 BELFAST
 BT7 2JA

Linda MacHugh
 Director of Water and Drainage Policy
 Division
 Department for Infrastructure
 Clarence Court
 10-18 Adelaide Street
 BELFAST
 BT2 8GB

16th July 2020

Dear Ms MacHugh

RE: Consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 - 2027

Thank you for your e-mail and letter dated 17th June 2020. The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Team welcome the opportunity to comment on Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 – 2027.

DAERA and Department for Communities Historic Environment Division (HED) have considered the consultation and associated documents and our opinions are set out below.

Introduction

NIEA, DAERA have received a Consultation from DfI on Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for the 2nd cycle of flood risk management planning under the Floods Directive for the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan (NI FRMP) 2021 – 2027. This includes:

- Letter detailing Consultation on SEA and HRA;
- SEA Screening Report FRMP 2021-2027;
- SEA Monitoring Report FRMP 2021-2027; and
- HRA Assessment Report FRMP 2021-2027

NIEA, DAERA notes that: DfI states the opinion that a full SEA is not required for

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this NI FRMP 2021-2027 as it constitutes a minor modification of the 1st cycle FRMPs (the SEA Environmental Report and HRA for the 1st cycle FRMPs can be found at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/flood-risk-management-plans>), that no additional measure types are proposed for inclusion in the updated Plan and that whilst the NI FRMP now contains the Lame area as a new flood risk area, DfI state that none of the generic flood risk management measures proposed for at risk areas, including Lame, have changed from those assessed in the SEA for the 1st cycle Plans. A fresh HRA (for the new Lame flood risk area) has been undertaken of the minor modifications included in the updated Plan and it has been concluded that Plan implementation will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

The introduction of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the NI FRMP 2021-2027 quotes from the legislation that an "assessment is required for certain categories of plans and programmes only where they are determined to have significant environmental effects. Regulation 5(6)(b) of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 states that an environmental assessment need not be carried out for a minor modification to a plan or programme..... unless it has been determined under Regulation 9(1) that the plan, programme or modification, as the case may be, is likely to have significant environmental effects".

The HRA for NI FRMP 2021-2027 states that " For the twelve areas identified in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027, including Lame APSFR, there is no certainty at this strategic stage as to whether any additional flood protection approaches will be proposed and what their nature would be. This will depend on the undertaking and outcome of feasibility studies" and " For Lame APSFR, should any flood protection scheme propose a structural approach where there is a potential for impact on a N2K site, the proposal will go through a separate and specific project level HRA, which will look more closely at the potential impacts, options and mitigation for the work. This will facilitate avoidance measures to be carried out at the earliest opportunity at the project stage. As all N2K sites are also ASSIs under national legislation, any proposals will have to go through the assent process, with all proposals and approaches requiring agreement from NIEA before any works can proceed. This process will act as a second line of protection for N2K sites, and will ensure that any approaches implemented have been agreed through consultation with NIEA as the statutory environmental consultee".

The Screening Report for NI FRMP 2020-2027 concludes that "SEA Screening and HRA have determined that the minor modifications proposed in the 2nd cycle FRMP 2021-2027 do not have the potential for significant effects on the environment or on

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designated N2K sites at the Plan level, no further SEA or HRA steps are proposed to be undertaken for the updated Plan".

DAERA SEA Comments

DfI have followed required procedure for SEA and have concluded that a minor modification has been made to the 1st cycle FRMP and subsequently undertaken the required SEA screening for the 2nd cycle FRMP.

Having considered the 2020 Screening and Monitoring Reports, NIEA, DAERA is satisfied that the DfI have identified, assessed and proposed mitigation measures for any potential significant environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the 2nd cycle NI FRMP and that there is no further requirement to complete a full SEA.

