

**Introduction and Explanation of the Scope of the
Variation to the County Donegal Development
Plan 2018-2024 (As Varied) in respect of a
Wind Energy Policy Framework
(Variation No. 2)**



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

**Community Development
& Planning Services,
18th July 2022**

1.0 Introduction

The Variation has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended), and having regard to relevant national policy and Government planning guidelines including: the 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines, (2006)'; 'An Information Note: Review of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 – Preferred Draft Approach' (June, 2017)'; the 'Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change (July, 2017)'; and the 'Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (December, 2019)'.

2.0 Explanation of the Scope of Variation

The aim of this Variation is to provide a robust evidence based policy framework for the sustainable development of County Donegal's wind energy resource, in accordance with national legislation and Government guidance.

The Variation addresses a policy lacuna in the Donegal County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) ['the CDP'] in relation to wind energy. This gap in the CDP's policy framework was created following a High Court Order made on 5th November, 2018, that removed certain critical provisions of the CDP relating to Wind Energy from that adopted by a resolution of the Members in May, 2018. The sections that were omitted by the Order, and that are addressed in the Variation, are summarized below:

Omitted Section	Section Details
(1.) Section 6.5(c) of the Wind Energy standards at Part B: Appendix 3, Development Guidelines and Technical Standards ;	Wind turbines must meet the requirements and standards set out in the DEHLG Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, or any subsequent related Guidelines and in addition must not be located within: (c) Areas identified as locations where wind farm development would not be acceptable as identified on Map 8.2.1, Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan 2018-2024.
(2.) Section 6.5(f) of the Wind Energy standards at Part B: Appendix 3, Development Guidelines and Technical Standards and Map 8.2.1 in Part A	Wind turbines must meet the requirements and standards set out in the DEHLG Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, or any subsequent related Guidelines and in addition must not be located within: (f) A set back distance of ten times the tip height of proposed turbines from residential properties and other centres of human habitation.
(3.) Map 8.2.1 in Part A	Wind Energy Mapping (identifies areas as either Open To Consideration, Not Acceptable, or Acceptable for Augmentation.

3.0 Summary of the Variation

The Variation specifically:

- Inserts a new Wind Energy Map 8.2.1 identifying areas designated as: (a) 'Acceptable in Principle'; (b) 'Open to Consideration'; and (c) 'Not Normally Permissible' for wind energy development.
- Inserts a new policy framework aligned to the three designated areas in Map 8.2.1, and also stipulating setback distance requirements from residential properties.
- Inserts new background and contextual text updating the legislative framework and guidelines within which windfarm development must be considered.
- Deletes outdated policies, and background and contextual text.
- Deletes existing Section 28 statement in respect of Wind Energy Development Guidelines and inserts replacement text.

4.0 The Process for Making the Variation

The key elements of legislation to be adhered to in the process of varying a Development Plan include: Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (As Amended) (in terms of procedure generally); Articles 13K-13N (in terms of environmental assessment); Articles 13O (for transboundary procedures); and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended), particularly Sections 177U and 177V (in terms of Appropriate Assessment). The principal steps in the process include:

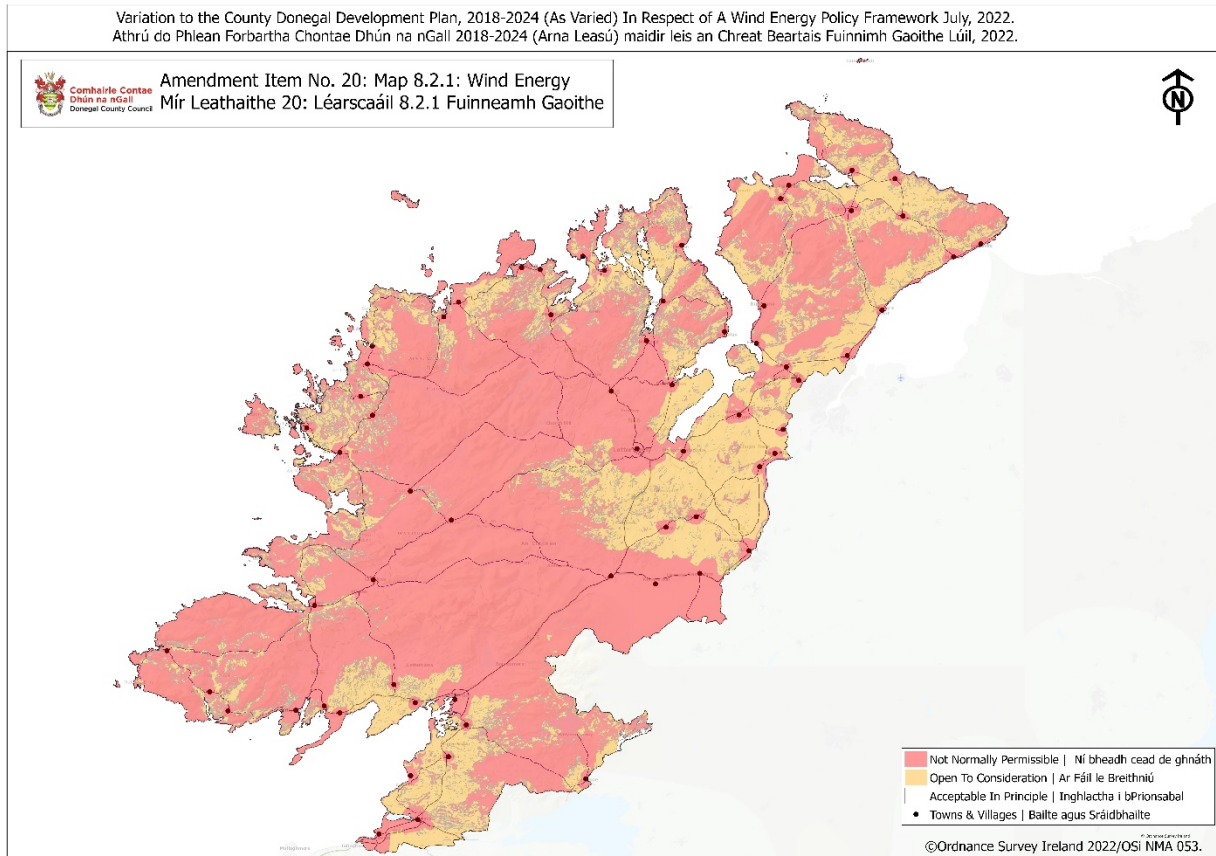
- Preparation of a Proposed Variation by the Planning Authority;
- The screening for, scoping of, and carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA), including the preparation of an Environmental Report (ER) and Natura Impact Report (NIR) as required;
- Publication of the Proposed Variation, and ER and NIR as required, including by means of public notices in newspapers and on the Council's website and social media;
- A 4 week period of public consultation during which time the Proposed Variation and associated ER and NIR shall be displayed on the Council's website and at stated places;
- Written submissions received within the stated 4 week period shall be taken into consideration;
- The preparation of a Chief Executive's Report listing who made the submissions/observations, summarising the submissions and giving the recommendations in relation to the submissions;
- The consideration of the Proposed Variation and associated SEA process (including Environmental Report as necessary) AA process (including the Natura Impact Report as necessary) by the Elected Members; and
- The decision of the Elected Members to either, make, modify or refuse to make the Variation.

5.0 Preparation of Map 8.2.1: ‘Wind Energy’

5.1 Identification of Designations

The Wind Energy Guidelines (2006) and the Draft Wind Energy Guidelines (2019) set out similar step-by-step sieve mapping analysis methodologies to inform the identification of the suitability of areas for wind energy development by means of a “sieve mapping” analysis applying key environmental, landscape and technical criteria. This methodology was used as the basis for constructing a new Map 8.2.1: ‘Wind Energy’ to replace the previous map removed from the CDP on foot of the High Court Order as referred to above. The new Map 8.2.1 is inserted in Fig. 2 below. Further details on the methodology used are set out in the remainder of this Section and in Section 5.2.

[Fig. 2: Map 8.2.1]



The spatial datasets used to inform Map 8.2.1 are set out below.

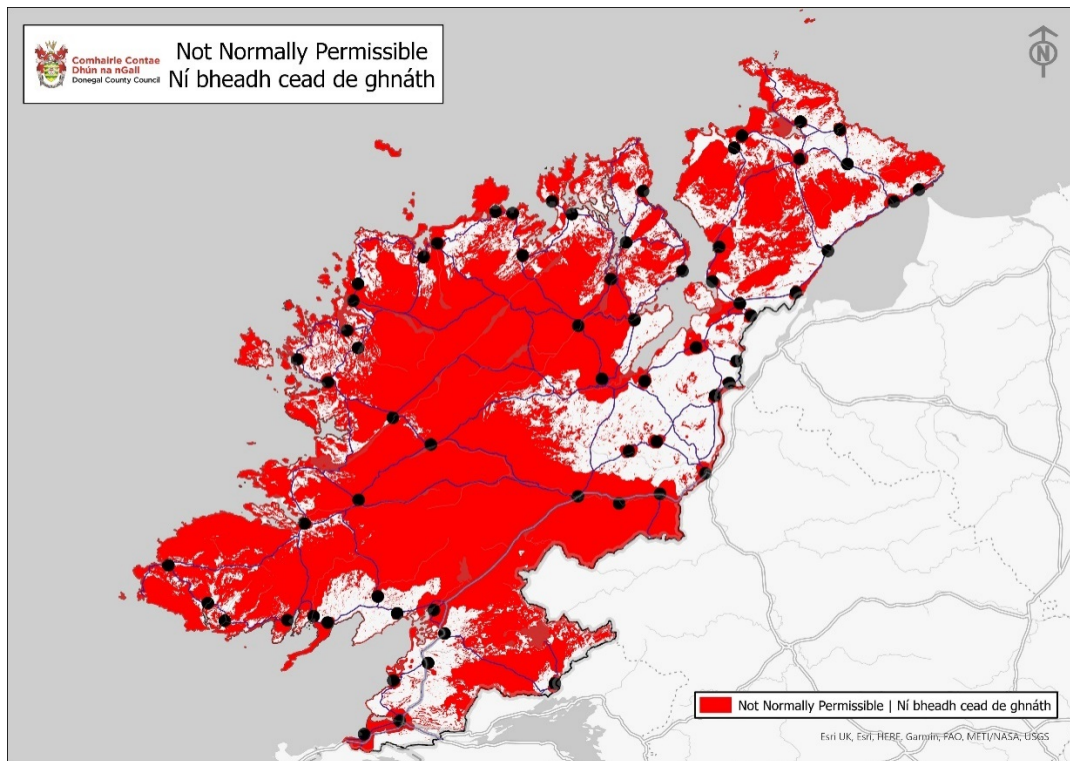
‘Not Normally Permissible’ Areas

These areas are considered to have minimal capacity to accommodate windfarm development. The ‘Not Normally Permissible’ areas submitted to the November, 2021 Plenary Council meeting were constructed using the sieve mapping analysis as referenced in Section 5.1 above by overlaying spatial layers of the highest environmental, scenic and cultural quality including: areas of European and national protected habitats and species; defined settlements

frameworks in the CDP and a 500m buffer around them; Natural Heritage Areas; areas of Especially High Scenic Amenity as designated in the CDP; Glenveagh National Park; Areas of High Landslide Susceptibility; a key landslide event at Meenbog; Ancient Woodlands; and Natures Reserves. The Map was amended by resolution of the Members at the Plenary Council meetings of 29th November, 2021 and 31st January, 2022 (deferred to 21st February, 2022).

The combined effect of these layers is identified in Fig. 3 below and details of each individual layer are contained within Table 1 of this document.

