

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

FOR THE

PORTARLINGTON JOINT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

for: Laois and Offaly County Councils



by: CAAS Ltd.



JULY 2025

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
CAFE	Cleaner Air for Europe
CFRAM	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management
CGS	County Geological Site
CORINE	Co-ORDinated INformation on the Environment
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
DCCA	Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment
DCEE	Department of Climate, Energy and Environment
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQS	Environmental Quality Standard
ELVs	Emission Discharge Values
EU	European Union
GFC	Gross Final Consumption
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
JLAP	Joint Local Area Plan
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry
NECP	National Energy and Climate Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NO₂	Nitrogen dioxide
NTA	National Transport Authority
OPW	Office of Public Works
O₃	Ozone
PM_{2.5}	Fine particulate matter
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
PAS	Priority Action Substance
RAL	Remedial Action List
RED	Renewable Energy Directive
RBD	River Basin District
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPA	Register of Protected Areas
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEO	Strategic Environmental Objective
SI No.	Statutory Instrument Number
SPA	Special Protection Area
SuDS	Sustainable urban Drainage systems
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WRZ	Water Resource Zone
WSS	Water Supply Scheme
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action (such as a plan or programme) or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a European Site in view of its conservation objectives.

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems' (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992).

Flora is all the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all the animals found in a given area.

Environmental Problems

Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain Plans and programmes on the environment (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse.

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and ideal targets. If environmental problems are identified at the outset, they can help focus attention on important issues and geographical areas where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.

Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are environmental components, such as air, water or soil, through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported, coming into contact with human beings.

Mitigate

To make or become less severe or harsh.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects. Mitigation measures can be roughly divided into those that: avoid effects; reduce the magnitude or extent, probability and/or severity of effects; repair effects after they have occurred; and compensate for effects, balancing out negative impacts with other positive ones.

In the context of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, mitigation measures are clearly distinguished from compensatory measures. Compensatory measures are intended to offset the negative effects of the plan or project so that the overall ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network is maintained.

Natural Heritage

The Heritage Act (1995) defines natural heritage as including flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, inland waterways, heritage gardens and parks.

Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and associated Regulations (as amended) to define a structure included by a planning authority in its Record of Protected Structures. Such a structure shall not be altered or demolished in whole or part without obtaining planning permission or confirmation from the planning authority that the part of the structure to be altered is not protected.

Recorded Monument

A monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places that is set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified. Any works at or in relation to a recorded monument requires two months' notice to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

Scoping

Scoping is the process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. Scoping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at International, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives can be evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

Section 1 SEA: Introduction and Benefits

1.1 Introduction

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan (JLAP) 2025-2031. It has been prepared by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Laois and Offaly County Councils. The purpose of this report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan.

Environmental assessment is a procedure that ensures that the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before such decisions are made. *Environmental Impact Assessment*, or EIA, is generally used for describing the process of environmental assessment for individual projects, while *Strategic Environmental Assessment* or SEA is the term which has been given to the environmental assessment of plans and programmes, which help determine the nature and location of individual projects taking place. SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a proposed plan or programme, in order to ensure that these effects are adequately addressed at the earliest appropriate stages of decision-making in tandem with economic, social and other considerations.

The SEA has been undertaken in order to comply with the European SEA Directive¹, which introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes that are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use planning.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011), and the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011).

1.2 Implications for the Planning Authority

SEA identifies the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan. The findings of the SEA are expressed in this Environmental Report, an earlier version of which accompanied the Draft Plan on public display and has been updated following consultation, and identifies how environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan and how alternatives for the Plan were considered.

The planning authorities have taken into account the findings of this report and other related SEA output during the Plan preparation process.

Following adoption of the Plan, an SEA Statement is prepared that summarises, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

1.3 Why SEA? The Benefits

SEA is the planning authority's and the public's guide to what are generally the best areas for development in the Plan area.

SEA enables the planning authority to direct development towards robust, well-serviced and connected areas in the Plan area – thereby facilitating the general avoidance of incompatible development in the most sensitive, least well-serviced and least well-connected areas, in the Plan area and beyond.

SEA provides greater certainty to the public and to developers. Plans are more likely to be adopted without delays or challenges and planning applications are more likely to be granted permission. Environmental mitigation is more likely to cost less.