The following points however, should be addressed to strengthen the Screening and Monitoring Reports and to ensure no likely environmental effects:

Groundwater flooding risk does not appear to be formally identified, but is almost definitely a risk for parts of Northern Ireland (it has been identified in the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England). For that reason areas of potential significant groundwater flood risk should be identified and bespoke flood prevention, protection and preparedness measures proposed which mitigate specifically against groundwater flooding, for example groundwater monitoring.

The 'Geology and soil' section (page 20) of the SEA Monitoring Report FRMP 2021-2027 states: 'No ASSIs designated for features of geological importance are located in the vicinity of the completed FASs, and there has therefore been no potential for impact'. This isn't factually accurate as Table 3-5 (page 17) includes Outer Belfast Lough ASSI. This ASSI has geological selection features, so there is potential for impact from flood alleviation schemes. The recommendation paragraph does however state that potential impacts on geological features will be considered on a project by project bases with regard to geology, which is welcomed.

It is noted the 2nd cycle of FRMP is considered by DfI to be a minor modification to the 1st cycle of FRMPs.

We are pleased to see marine policy documents and legislation included in Table 4.1 on Plans, Programmes and Legislation. For completeness it is advised that reference to the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive should also be included in this table at International/EU level.

In terms of the approach being taken, provided DfI is satisfied the SEA assessment that accompanied the 1st cycle of FRMP fully assessed the likely effects upon

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marine aspects across relevant SEA topic areas, the Marine Plan Team would have no further comments on this Screening Report. For example, the assessment should have considered the potential impacts on marine cultural heritage; marine biodiversity, flora and fauna; marine water; and potential impacts on seascape as part of the landscape topic. The potential for marine transboundary effects should also have been given consideration.

The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland and the UK Marine Policy Statement set out the considerations to be taken into account in relation to decisions that affect or might affect the NI marine area. These marine policy documents will assist you in your consideration of the above and can be viewed at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/marine/marine-planning>

Monitoring Report

It is unclear if all relevant marine aspects have been included in the monitoring of effects on SEA topics from the implementation of the 1st cycle FRMPs 2015-2021. For example, it appears that status of marine/coastal waters and marine biodiversity, flora and fauna have been included, although the State of the Seas report should also be referenced. In addition, there is no clear reference to marine cultural heritage or seascape, including seascape character assessments, within the landscape section.

You are advised that consideration should also be given to monitoring relevant marine aspects and the marine policy documents above will assist you in your considerations.

Habitats Regulations Assessment Comments

In relation to HRA, DAERA suggests that DfI should undertake a full HRA consideration for all Flood Risk Areas before adoption, as new N2K sites have been designated since and indicate if there are any significant changes to context over time (such as any new designations, significant changes to conservation status or policy context) which would amend the conclusions of the original assessment. The previous HRA for the 1st cycle could be used as the basis of the new HRA (alongside the detailed consideration of the new modification).

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DIVISION COMMENTS RE CONSULTATION ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2027

DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) operate via a Service Level Agreement with colleagues in DAERA in relation to SEA, whereby, we provide authoritative comment and advice in relation to matters of Cultural Heritage including

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archaeological and architectural heritage. We make the following comments in respect of the documentation received by our office on 25 June 2020.

Screening Report

HED would advise that we have made the following observations in relation to the content of the screening report and we request that our comments be taken into account.

In relation to cultural heritage Table 4.1.2 should consider at the International Level

- Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Valletta1992)
- Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada1985)

At the national level, we consider that the following should be taken into account

- The Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015

We advise that the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act which is cited in the table does not apply in Northern Ireland.

We advise that at the sub regional level – we consider that cognisance of existing (and forthcoming) draft plan strategies for local council areas affected by the plan would be appropriate

Section 4.2.7 We note and welcome reference to the World Heritage Site at the Giants Causeway, however we advise for the purposes of accuracy that the Marble Arch Global Geopark is not designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We would nonetheless welcome its recognition as an area of natural and cultural heritage interest in the content of the report.