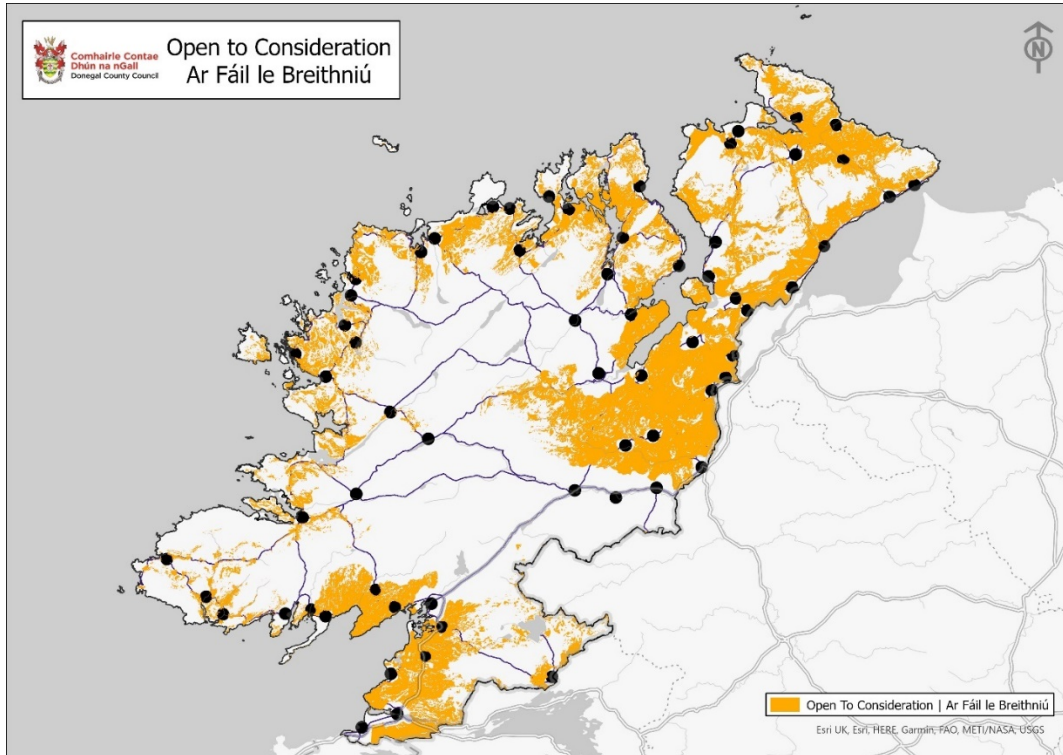
[Fig. 3: ‘Not Normally Permissible’ Areas]



‘Open to Consideration’ Areas

Development within these areas is not precluded, but may be constrained by one or more environmental or aeronautical considerations that require detailed investigation at the project level. The ‘Open to Consideration’ areas submitted to the November, 2021 Plenary Council Meeting were constructed using the sievemapping analysis as referenced in Section 5.1 above by overlaying spatial layers that include proposed Natural Heritage Areas; Donegal, City of Derry Airport and Finner Camp’s flying constraints; Geological Heritage Sites; Peat Bogs (outside of Natura sites); Natura 2000 site buffers; and High Scenic Amenity areas. The Map was amended by resolution of the Members at the Plenary Council meetings of 29th November, 2021 and 31st January, 2022 (deferred to 21st February, 2022). It should be noted that the image below shows the full extent of the datasets that were used to construct the ‘Open to Consideration’ areas, but that where such areas coincide with the ‘Not Normally Permissible’ data, the latter shall appear in the consolidated Map 8.2.1 as such areas must, in policy terms, take priority over the ‘Open to Consideration’ considerations.

[Fig. 4: 'Open to Consideration' Areas]



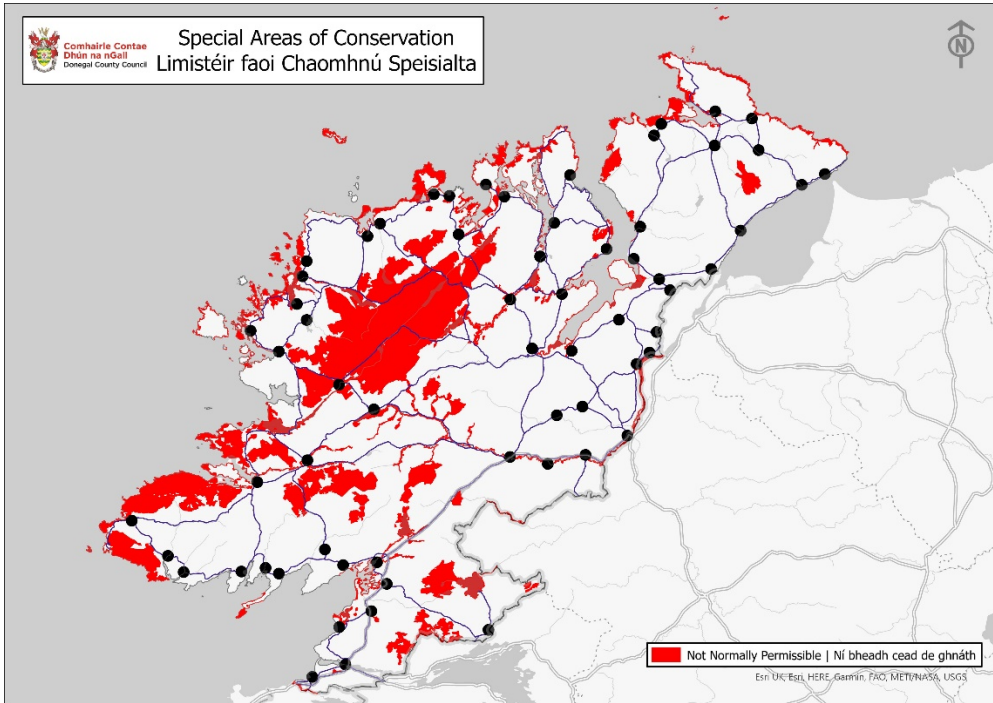
'Acceptable in Principle' Areas

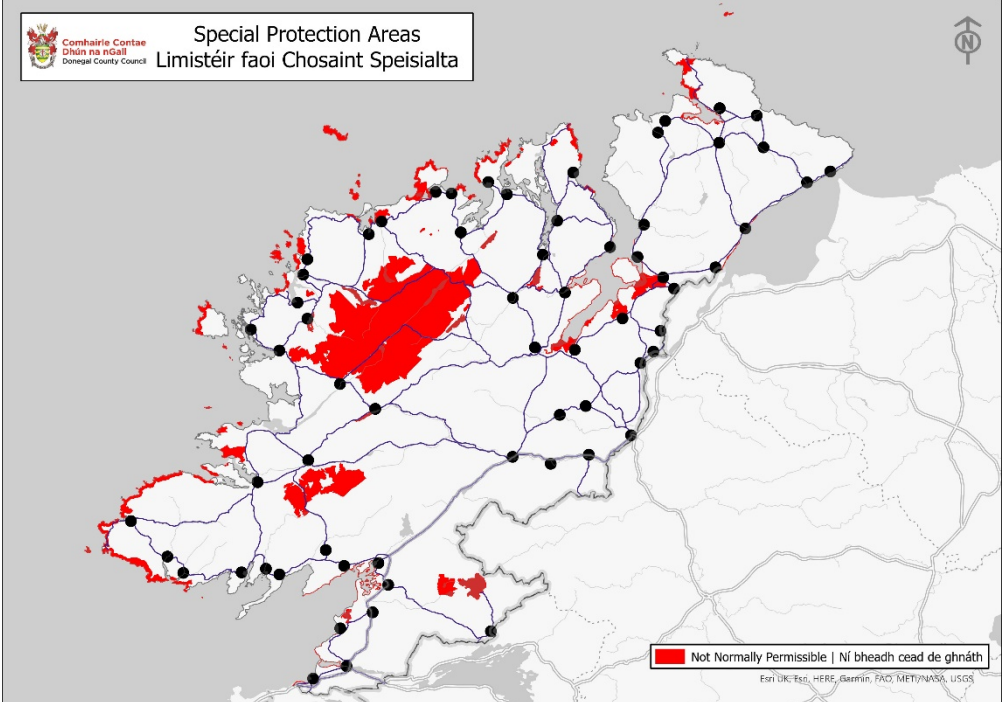
These areas are comprised of those that do not fall within any of the aforementioned constraints spatial layers used in the 'sieve-mapping-analysis'. In the absence of such substantive constraints, these areas are considered to be acceptable in principle for windfarm development, subject to compliance with all other objectives and policies contained within this Variation and the CDP.

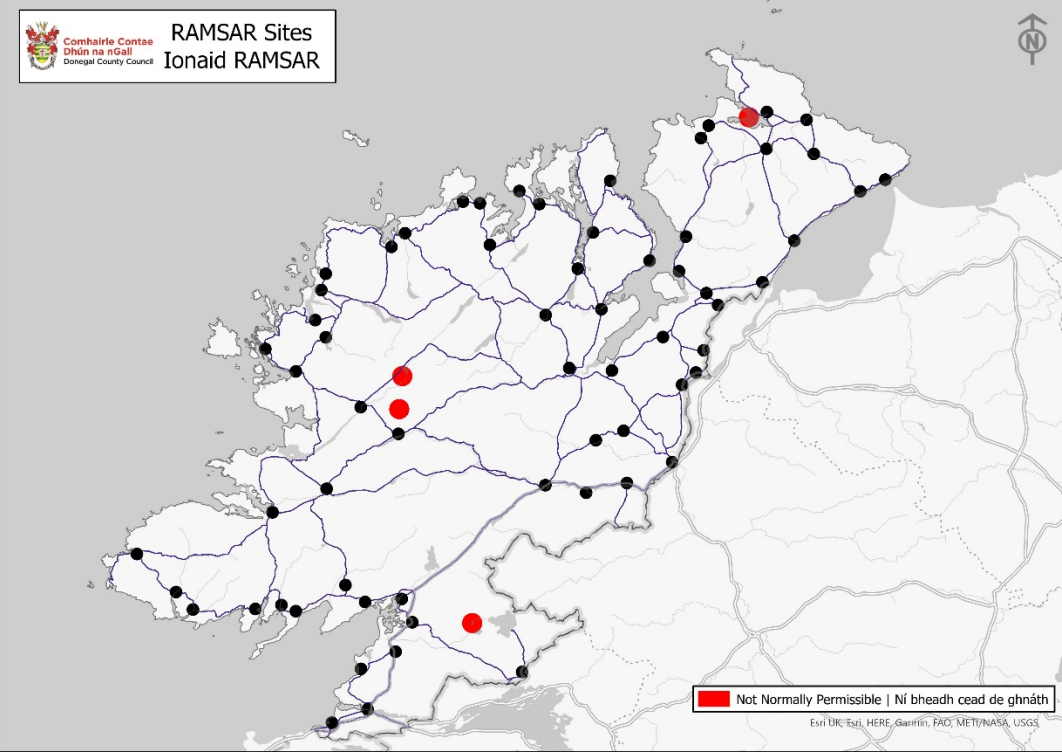
5.2 Spatial Data Used for the Sieve-Analysis

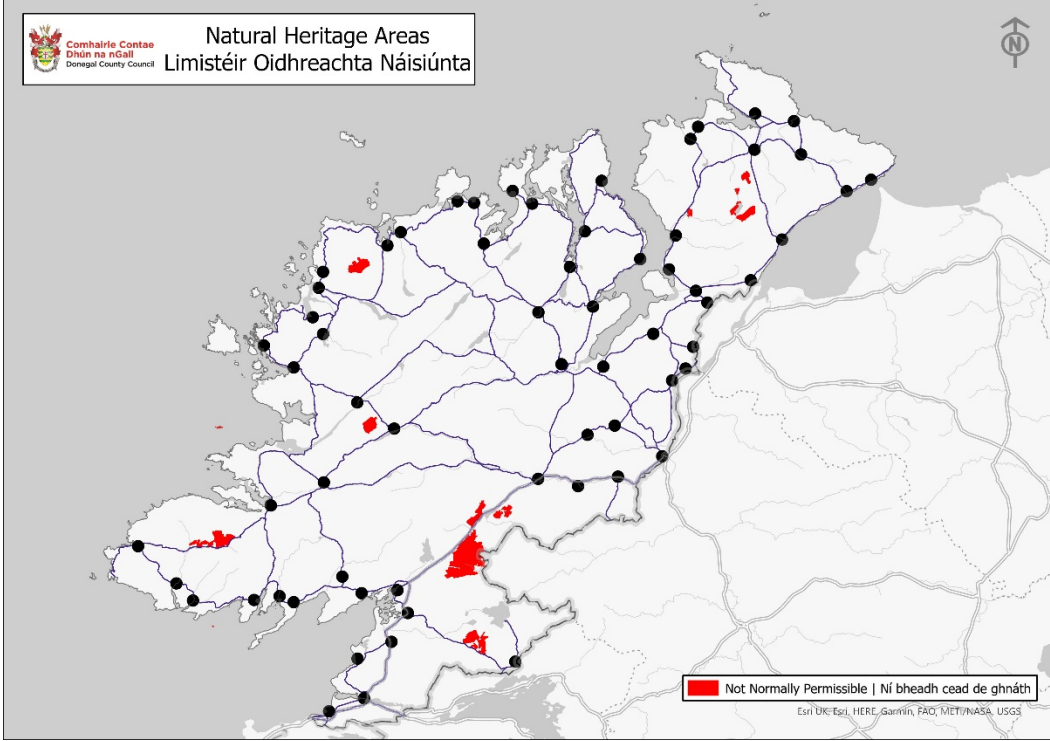
Tables 1 and 2 below show the spatial data layers used in the construction of the ‘Not Normally Permissible’, ‘Open to Consideration’ and, consequently, the ‘Acceptable in Principle’ designations.