The Plan directs incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focuses on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed

envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation.

Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit.

Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

Section 2 The Plan

2.1 Introduction and Content

The Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan (JLAP) 2025-2031 has been prepared and adopted in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (hereafter referred to as 'the Act').

The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Portarlington, in the context of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027, the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031. The Plan has also been informed by Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Act.

2.2 Form and Content of the Plan

The Plan comprises a written statement and accompanying maps. The written statement shall take precedence over the map should any discrepancy arise. In the full interpretation of all objectives for Portarlington, it is essential that both the County Development Plans and the Joint Local Area Plan are read together. Where conflicting objectives arise between the two, the objectives of the former shall take precedence.

The general development management standards applicable to the Plan area are included in the County Development Plans, while policies and objectives that are specific to Portarlington are included in the JLAP.

It is a specific provision of the Plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 identified in this SEA Environmental Report and accompanying Appropriate Assessment (AA) Natura Impact Report that accompany this Plan shall be complied with throughout the implementation of the Plan.

2.3 Vision Statement and associated Key Plan Objectives

The Joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington is underpinned by the following Vision Statement, which is intended to guide the future growth of the town over the period 2025-2031: "To develop Portarlington as a sustainable low carbon settlement centred on a compact, vibrant town centre utilising locational strengths to attract employment and to promote the unique settlement as an attractive town in which to live, work and play, while ensuring the management of flood risk and the protection of the unique built and natural heritage". Key Plan Objectives in relation to the delivery of the above Vision Statement are as follows:

- Objective 6.1: Support new development that will enable sustainable housing growth, employment and prosperity for Portarlington as a 'Key Service Centre' in line with the Strategic Objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (2019), the Laois County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (designated as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town) and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (designated as a Self-Sustaining Town).
- Objective 6.2: Promote and support positive placemaking and the development of sustainable communities, with an emphasis on active travel and shorter walking and cycling timeframes to social and community facilities, improving permeability in the built environment, and encouraging a reduction in car dependency.
- Objective 6.3: Support and facilitate the regeneration and consolidation of the town centre, in line with the objectives of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030', while emphasising heritage-led regeneration.
- Objective 6.4: Work in partnership with community groups for the regeneration and revitalisation of Portarlington, and to actively seek and secure funding and investment under available national and regional investment and funding programmes in line with the development strategy as set out.
- Objective 6.5: Support compact residential growth in Portarlington through the sustainable intensification, and consolidation of the town centre and in established residential areas, to meet identified housing targets and requirements.
- Objective 6.6: Monitor and manage the delivery of housing in Portarlington, in line with national, regional and county level objectives, through

- the development strategy in this plan and also through the development management process.
- Objective 6.7: Promote and support balanced economic development and employment growth.
- Objective 6.8: Protect, conserve and enhance the built, natural and cultural environment, by promoting awareness and high-quality urban design and utilising relevant heritage legislation.
- Objective 6.9: Develop and improve flood mitigation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland.
- Objective 6.10: Enhance climate adaptation and mitigation, and accelerate a transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy in Portarlington.
- Objective 6.11: Ensure that Portarlington grows at a sustainable level in line with the Core Strategy Table and deliver consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment in services, infrastructure, amenities and local employment in order to become more self-sustaining.
- Objective 6.12: Development within flood risks areas shall be limited to that appropriate to the level of flood risk, as identified in Map 3 (Land Use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning) in accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended. New development within this area is limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been prepared.

2.4 Strategic work undertaken by the Councils to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development

Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display and adopting the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

Strategic work undertaken by the Councils includes background work in relation to Plan provisions, including those relating to:

- Core Strategy Compliance and Housing;
- Town Centre Revitalisation;
- Placemaking and Sustainable Communities;
- Climate Change;
- Economic Development;
- Sustainable Travel and Transportation;

- Infrastructure and Environmental Services;
- Built Heritage;
- Biodiversity and Natural Heritage; and
- Land Use Zoning Objectives.

The undertaking of the SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions as detailed in Section 9 of this report.

