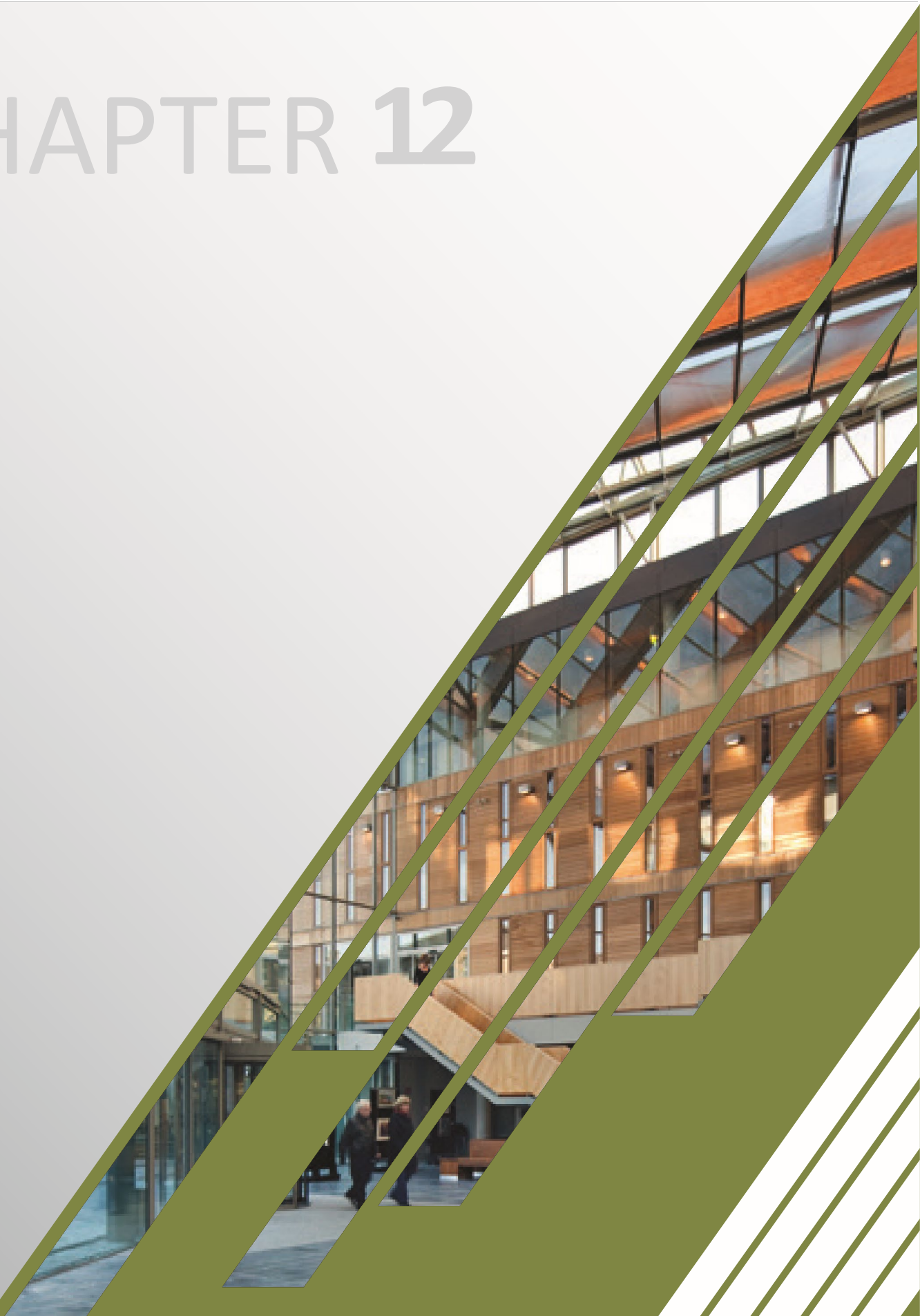


CHAPTER 12



CHAPTER 12

Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

2.12 Chapter 12 Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.1		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.8	Natura 2000 Sites Policy Objectives	348

Insert a footnote at the end of both CPO 12.5 and CPO 12.6 of the plan as follows;