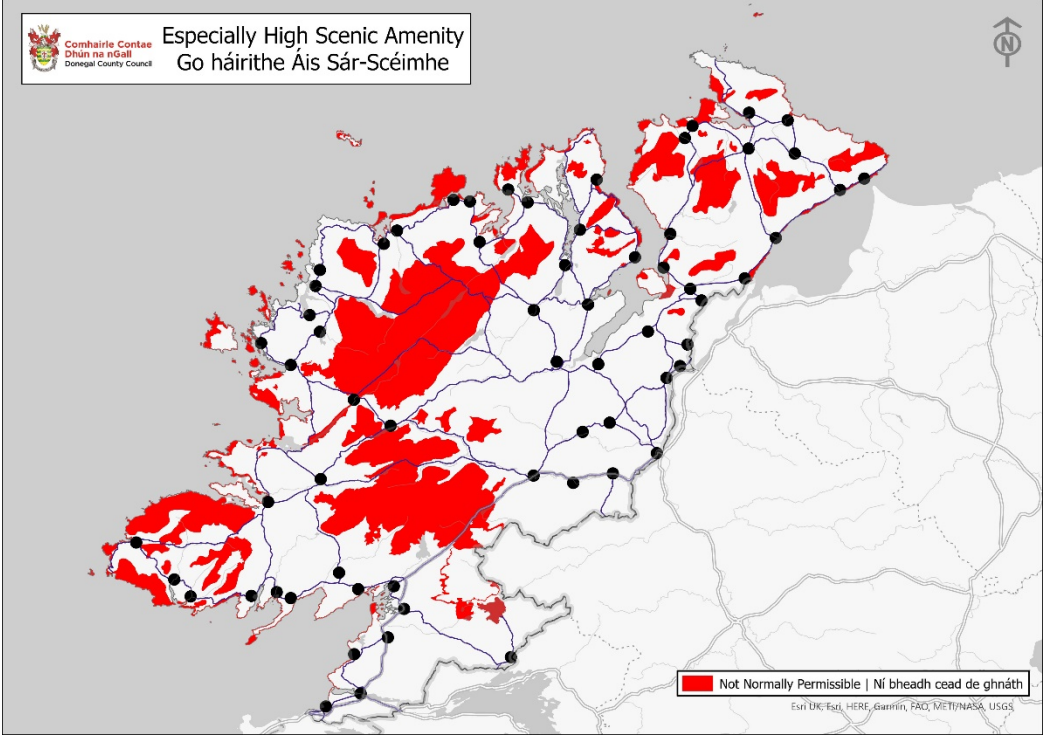
Table 1: Individual Spatial Data Layers Used In The Construction of ‘Not Normally Permissible’ Areas.

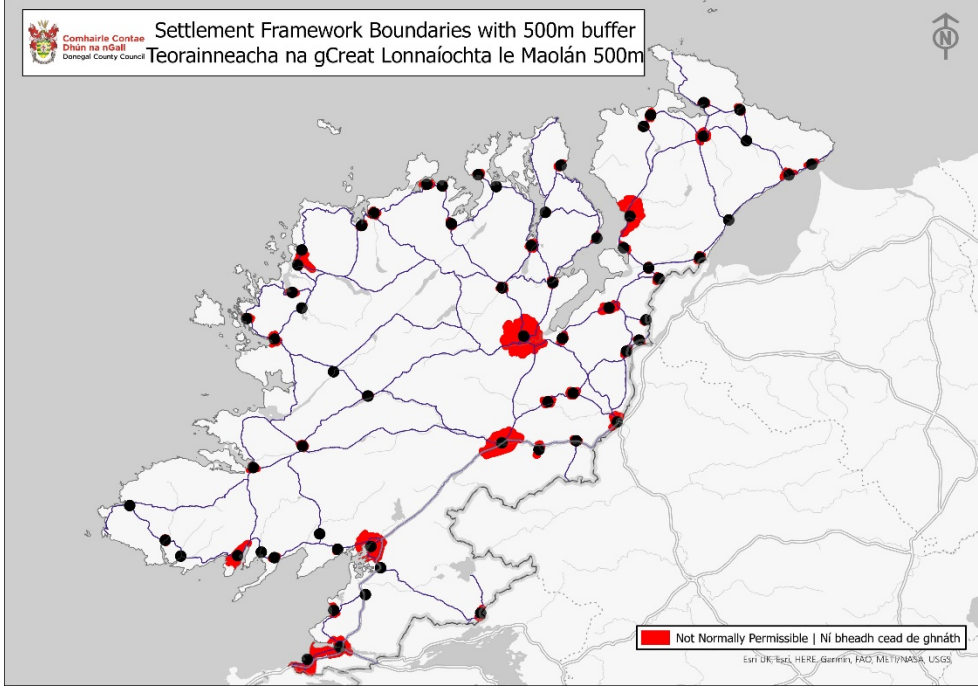
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
1&2	<p>Natura 2000 sites are European designated sites protected under both the EU Habitats Directive and EU Birds Directive, and also under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011, as amended by S.I. No. 499 of 2013 and S.I. No. 355 of 2015). Natura sites consist of both Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Member States are required to establish the Natura 2000 network through the designation of these sites, and have an obligation to protect and conserve threatened habitats and species listed under both the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. Protection is also given to these sites under Objective NH-O-2 and Policy NH-P-1 of the CDP.</p>	

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
		 <p>The image is a map of Donegal County, Ireland, showing Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The map is titled 'Special Protection Areas Limistéir faoi Chosaint Speisialta' and includes the Donegal County Council logo. The SPAs are highlighted in red. A legend in the bottom right corner indicates that these areas are 'Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth'. The map also features a north arrow and a scale bar.</p>

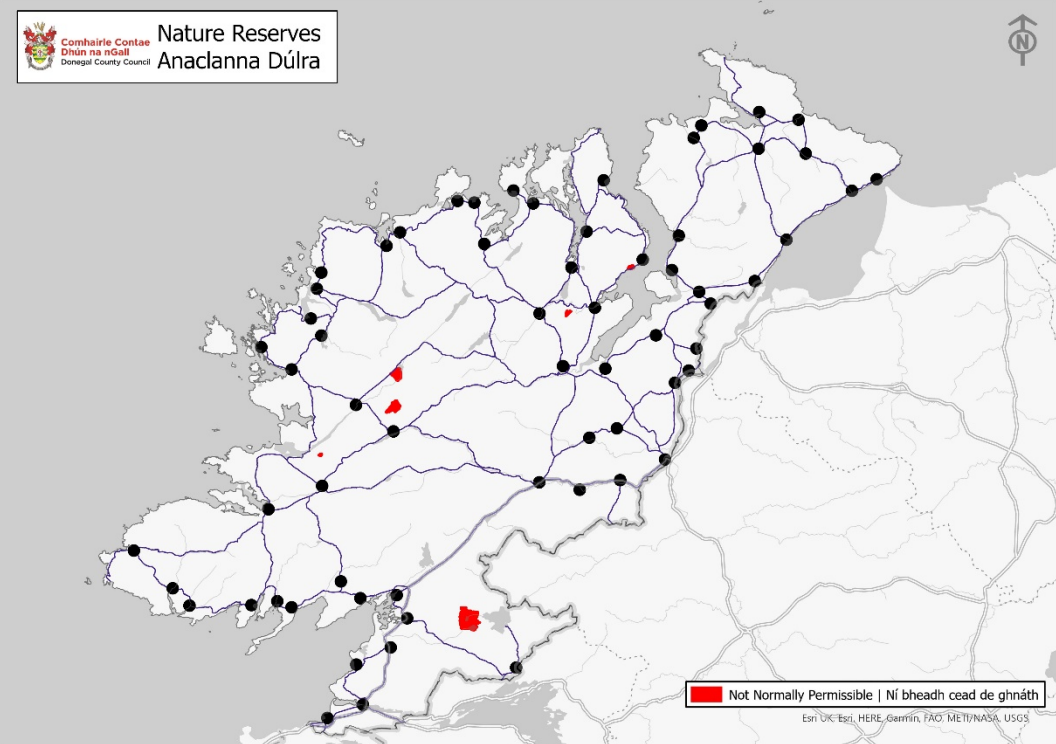
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
3	<p>Ramsar sites are wetland areas of significant value to waterfowl, and are statutorily protected under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar) 1971 (as amended 1982 and 1987), and are therefore offered national protection. Ramsar sites are also protected under objective NH-O-3 and policy NH-P-1 of the CDP.</p>	 <p>The map displays the geographical distribution of Ramsar sites in Donegal County, Ireland. It shows a dense network of rivers and lakes. Most sites are indicated by small black dots, but three specific sites are highlighted with larger red dots. A legend in the bottom right corner of the map area states: "Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth". The map also includes a north arrow in the top right corner and a title box in the top left corner that reads "Ramsar Sites Ionaid RAMSAR" with the Donegal County Council logo.</p>

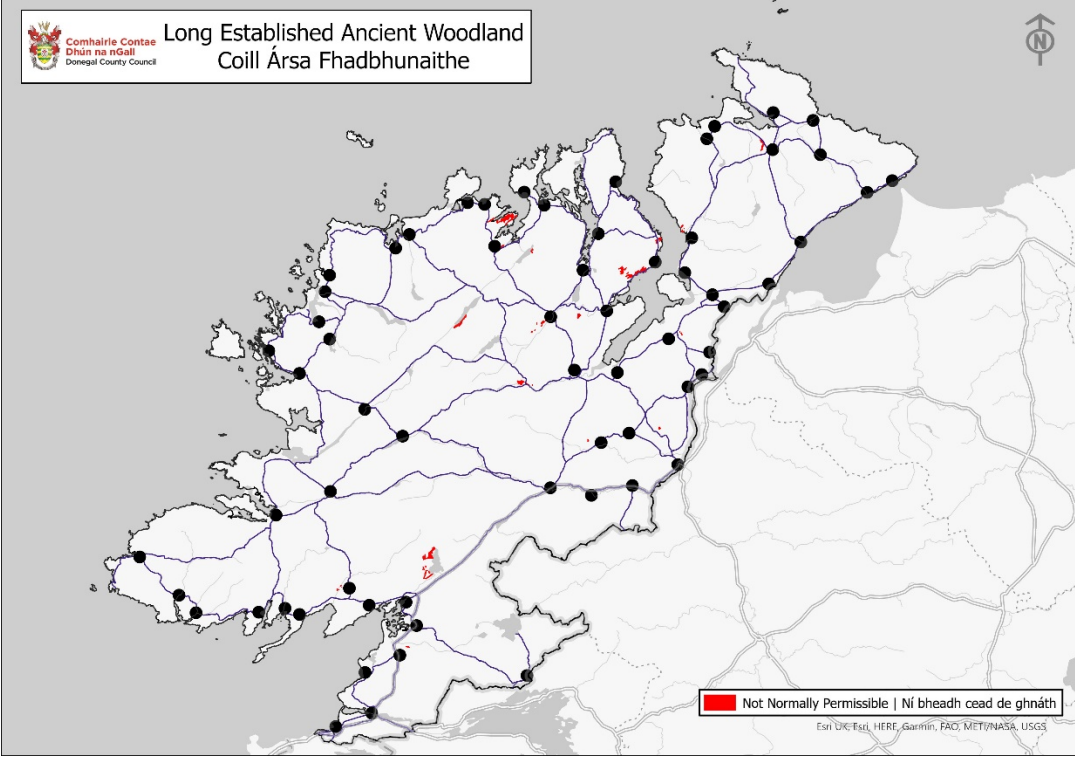
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
4	<p>Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are a national network of wildlife sites designated by Ministerial order to conserve and protect environmentally important landforms, species, communities and habitats; they are statutorily protected under the Wildlife Amendment Act 2000 (as amended), of national importance, and thereby offered national protection. NHAs are also protected under objective NH-O-3 and policy NH-P-1 of the CDP.</p>	 <p>The map displays the Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) network in Donegal County, Ireland. It features a network of black dots connected by lines, representing the NHA network. Several areas are highlighted in red, indicating they are 'Not Normally Permissible'. The map includes a legend, a north arrow, and the Donegal County Council logo.</p>