SEA Monitoring Report

In relation to the SEA monitoring report, HED advise that this report could be more robust in its consideration of cultural heritage. Most specifically we note a focus on Scheduled Monuments and on Listed Buildings in the bullet point text content for monitoring in section 3.2. HED advise that cultural heritage interests extend beyond these sites which have statutory designation, and that a fuller understanding of historic environment evidence should be demonstrated. We strongly recommend reference to our suite of historic environment datasets in assessment and monitoring. We consider that the broad group of identified heritage assets, (including Industrial Heritage Assets and Maritime Heritage Assets, which may have specific

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relationships with coastal and riverine areas), merit consideration. Our datasets are available at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-digital-datasets>

For datasets on wrecks and recorded maritime losses you should contact rovy.mcneary@daera-ni.gov.uk

While monitoring may be dealt with at Project Specific Level, we nonetheless consider it important that the full suite of heritage assets, available from the Historic Environment Record of Northern Ireland has recognition at this stage, alongside the intertwined relationship that cultural heritage has with landscape, seascape and the natural environment. As well as measuring the impact on the sites themselves we suggest that the potential for adverse impact on their settings should be taken into account, as this has the potential to affect how those sites are seen, experienced, understood and enjoyed. We therefore advise that at Project Specific level, - cognisance of the HED Guidance on Setting and the Historic Environment would be appropriate.

- <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-setting-and-historic-environment>

HED also advise that in addition to monitoring those direct impacts outlined in the report it may be of value to monitor where heritage assets are used as part of the means to address flood risk – i.e. through historic coastal works, or man-made waterways and historic canals.

Should you have any queries in regard to the content of our response we can be contacted at the: Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Gasworks Business Park.

Please contact the SEA Team at seateam@daera-ni.gov.uk should you have any queries or require clarification.

Yours sincerely,

PP. *C. Nolan*

Ms. Donna Whelan
Senior Scientific Officer
Natural Environment Division
NIEA, DAERA

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17th July, 2020

Water and Drainage Policy Division
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For the attention of: Linda MacHugh

Re.: Consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for the Northern Ireland Flood risk Management Plan 2021 - 2027

Dear Linda,

I refer to your letter of 17th June concerning the above. The OPW welcomes the consultation on the environmental screening and assessment of the review and update of the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) for Northern Ireland, and we note in particular that the Plan for 2021 – 2027 is an update and modification of the 1st cycle FRMPs.

We have reviewed the documentation provided, and, noting that there is limited flood risk in the border areas and that project-level assessments will be undertaken with regards to the implementation of specific flood relief schemes, we have no objection or comment on the conclusions arrived at. We would suggest that consideration might be given as to whether it would be appropriate to include the relevant FRMPs from the Republic of Ireland within the assessment of the in-combination effects (Section 5.1.5, Habitats Regulations assessment), but would not foresee this changing the conclusions of the assessment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have queries on the above.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Adamson
Assistant Chief Engineer
Flood Relief and Risk Management Division

**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government



16th July 2020

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Your Reference: IN1/20/389026

**Consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for the Northern
Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 – 2027**

Dear Ms MacHugh,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 17 June 2020 in connection with Consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 – 2027.

The Department has no objection or comments on the decision outlined in your letter, i.e. that a full SEA is not required for the NI FRMP 2021-2027. The decision to screen out the further assessment of potential transboundary impacts is reasonable based on the information provided.

Within the SEA Screening Report Section 4.2.3 relating to the transboundary nature of the effects under 'Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area likely to be Affected' clarifies that:

'As measures in the Plans to address flood risk will essentially be located within Northern Ireland, and also because, with the exception of the Erne system (in the North Western IRBD), for the most part cross border river catchments drain into Northern Ireland and not towards the RoI. It [sic] was not anticipated that any measures would result in significant transboundary effects or additional SEA topics.'





Yours sincerely,

Declan Grehan

Declan Grehan
Assistant Principal
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