2.5 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

Many of the major issues affecting Portarlington's development are contingent on national policy and government funding. The Plan sits within a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use planning, infrastructure, sustainable development, tourism, environmental protection and environmental management. The Plan must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions and will, in turn, guide lower-level strategic actions. These documents include plans and programmes such as those detailed in Appendix I² (see also, Section 4 "Environmental Baseline", Section 5 "Strategic Environmental Objectives", Section 6 "Description of Alternatives" and Section 9 "Mitigation Measures"). These documents have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The Revised National Planning Framework sets out Ireland's planning policy direction up to 2040. The National Planning Framework is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region sets out objectives for land use planning, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been subject to environmental assessment and must, as relevant and appropriate, be implemented through the Laois and Offaly County

² Appendix I is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

Development Plans, that set out the overarching development strategy for the Counties, and the Joint Local Area Plan.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Joint Local Area Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

Section 3 SEA Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach

The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SEA and AA have informed the Plan.

3.2 Appropriate Assessment and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

3.2.1 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA have been undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.³ The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

3.2.2 Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Many elements of Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment as detailed in the EPA's (2013) Practitioner's Manual have been aligned with in the undertaking of the SEA for the Plan. These include:

Scoping

- Biodiversity-relevant issues were identified for consideration at scoping stage and these are now detailed in Section 4.
- Reference to a zone of influence is provided at Section 4.

Baseline

- Biodiversity data sources relevant for this local level assessment have been identified and datasets collated/gathered.

- The biodiversity baseline addresses designated sites and other habitats and species of ecological value.
- AA information has been incorporated into the SEA baseline.

Alternatives

- Impacts upon biodiversity are considered under each of the alternatives and potential conflicts can be mitigated.

Impact assessment

- Effects on biodiversity are identified and assessed and the AA considers the interrelationship between biodiversity and potential effects on European Sites.

Mitigation and monitoring

- Taking into account all measures contained within the Plan, all the proposed mitigation measures deriving from the various processes were generally consistent and compatible.
- Indicators and associated targets have been included in SEA for monitoring European Sites.

Reporting

- This SEA ER addresses all biodiversity-related considerations relevant for this level of assessment.
- This SEA ER contains all biodiversity-relevant information, data, figures and maps relevant for this level of assessment.
- This SEA ER has been informed by the AA findings.

Communication and consultation

- Submissions received have been taken on board.
- The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA have taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

3.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) have informed the preparation of the County Development Plans, which include flood risk management and drainage provisions. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014.

The SFRA undertaken for the JLAP has informed its land use zoning and written provisions.

³ 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 plan to proceed; and
(c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

3.4 Scoping

The scope of environmental issues to be dealt with by the SEA together with the level of detail to which they are addressed was broadly decided upon taking into account the collection of environmental baseline data and input from environmental authorities. Scoping allowed the SEA to become focused upon key issues relevant to the environmental components that are specified under the SEA Directive⁴.

All relevant environmental authorities identified under the SEA Regulations as amended, were sent SEA scoping notices by the Councils indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to the Councils⁵.

As the Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State, transboundary consultations as provided for by Article 7 of the SEA Directive were not undertaken.

3.5 Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. In accordance with this requirement, alternatives for the Plan are identified and assessed in Sections 6 and 7.

⁴ These components comprise biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

⁵ The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Galway County Council; Roscommon County Council; Westmeath County Council; Meath County Council; Kildare County Council; Carlow County Council; Kilkenny County Council; and Tipperary County Council.

3.6 Environmental Report

This SEA Environmental Report predicts and evaluates the likely environmental effects of implementing the Plan and relevant alternatives. The Environmental Report provides the Councils, stakeholders and the public with a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of the Plan.

Mitigation measures to prevent or reduce significant adverse effects posed by the Plan are identified in Section 9 - these have been integrated into the Plan.

An earlier version of this report was reported was updated in order to take account of relevant recommendations contained in submissions and in order to take account of changes that were made to the Draft Plan that was placed on public display earlier in the process.

The Environmental Report is required to contain the information specified in Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended (see Table 3.1).

No significant difficulties have been encountered during the undertaking of the assessment to date.

3.7 SEA Statement

On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement is prepared that includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan, highlighting the main changes to the Plan that resulted from the SEA process;
- How the SEA Environmental Report and consultations have been taken into account, summarising the key issues raised in consultations and in the Environmental Report indicating what action was taken in response;
- The reasons for choosing the Plan in the light of the other alternatives, identifying the other alternatives considered, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the Plan as adopted was selected; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing of the Plan.