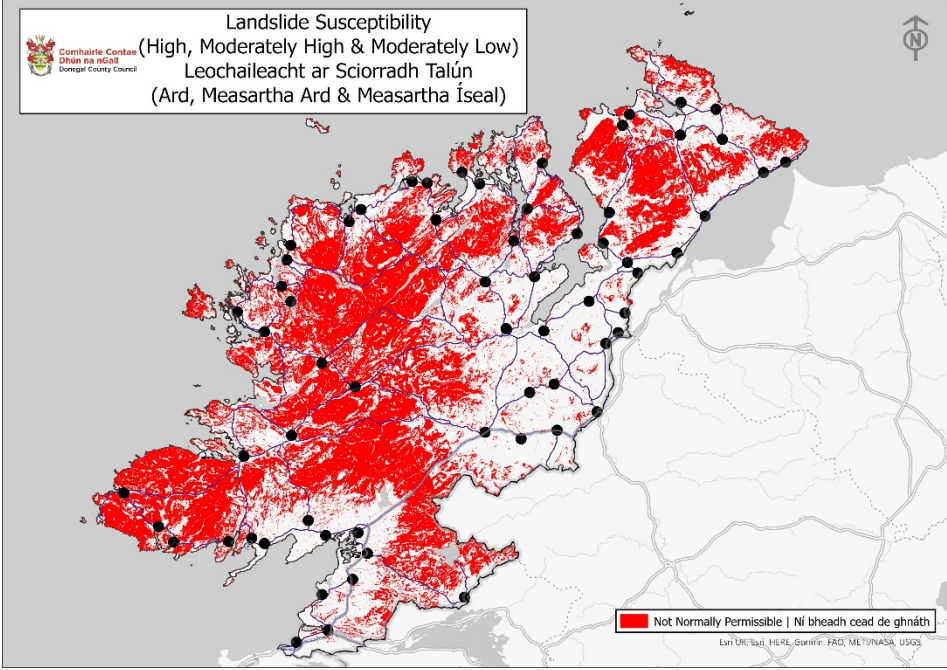
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
5	<p>Scenic Amenity Map 7.1.1 of the CDP identifies three landscape designations for the County. The most valuable of these is 'Areas of Especially High Amenity' (EHSA). Objective NH-O-4 and Policy NH-P-6 of the CDP provides protection of these areas. These areas are considered to be "sublime natural landscapes of the highest quality that are synonymous with the identity of County Donegal" and as having 'extremely limited capacity to assimilate additional development.'</p>	 <p>The map displays the geographical outline of County Donegal with red-shaded regions indicating Areas of Especially High Scenic Amenity (EHSA). A network of roads is shown in grey, and a north arrow is located in the top right corner. The Donegal County Council logo is in the top left. A legend at the bottom right shows a red square next to the text 'Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth'. At the bottom of the map, there is a small attribution: 'Esri DeLorme, HERE, Garmin, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS'.</p>

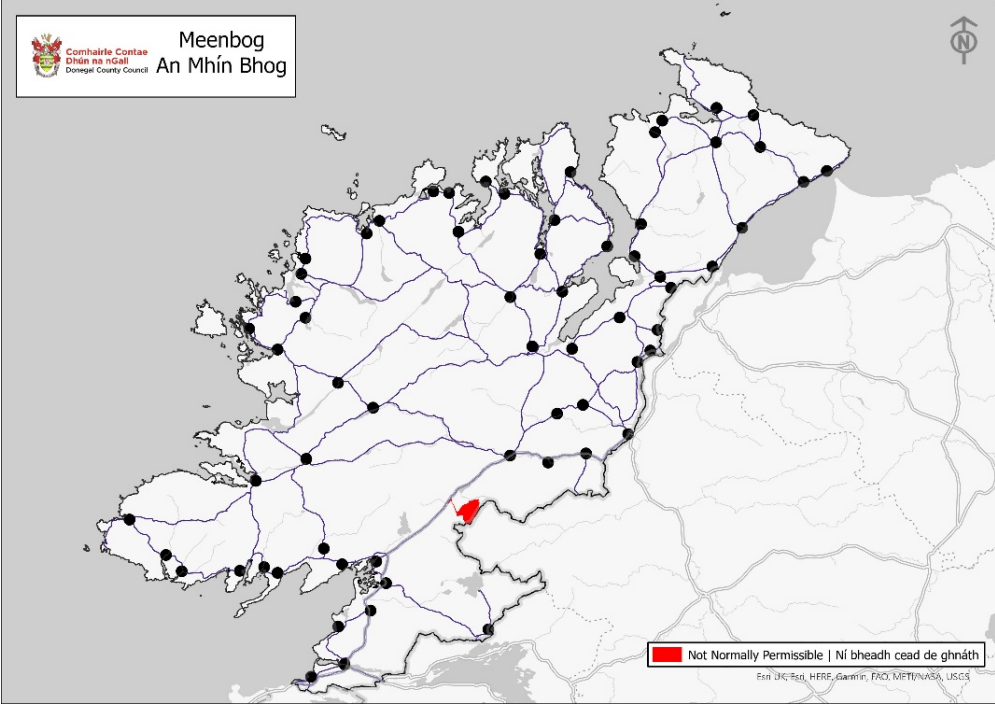
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
6	<p>Settlement frameworks identified in the CDP and a buffer of 500m around each such settlement framework boundary have been identified as areas not suitable for windfarm development consistent with the guidance set out in section 3.6 of the Draft Wind Energy Guidelines (2019). The Settlement Framework Boundaries are those contained within Part C of the CDP.</p>	 <p>Settlement Framework Boundaries with 500m buffer Teorainneacha na gCreat Lonnaíochta le Maolán 500m</p> <p>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Council</p> <p>Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth</p> <p>Map data: HERE, DeLorme, FAO, MET/NASA, USGS</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
7	<p>Glenveagh National Park is the county's only National Park, and is protected through European and National legislation. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides the legal basis under which National Parks are protected and Member States are obligated to abide by the criteria set out by the IUCN.</p>	<p>The image is a map of Donegal County, Ireland, showing a network of roads. A specific area in the central-northern part of the county is highlighted in red, representing Glenveagh National Park. The map includes a north arrow in the top right corner and a disclaimer in the bottom right corner: "Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth". The map is titled "Glenveagh National Park Páirc Náisiúnta Ghleann Bheatha" and is associated with "Comhairle Contae Donegal the nGall Donegal County Council".</p>

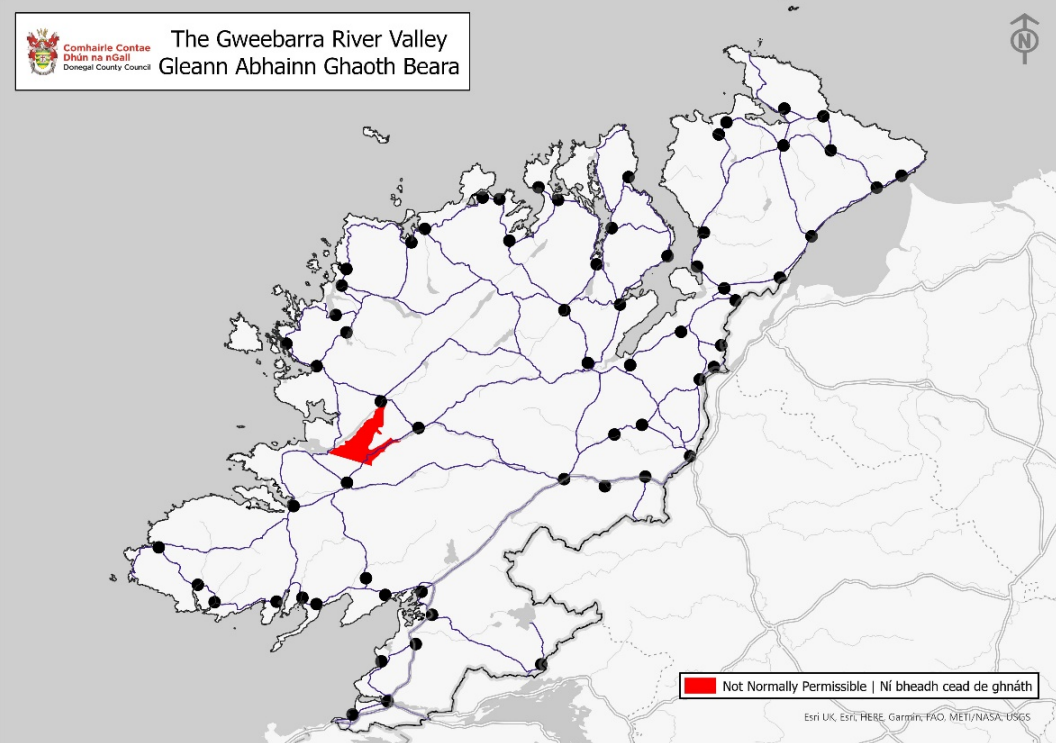
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
8	<p>Nature Reserves are identified as areas of National importance to wildlife, and are offered statutory protection under both Ministerial Orders and under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2021. Reflecting the importance of the nature reserves, the CDP Policy NH-P-1, supports the protection of these sites.</p>	 <p>The map displays the geographical distribution of Nature Reserves in Donegal County. A legend in the top-left corner identifies the layer as 'Nature Reserves' (Anaclanna Dúlra) under the Donegal County Council. The map shows a network of black dots connected by thin lines, representing a system of reserves or routes. Several areas are highlighted in red, indicating specific sites. A legend in the bottom-right corner states 'Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth'. The map also features a north arrow and a scale bar.</p>

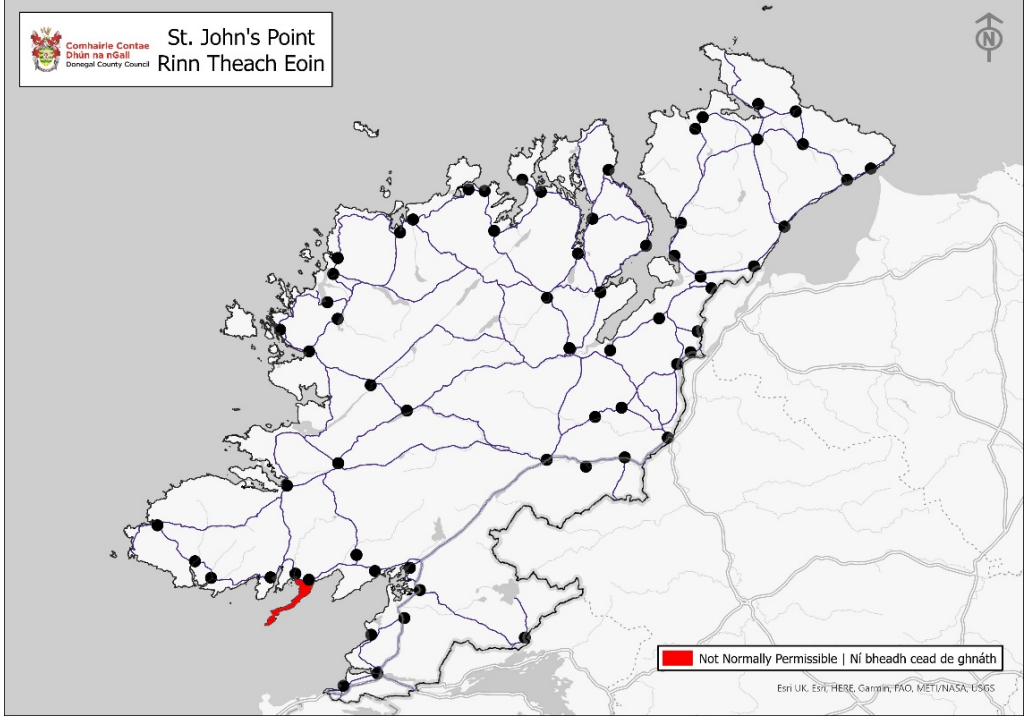
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
9	<p>Ancient and Long Established Woodlands are statutorily protected under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. Member States are obligated to monitor and assess the conservation status of Annex I habitats, including woodlands. Ancient Woodlands are identified by the NPWS as areas which have been continuously wooded since 1660.</p>	 <p>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Council</p> <p>Long Established Ancient Woodland Coill Ársa Fhabhunaithé</p> <p>Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth</p> <p>Esri, DeLorme, HERE, Garmin, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
10	<p>The Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) identifies areas of 'High', 'Moderately High', 'Moderately Low', and 'Low' Landslide Susceptibility on a national basis having regard to a specified set of conditions (e.g. slope, terrain) that cumulatively inform areas where landslides could occur. GSI officials were consulted during the preparation of the Proposed Variation.</p>	