CPO 12.5	Ensure that no plans, programmes, etc. or projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European Sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects). “Footnote: Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place”.
----------	---

CPO 12.6	Ensure that any plan or project that could have a significant adverse impact (either by themselves or in combination with other plans and projects) upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 Site or would result in the deterioration of any habitat or any species reliant on that habitat will not be permitted. “Footnote: Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place”.
----------	--

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.2		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.10	Rare and Protected Species and their Habitats	353

Amend CPO 12.20 of the plan as follows:

CPO 12.20	Protect and conserve NHAs and pNHAs including NHAs that become designated and notified to the Local Authority during the lifetime of the Plan and seek to develop linkages between designated sites, where feasible and as resources permit.
-----------	--

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.3		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.10	Rare and Protected Species and their Habitats	353

Amend CPO 12.21 of the plan as follows:

CPO 12.21	Lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary for personal safety and should be designed so as to avoid creating glare or emitting light above a horizontal plane. Lighting fixtures should have minimum environmental impact and Dark Sky lighting should be considered in the interest of reducing the impact of lighting on wildlife as part of any future planning application, thereby contributing towards the protection of amenity and the protection of light sensitive species such as bats EUROBATS guidelines should be applied in informing proposed development(s), where relevant.
-----------	---

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.4		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.10	Rare and Protected Species and their Habitats	353

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.21 of the plan as follows:

Require, in special circumstances, that an *'Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)'* prepared by a suitably qualified and indemnified person be undertaken for a proposed development which may potentially have a significant impact on rare and threatened species.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.5		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.11	Local Sites of Biodiversity Value and Non-Designated Sites	354

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.24 of the plan as follows:

Investigate a protocol in relation to the application of an ecosystems services scoring approach to inform the assessment of planning applications.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.6		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.14	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	358

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.38 of the plan as follows:

Support increases in tree cover in all towns and villages across Westmeath due to air quality, shade, aesthetic and health benefits they provide.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.7		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.14	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	358

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:

Support the development of a plan for the protection and maintenance of public trees in urban areas.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.8		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.14	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	358

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:

Require, where necessary, a Tree Management Plan to be submitted as part of new development proposals. Ensure that, where possible, established trees are incorporated into the overall design of new developments and are fully protected during development works in accordance with BS standards.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.9		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.14	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	358

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:

Support the preparation of a Tree Planting Policy for the County which promotes biodiversity and indigenous tree planting.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.10		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.17	Peatlands	361

Amend Section 12.17 of the plan as follows:

The Council recognises the importance of peatlands as a major natural, archaeological and non-renewable resource in addition to recognising the important historical traditions and peat management skills associated with cutting turf for domestic use. In their natural state peatlands act as long-term sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. Peatlands are the most important long-term carbon store in the terrestrial biosphere. They sequester and store atmospheric carbon for thousands of years. Given the extent of intact raised bogs in Westmeath, considerable potential exists to use this valuable resource to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.11		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.17	Peatlands	361

Amend CPO 12.58 of the plan as follows:

CPO 12.58	Exercise control of peat extraction, both individually and cumulatively, which would have significant impacts on the environment, <i>in accordance with legislative provisions, in the interest of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change.</i>
-----------	---

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.12		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.17	Peatlands	362

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.65 of the plan as follows:

Support the implementation of the 'National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022' within the County.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.13		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.20	A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Westmeath	364

Amend text in section 12.20 of the plan as follows:

A Green Infrastructure Strategy will include provisions for improved access across Westmeath through improved walking and cycling routes, *that would include looped walks and cycles both through towns and rural area*, whilst also ensuring adequate protection to the existing environment and ecology of the landscape.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.14		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.22	Greenways	368

Amend text in section 12.76 of the plan as follows:

Support the development of implementation plans for greenways throughout the county together with supporting environmental assessments.

Chapter 12		
Proposed Amendment CH 12.15		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
12.24	Public Rights of Way	369

Amend CPO 12.81 of the plan as follows:

Review and protect existing public rights of way for the common good and bring forward proposals for the creation of public rights of way (including access to historical sites and graveyards). Where appropriate, links to established public rights of way in adjoining counties will be identified.