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
11	<p>Meenbog has been included in the area designated 'Not Normally Permissible' owing to the exceptional landslide event that occurred here in November, 2020 and on the basis of the precautionary approach. The site is one of three sites that are the subject of a detailed study being carried out by Geological Survey Ireland.</p>	 <p>The image is a map of Donegal, Ireland, showing a network of roads and rivers. A specific area in the south-central part of the county is highlighted in red. In the top-left corner, there is a title box with the Donegal County Council logo and the text 'Meenbog An Mhín Bhog'. In the bottom-right corner, there is a legend with a red square and the text 'Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth'. A north arrow is located in the top-right corner. At the very bottom of the map, there is small text: 'Eirí UIC: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FRC, METI/NAASA, USGS'.</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
12	<p>Included in the 'Not Normally Permissible' designation due to the landslide event at the adjacent Meenbog windfarm site (an eventuality forewarned by an eminent Civil and Structural Engineer in a submission to the relevant planning application) and having regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the presence of identified 'Moderately High' and Moderately Low' landslide susceptibility areas; and ➤ the ecological and environmental sensitivities of the area, including the strategic Lough Mourne public water supply reservoir and associated known tributaries and unknown underground feeder supplies, and to the consequent imperative need to protect the catchment area by adopting a precautionary approach to this specific area. 	<p>Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District Areas at risk of Landslides and Associated Environmental and Ecological Concerns Limistéir i gCeantar Bardasach Leifear - Shrath an Urláir atá i mbaol Sciorradh Talún agus Údair bhainteacha Imní ó thaobh na Timpeallachta agus na hÉiceolaíochta de</p> <p>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Council</p> <p>Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth</p> <p>Esri, DeLorme, HERE, Garmin, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
12A	<p>The Gweebarra River Valley</p> <p>Whilst much of the river valley was already included in the 'Not Normally Permissible' areas, this proposal consolidates the 'Not Normally Permissible' designation having regard to the fact that the area joins two specific EHSA's - The Gweebarra River and Lough Finne. Within the mapped area there are spectacular views of both EHSA's, Gweebarra River and Lough Finne. Considering the vast environmental assets in the area – Meenmore West Bog; Coolvoy Bog; vast mature forestry; Lettermacaward Water Treatment Plant; there is potential for this area of the County to potentially play a leading role offsetting carbon omissions as well as its proximity to one of Irelands leading Salmon Fisheries. It should also be noted that this mapping change is reflected in the Gweebarra River Basin being added to the list of areas protected under Policy E-P-23 (Amendment Item No. 14 refers).</p>	

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
12B	<p>St. John's Point</p> <p>It should also be noted that this mapping change is reflected in St. John's Point being added to the list of areas protected under Policy E-P-23 (Amendment Item No. 14 refers).</p>	 <p>The image is a map of Donegal County, Ireland, showing various spatial layers. A specific area on the western coast, St. John's Point, is highlighted in red. The map includes a legend in the top left corner with the Donegal County Council logo and the text 'St. John's Point Rinn Theach Eoin'. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. A scale bar is at the bottom right, with the text 'Not Normally Permissible Ní bheadh cead de ghnáth'. At the very bottom right, there is a small text credit: 'Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS'.</p>

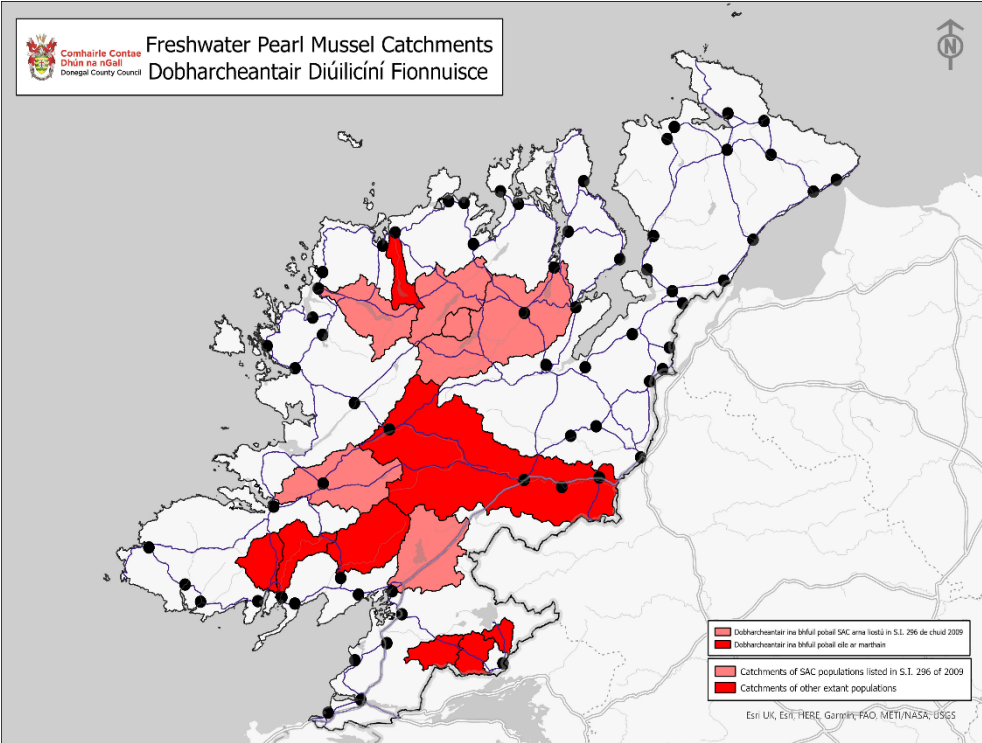
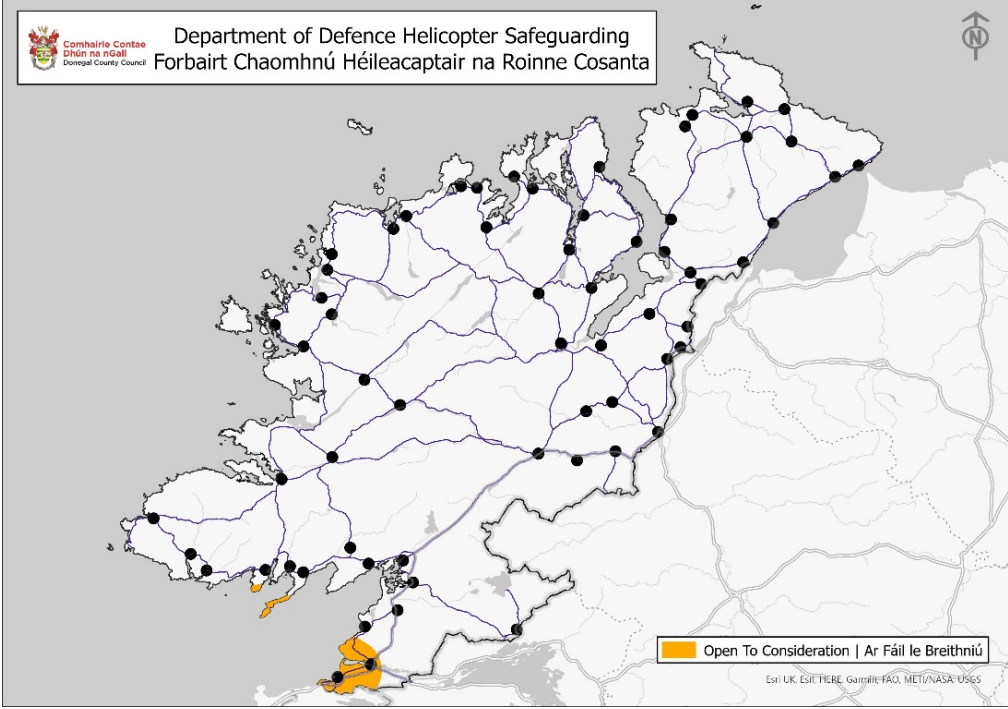
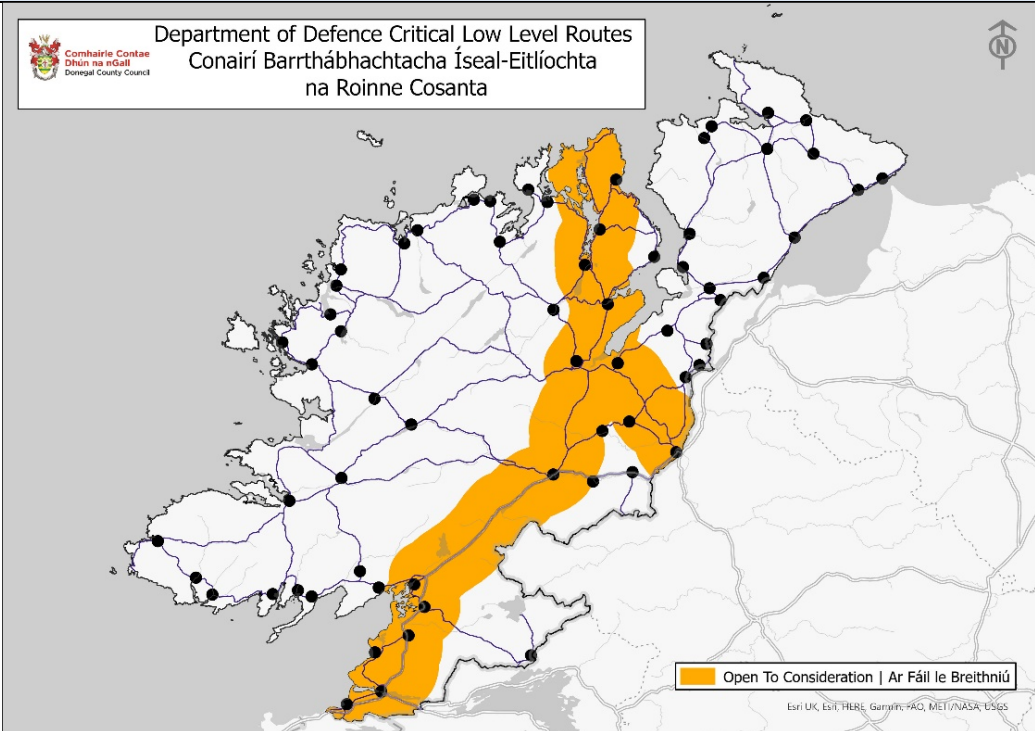
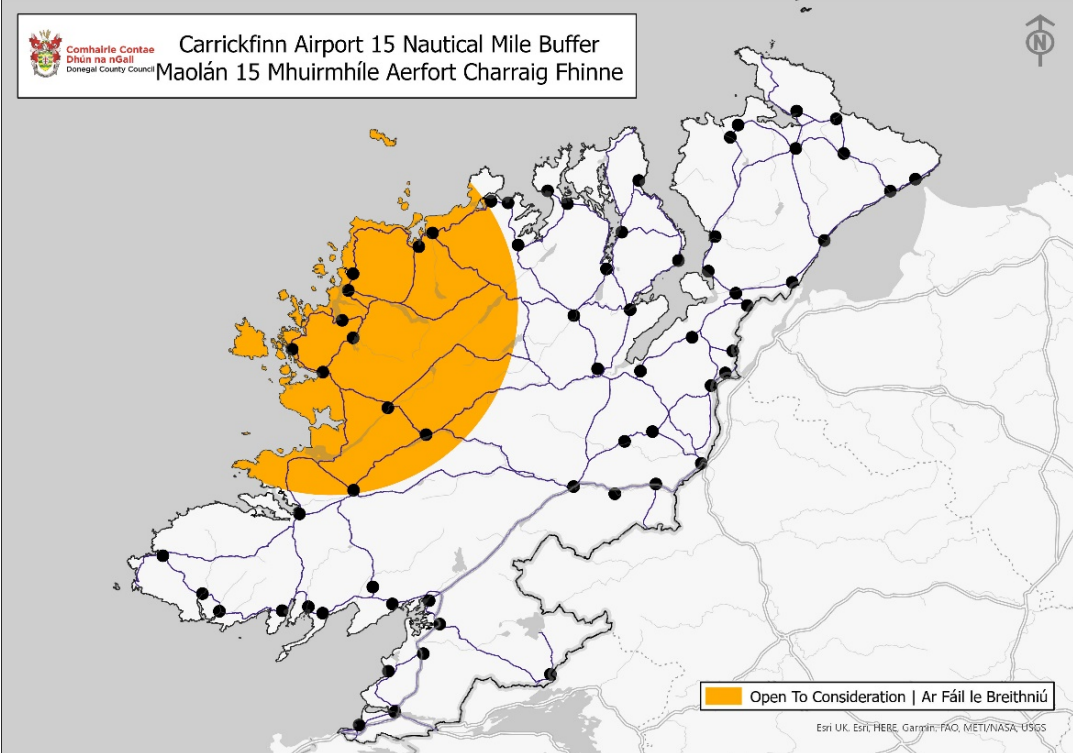
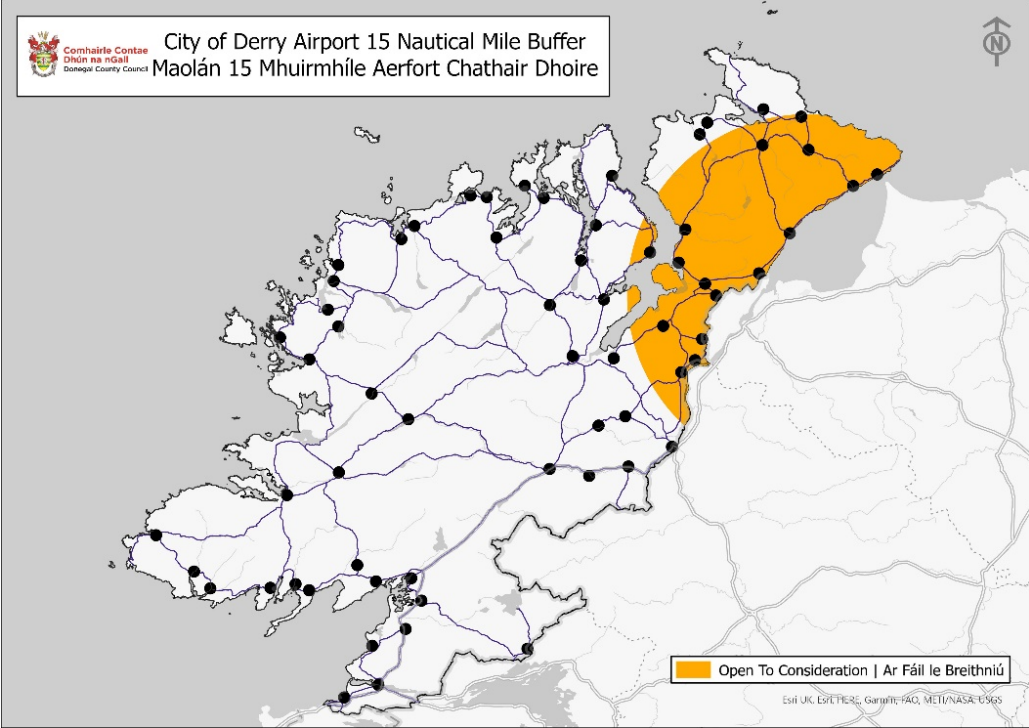
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial Data	Image of Spatial Layer
12C	<p>Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchment</p> <p>The EPA in its submission to the SEA Environmental Report– Scoping exercise observed that the ‘Water Framework Directive protected areas (Salmon rivers, nutrient sensitive rivers, freshwater pearl mussel rivers etc) and high status water bodies should be afforded particular protection in implementing the Variation. Considering this submission, the five river valleys of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel are included so that the highest level of protection can be afforded to the designation which strengthens and responds to the submission made by the EPA.</p> <p>It should also be noted that these mapping changes are reflected in the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchment being added to the list of areas protected under Policy E-P-23 (Amendment Item No. 14 refers).</p>	 <p>Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchments Dobharcheantair Diúilicíní Fionnuisce</p> <p>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Council</p> <p>Legend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dobharcheantair na bhfuil poibéal SAC ann fós in S.I. 296 de chuid 2009 Dobharcheantair na bhfuil poibéal óile ar maith Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009 Catchments of other extant populations <p>Esri, UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS</p>

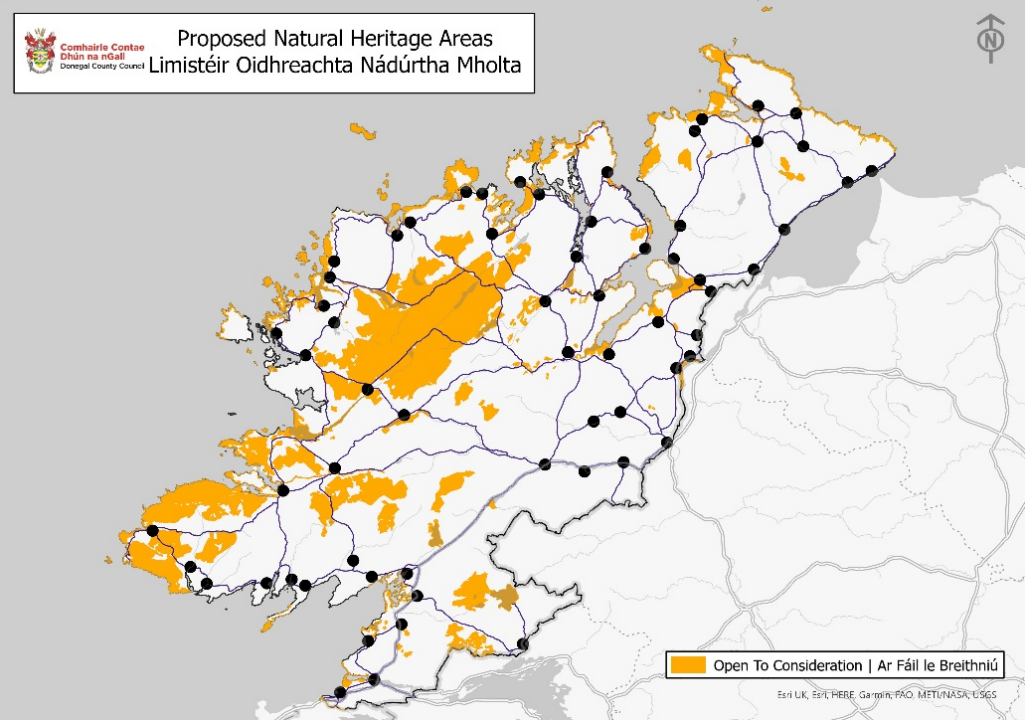
Table 2: Individual Spatial Data Layers Used In the Construction of ‘Open to Consideration’ Areas

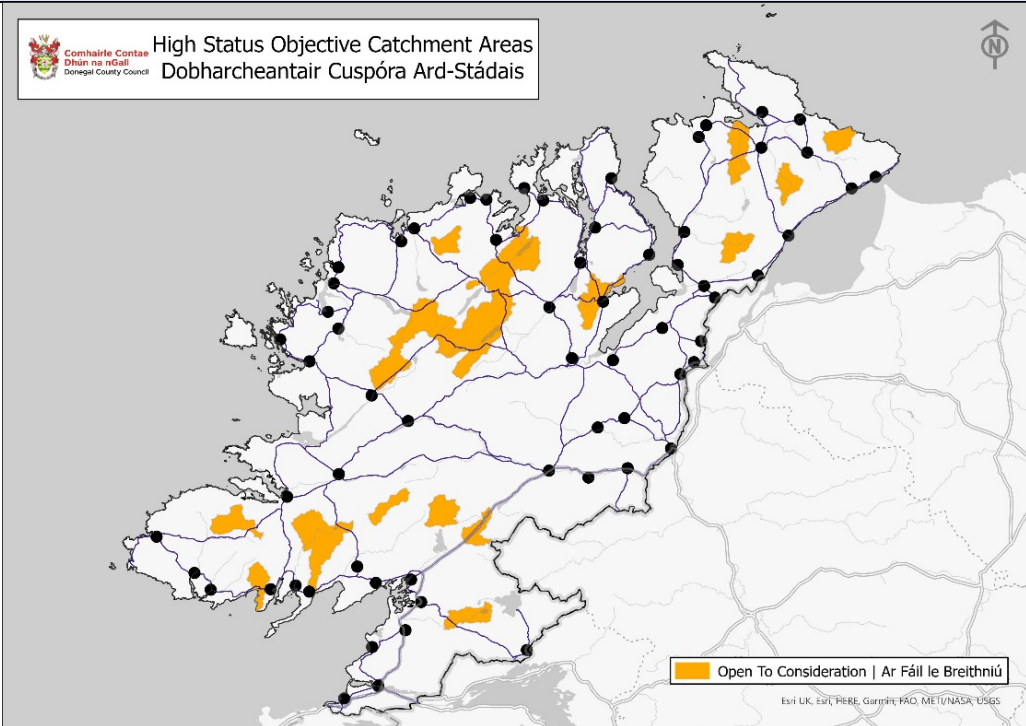
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
13	<p>The Minister for Defence is responsible for the regulation of military aviation including the safeguarding of Finner Camp to protect current and future aircraft operations. This image shows areas identified for helicopter safeguarding for approaches to Finner Camp along with a 5km buffer subsequent to instruction from the Department of Defence. Proposed windfarm projects may impact on safety and the inclusion of this buffer within the Open to Consideration area alerts all stakeholders to the potential of an issue arising.</p>	 <p>The map displays the geographical layout of Donegal County, Ireland. A network of black dots and lines represents helicopter routes and their 5km safeguarding buffers. A specific area in the southern part of the county is highlighted in orange, indicating it is 'Open to Consideration'. The map includes a north arrow in the top right corner and a legend in the bottom right corner. Logos for Donegal County Council and the Department of Defence are present in the top left corner.</p>

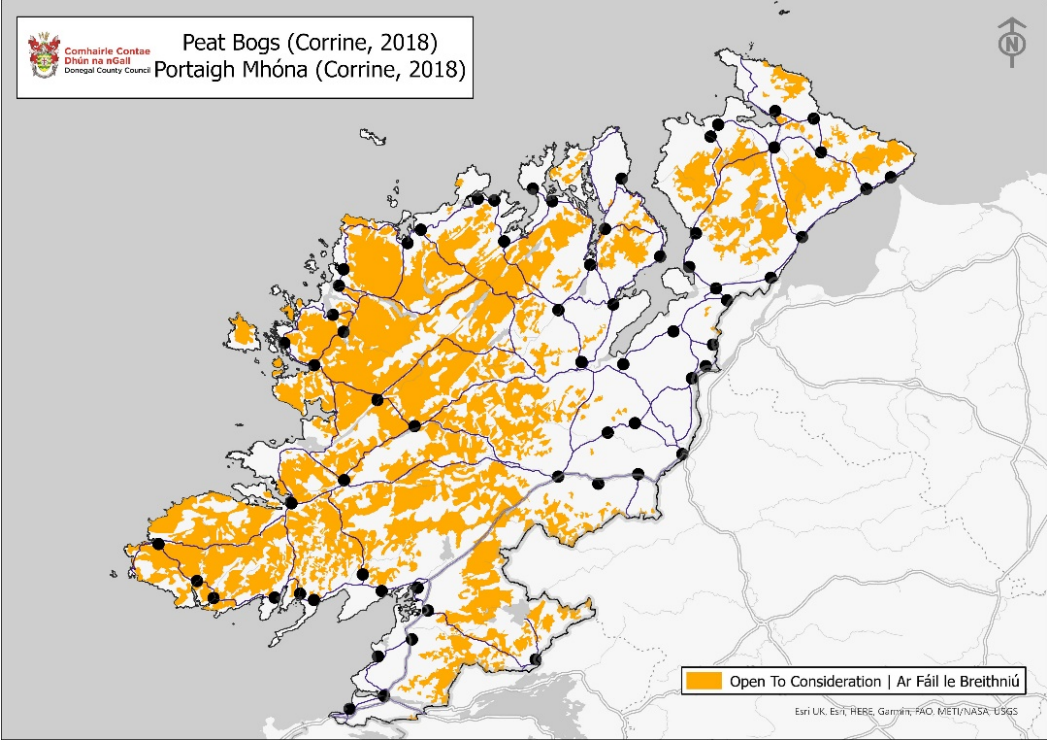
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
14	<p>The Minister for Defence is responsible for the regulation of military aviation to protect current and future aircraft operations. Air Corps aircraft including Garda Air Support Unit (GASU), helicopter air ambulance and aircraft operating on security taskings use Critical low level routes (3NM buffer). These routes have been identified by the Department of Defence. Proposed windfarm projects may impact on safety and the inclusion of this buffer within the Open to Consideration area alerts all stakeholders to the potential of an issue arising.</p>	 <p>The map displays the county of Donegal with a network of critical low level routes marked by black dots and lines. A large orange-shaded area, representing the 'Open To Consideration' buffer, follows the central and eastern routes. The map includes a title box in the top left with the Donegal County Council logo and the text 'Department of Defence Critical Low Level Routes Conairí Barrthábhachtacha Íseal-Eitlíochta na Roinne Cosanta'. A north arrow is in the top right, and a legend at the bottom right identifies the orange area as 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. Source information 'Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, MET, NASA, USGS' is at the bottom right.</p>

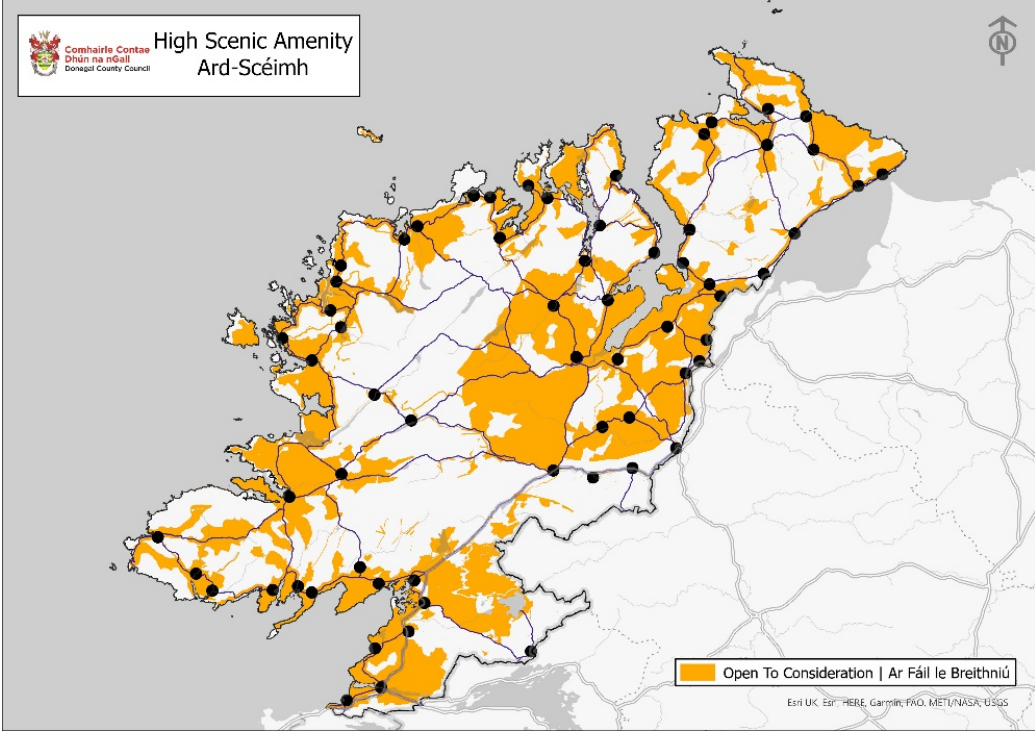
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
15	<p>Carrickfinn Airport has identified a landbuffer of 15 NM around the airport within which windfarm developments could potentially prejudice aviation safety. Proposed windfarm projects within this area may impact on safety and the inclusion of this buffer within the Open to Consideration area alerts all stakeholders to the potential of an issue arising. This approach is consistent with Policies T-P-16, T-P-17 and T-P-18 of the CDP.</p>	 <p>The map displays the Carrickfinn Airport 15 Nautical Mile Buffer as a semi-transparent orange area. The map includes the Donegal County Council logo and name in both Irish and English. A legend at the bottom right identifies the orange area as 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. The map shows the coastline of Donegal and surrounding areas, with numerous black dots representing proposed windfarm locations. The map is titled 'Carrickfinn Airport 15 Nautical Mile Buffer' and 'Maolán 15 Mhuirmhíle Aerfort Charraig Fhinne'.</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
16	<p>City of Derry Airport authorities have identified a land buffer of 15 NM around the airport, The areas that fall within County Donegal (only) are illustrated on this map. Proposed windfarm projects in this area may impact on safety and the inclusion of this buffer within the Open to Consideration area alerts all stakeholders to the potential of an issue arising. Protection is also offered to these areas through Policy T-P-19 of the CDP.</p>	 <p>The map displays the geographical outline of County Donegal with a network of roads and a 15 Nautical Mile buffer zone around the City of Derry Airport highlighted in orange. A legend in the bottom right corner identifies the orange area as 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. The map also features a north arrow in the top right corner and logos for 'Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Council' and 'Esri UK, Esri/HERE, Garmin, FMO, METI/NASA/USGS' in the bottom right corner.</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
17	<p>Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are national sites of significance for wildlife and habitats that have been published on a non-statutory basis and are not yet statutorily proposed or designated to NHA status. Notwithstanding the absence of any statutory confirmation, it is considered reasonable to alert all stakeholders to the existence of these areas and the potential wildlife therein and that such issues may be a material consideration in the assessment of any planning application.</p>	

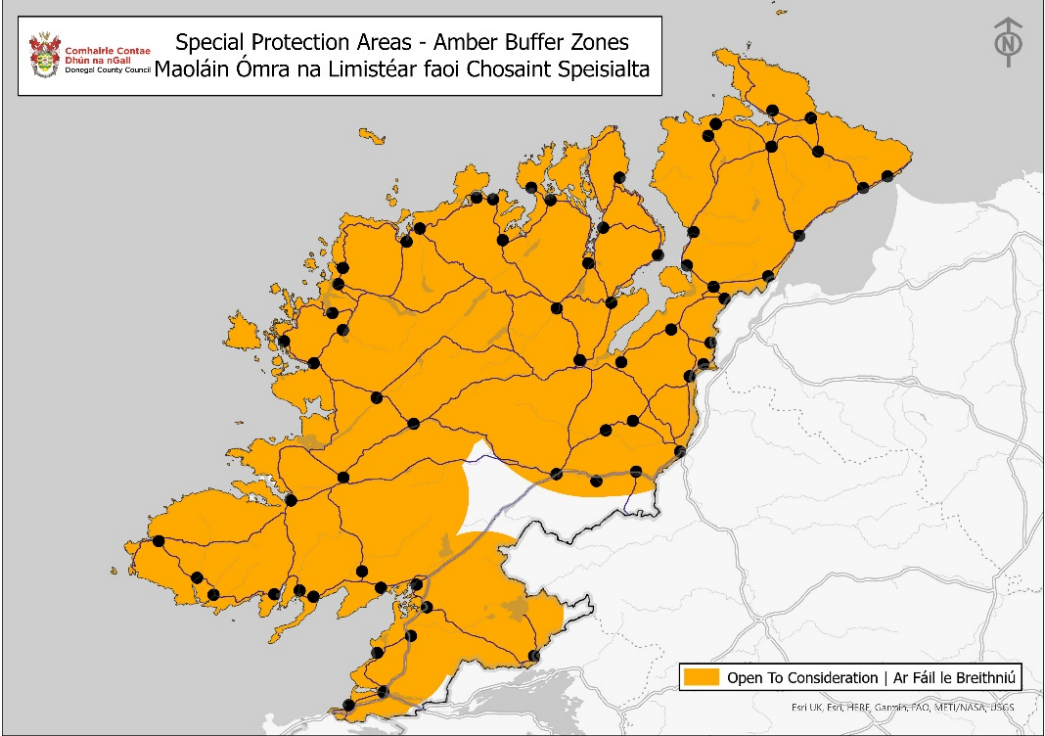
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
18	<p>High Status Objective Water Bodies are coastal, transitional, river and lake water bodies that have been identified as having a pristine or high status objective under the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (RMBP). The RMBP sets out the targets and measures to meet the objectives of the WFD including the protection and restoration of these waterbodies.</p>	

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
19	<p>A significant amount of the land cover of the County is Peat Bog, the majority of which are in upland areas, as identified on this map. Whilst the most substantive parts of this resource are contained within Natura 2000 sites, other more localized, smaller-scale sites are to be found around the County within broader peat bog areas. Peat is an important carbon sink, and an important wetland ecosystem and natural habitat. The National Peatlands Strategy 2015 gives direction on peatland management to 2025 and the Draft Wind Energy Guidelines (Appendix 4) sets out detailed best practice for development on peatlands. Objective NH-O-11 of the CDP 2018-2024 also relates to the management and conservation of peatlands.</p>	 <p>The map displays the geographical distribution of peat bogs in Donegal County, Ireland. The peat bog areas are highlighted in orange, primarily concentrated in the upland regions of the county. A network of black dots is overlaid on the map, likely representing specific sites or monitoring points. The map includes a legend in the bottom right corner with the text 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. Logos for 'Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Council' and 'Peat Bogs (Corrine, 2018)' are present in the top left. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. The map also features a scale bar and a legend for the data layer.</p>

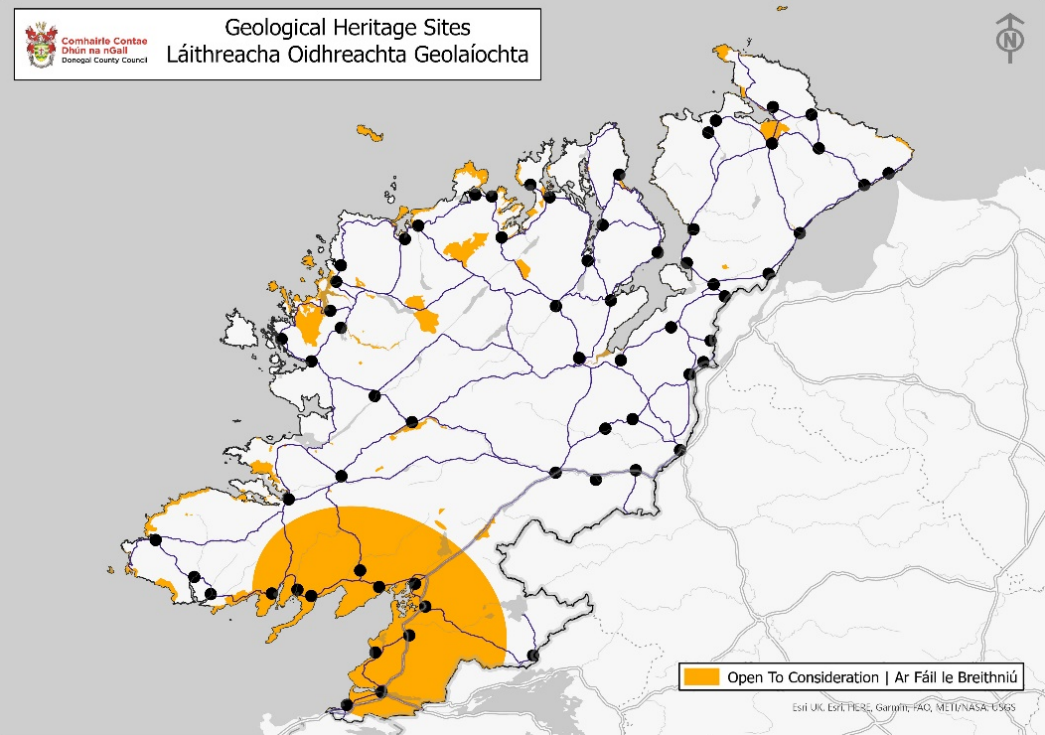
Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
20	<p>Scenic Amenity Map 7.1.1 of the CDP identifies three landscape designations for the County. The middle ranked of these is 'Areas of High Scenic Amenity' (HSA). These areas are identified as "landscapes of significant aesthetic, cultural, heritage and environmental quality that are unique to their locality and are a fundamental element of the landscape and identity of County Donegal. The CDP describes these areas as having: the capacity to absorb sensitively located development of a scale, design and use that will enable assimilation into the receiving landscape and which does not detract from the quality of the landscape. Thus it follows that windfarm developments <u>may</u> present challenges in terms of visual impact.</p>	 <p>The image shows a map of County Donegal, Ireland, with several areas highlighted in orange. These orange areas represent 'High Scenic Amenity' (HSA) zones. The map includes a legend in the bottom right corner with the text 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'Comhairle Contae Donegal County Council' and the title 'High Scenic Amenity Ard-Scéimh'. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. The map also shows a network of roads and geographical features like rivers and coastlines.</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
21	<p>Specialist ecological consultants procured for this Variation project advised that it would be good practice to define specific, tailored buffer zones around all of the Natura 2000 sites within the County and adjoining authorities inclusive of trans-boundary sites. Each buffer has been identified having regard to the qualifying interests of the (pertaining) Natura site and the characteristics of the adjoining grounds and their importance for the designated area in terms of habitat and species. This image illustrates the extent of SAC buffers within the Republic of Ireland.</p>	<p>The image is a map of Donegal County, Ireland, illustrating the Amber Buffer Zones for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The map shows the county's coastline and internal road network. Orange-shaded areas represent the buffer zones around Natura 2000 sites. A legend at the bottom right of the map area indicates that these orange areas are 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. The map also includes a north arrow in the top right corner and a title box in the top left corner with the Donegal County Council logo and the text 'Special Areas of Conservation - Amber Buffer Zones Maoláin Ómra na Limistéar faoi Chaomhnú Speisialta'. At the bottom right, there is a small attribution: 'Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, METI, NASA, USGS'.</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
22	<p>Specialist ecological consultants advised that it would be good practice to define specific, tailored buffer zones around all of the Natura 2000 sites within the County and adjoining authorities inclusive of trans-boundary sites. Each buffer has been identified having regard to the qualifying interests of the (pertaining) Natura site and the characteristics of the adjoining grounds and their importance for the designated area in terms of habitat and species. This image illustrates the extent of the buffers of Northern Ireland SACs that fall within the jurisdiction of Donegal County Council.</p>	<p>The image is a map of Donegal County, Ireland, illustrating the extent of Amber Buffer Zones for Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) relating to Northern Ireland. The map shows the county's coastline and internal road network. Numerous black dots are scattered across the county, representing the locations of SACs. A network of orange lines connects these dots, representing the Amber Buffer Zones. A legend in the bottom right corner indicates that the orange lines represent areas 'Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú'. The map also features a north arrow in the top right corner and the Donegal County Council logo in the top left corner. The title of the map is 'Special Areas of Conservation Amber Buffer Zones relating to Northern Ireland Maoláin Ómra na Limistéar faoi Chaomhnú Speisialta a bhaineann le Tuaisceart Éireann'. At the bottom of the map, there is a small text credit: 'Escrí UK, ES, FR, BE, GA, GR, IT, FAO, MET, NASA, BSI, CS'.</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
23	<p>Specialist ecological consultants advised that it would be good practice to define specific, tailored buffer zones around all of the Natura 2000 sites within the County and adjoining authorities inclusive of trans-boundary sites. Each buffer has been identified having regard to the qualifying interests of the (pertaining) Natura site and the characteristics of the adjoining grounds and their importance for the designated area in terms of habitat and species. This image illustrates the extent of SPA buffers within the Republic of Ireland.</p>	 <p>Special Protection Areas - Amber Buffer Zones Maoláin Ómra na Limistéar faoi Chosaint Speisialta</p> <p>Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú</p> <p>Ferri LK, For, FERRE, Gairm, P10, METI, NASA, USGS</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
24	<p>Specialist ecological consultants advised that it would be good practice to define specific, tailored buffer zones around all of the Natura 2000 sites within the County and adjoining authorities inclusive of trans-boundary sites. Each buffer has been identified having regard to the qualifying interests of the (pertaining) Natura site and the characteristics of the adjoining grounds and their importance for the designated area in terms of habitat and species. This image illustrates the extent of the buffers of Northern Ireland SPAs that fall within the jurisdiction of Donegal County Council.</p>	<p>The image is a map of Donegal County, Ireland, showing Amber Buffer Zones for Northern Ireland Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The map features a network of roads and several Natura 2000 sites marked with black dots. Two areas are highlighted in orange, representing the buffer zones. The map includes a title in English: "Special Protection Areas - Amber Buffer Zones Relating to Northern Ireland" and in Irish: "Maoláin Ómra na Limistéar faoi Chosaint Speisialta a bhaineann le Tuaisceart Éireann". It also features the Donegal County Council logo, a north arrow, and a legend at the bottom right that reads "Open To Consideration Ar Fáil le Breithniú". Source information at the bottom right mentions "Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, MET, NASA, USGS".</p>

Ref	Brief Description of Spatial data	Image of Spatial Data Layer
25	<p>County Geological Sites (CGS) have been identified in the Geological Heritage Audit of Donegal, 2019 (prepared By Geological Survey Ireland and supported by the Heritage Council and Donegal County Council). The Audit identifies a total of 102 CGS, 22 of which have been recommended as NHAs. The CGSs identified are the most important geological sites in the County, and some are identified as having national importance.</p>	

6.0 EXPLANATION for SPECIFIC TEXTUAL CHANGES in the VARIATION

Ref	Location in Plan	Type of Change	Explanation for Specific Textual Changes
1	Part A Section 2A.1 Page 10 (end of 3 rd Paragraph)	Amend Text	<p>This part of the Core Strategy sets out the vision for the sustainable growth of the County, including its consistency with national climate change and decarbonisation agenda.</p> <p>The amended text updates references to national climate related legislation and guidelines.</p>
2	Part A Section 2, Appendix 2	Deletion of entire Section 28 statement in respect of Wind Energy Development	<p>This part of the Plan sets out how the Planning Authority has taken into account the Ministerial Planning Guidelines as required under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended). The Variation provides for new wind energy policies and objectives and, as such, that part of the existing Section 28 Statement as it deals with wind energy requires updating.</p>
3	Part A Section 2, Appendix 2	Insert new Section 28 statement in respect of Wind Energy Development	<p>This amendment provides for a new Section 28 Statement as referred to in Item 2 above.</p>
4	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.1 Page 148	Amend Text	<p>This part of the Plan sets out the background to Chapter 8.2 Energy, of the Plan, including its consistency with the national climate change agenda and specifically the context for wind energy developments (also refers to other renewable energies).</p> <p>Generally the amended text in Section 8.2 Background, updates references to national climate related legislation and guidelines.</p> <p>The amended text within the section entitled Wind Energy Context, updates references to national climate change legislation and renewable energy guidelines. The text also contains a background and description of wind energy zoning objectives, that are wholly changed from the provisions of the Plan relating to Wind Energy that were adopted by a resolution of the Members in May, 2018.</p>

Ref	Location in Plan	Type of Change	Explanation for Specific Textual Changes
5	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies Page 152	Amend Text	This part of the Plan sets out that a community report must be submitted with a planning application for windfarm development in accordance with Article 22A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)
6	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.2 Objectives page 151	Amend existing objective E-O-1	This amended objective reflects national policy to develop a diverse and secure renewable energy supply.
7	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.2 Objectives page 151	Insert New Objective E-O-7	This new objective aligns with SPPR1 in the Guidelines, to secure maximum wind energy potential commensurate with the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.
8	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies page 152	Delete Policy E-P-12	This policy related to, and would have been considered in the context of, Wind Energy Map 8.2.1 as adopted by a resolution of the Members in May, 2018 but which were subsequently removed by High Court Order made on the 5th day of November, 2018. As that Wind Energy Map 8.2.1 map has been replaced, policy E-P-12 is no longer relevant.

Ref	Location in Plan	Type of Change	Explanation for Specific Textual Changes
9	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies	Insert new Policy E-P-12	E-P-12 This new policy addresses the establishment of the acceptability, or otherwise, of windfarm developments and is related to, and is to be considered in conjunction with, Map 8.2.1 that identifies areas that are (a) Acceptable in Principle, (b) Open to Consideration and (c) Not Normally Permissible.
10	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies page 153	Amend Policy E-P-13	The policy has been amended to reflect the designations in the new Map 8.2.1
11	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies page 153	Delete Policy E-P-16	This change removes an unnecessary superseded policy relating to improving the capacity of existing turbines.
12	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies	Insert new Policy E-P-16	This new policy pertains to the location of new wind measuring masts in areas designated as 'Acceptable in Principle' or 'Open to Consideration'.
13	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development	Insert New Policy E-P-22	This new policy relates to community consultation at planning application stage.

Ref	Location in Plan	Type of Change	Explanation for Specific Textual Changes
	Section 8.2.3 Policies		
14	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies	Insert new Policy E-P-23 and new associated definitions	This new policy sets out the requirements: (1) for set-back distances between wind turbines and residential receptors for visual amenity purposes; the Policy reflects amendments made by resolution of the Members of the Council at the Plenary Council meetings of 29 th November, 2021 and 31 st January, 2022 (adjourned to 21 st February 2022) to stipulate set-back distances of ten times tip height distance, whereas the recommended setback distance was four times tip distance; and (2) that windfarm developments must not be located within several stipulated environmental resources.
15	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies	Insert new policy E-P-24	This new policy sets out the requirements for set-back distances between wind turbines and the curtilage of residential properties for noise and shadow flicker reasons. following instruction from Elected Members at the Plenary Council Meeting of the 29 th November 2021. The Policy was included by resolution of the Members of the Council at the Plenary Council meeting of 29 th November, 2021.
16	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies	Insert new Policy E-P-25	This new policy requires the preparation of environmental management plans to manage all stages of a windfarm development from construction and operation to the end of life of a windfarm operation
17	Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development Section 8.2.3 Policies	Insert new Policy E-P-26	This new policy pertains to proposed wind farm developments located on peatlands to ensure that the impact on same is fully considered at planning application stage.

Ref	Location in Plan	Type of Change	Explanation for Specific Textual Changes
18	Part B Appendix 3: Development Guidelines and Technical Standards, 6.5 Wind Energy Page 197	Delete Technical Standard	<p>All of the technical standards(a) – (f) listed in 6.5 are to be deleted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two, (c) and (f), were removed by the High Court Order made on the 5th day of November; one relating to Map 8.2.1 and one referring to the ten times tip height of turbines from residential properties. – Two, (a) and (b), are being removed as they referred to restrictions within the zone of visual influence of Glenveagh National Park and the zone of influence/flight path of Donegal Airport, City of Derry Airport or Finner Camp and which have now been incorporated into policy. – Two, (d) and (e), have been removed in order to align the policy treatment of the referenced environmental designations (i.e. Natura 2000 sites and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchment Areas FWPMC's) with the treatment of other similar such assets in the CDP. Other such assets are not addressed at Technical Standards 6.5; rather, they are addressed in policy and on Map 8.2.1. Natura 2000 sites and FWPMC's are similarly addressed in policy and on Map 8.2.1. Removing bullets (d) and (e) will therefore provide for consistency of treatment in the CDP of these assets with other such assets.
19	Part B Chapter 7: The Natural and Built Environment Section 7.1.3 Policies Page135	Amend Policy NH-P-6	The amendment to this policy would reflect that windfarm development within EHSAs would have limited circumstances where it could be considered to be of a strategic importance.
20	Part A Chapter 8: Natural Resource Development	Insert new Map 8.2.1	<p>A new map is required which replaces Wind Energy Map 8.2.1 as adopted by resolution of the Members in May, 2018 but subsequently removed by High Court Order made on the 5th day of November, 2018.</p> <p>The new Wind Energy Map 8.2.1 identifies areas zoned as (a) Acceptable in Principle, (b) Open to Consideration and (c) Not Normally Permissible and used the evidenced based methodology and approach in accordance with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2021 as a basis. Additional spatial layers to be included within Areas 'Not Normally Permissible were added by Elected Members at the Plenary Council Meetings of the 29th November 2021 and 31st January, 2022 (adjourned to 21st February, 2022), with consequential knock-on effects for the areas designated 'Open to Consideration'.</p>