Table 3.1 Checklist of Information included in this Environmental Report

Information Required to be included in the Environmental Report	Corresponding Section of this Report, including
(A) Outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Sections 2, 5 and 8
(B) Description of relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the evolution of that environment without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 4
(C) Description of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Sections 4, 7 and 8
(D) Identification of any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, particularly those relating to European protected sites	Section 4
(E) List of environmental protection objectives, established at international, EU or National level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and describe how those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account when preparing the Plan	Sections 5, 7, 8, 9 and Appendix I
(F) Describe the likely significant effects on the environment	Sections 7 and 8
(G) Describe any measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme	Section 9
(H) Give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives considered, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken (including any difficulties)	Sections 3, 6, 7 and 8
(I) A description of proposed monitoring measures	Section 10
(J) A non-technical summary of the above information	Appendix II Non-Technical Summary
(K) Interrelationships between each environmental topic	Addressed as it arises within each Section

Section 4 Environmental Baseline

4.1 Introduction

Reflecting the specifications in the SEA Directive, the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment for the following environmental components are described in this section: biodiversity and flora and fauna; population and human health; soil; water; air and climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; and the interrelationship between the above factors.

This description includes information that is relevant to lower tier planning, environmental assessments and decision-making⁶.

4.2 National Reporting on the Environment

The EPA's *"Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024"* report provides an integrated assessment of the overall quality of Ireland's environment, the pressures being placed on it and the societal responses to current and emerging environmental issues. This report has informed various parts of the environmental baseline provided below. The five key environmental priorities identified by the report are:

- "Delivering a national policy position on the environment - we urgently need to have a national policy position on the environment to address the complex interactions, synergies and trade-offs across environmental policy areas and to deal with its interactions with other policy domains.
- Driving policy implementation - we must rigorously implement existing environmental plans and programmes to achieve the benefits that they were developed to deliver.
- Transforming our systems - transformation of our energy, transport, food and industrial sectors is critical to achieving a sustainable future.
- Scaling up investment in infrastructure - investment in water, energy, transport and waste management infrastructure is essential to protect the environment now and into the future.
- Protecting the environment to protect our health - protecting the environment is key to protecting

our health and we must act to reduce the modifiable risks to our health from environmental exposures."

4.3 Sustainable Development Goals

Implementation of the Plan will contribute towards efforts to achieve a number of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which were adopted by world leaders in 2015 at a United Nations Summit and came into force in 2016. These Goals include:

- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

4.4 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of a new Plan

In the absence of a new Joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington, the framework for development across the Plan area would be provided by the County Development Plans and other related documents. There would be no Joint Local Area Plan to provide additional detail beyond that provided already through the existing planning framework as how to achieve sustainable development and environmental protection and management in the town.

As a result, there would be a decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and

⁶ Article 5 of the SEA Directive, in accordance with the established European principle of subsidiarity, requires that the Environmental Report includes the information that may reasonably be required taking into account, inter alia, the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.

frequency of the positive environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring, including:

- Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contribution towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and associated ecosystem services, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats.
- Contribution towards protection and/or maintenance of biodiversity and flora and fauna by contributing towards the protection of natural capital including the environmental vectors of air, water and soil. Biodiversity and flora and fauna includes biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species (including birds and bats), listed/protected species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats (including terrestrial and aquatic habitats), and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna – including terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and flora and fauna.
- Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain.
- Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management.
- Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contributes towards protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of natural capital including environmental vectors, including air and water.
- Contribution towards the protection of soils (including those used for agriculture) and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination the highest standards of remediation.
- Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contributions towards the protection of water resources including the status of surface and groundwaters and water-based designations.
- Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage.
- Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies.
- Contribution towards increase in renewable energy use by facilitating renewable energy and electricity transmission infrastructure developments.
- Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth.
- Contribution towards reductions in average energy consumption per capita including promoting sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility, sustainable design and energy efficiency.
- Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- In combination with other plans, programmes etc., contribution towards the objectives of the wide policy framework relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated contribution towards maintaining and improving air quality and managing noise levels, including through measures relating to:
 - Sustainable compact growth;
 - Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport;
 - Drainage, flood risk management and resilience;
 - Sectors including agriculture, forestry, energy and buildings;
 - Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure.
- Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area.
- Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within the Plan area by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration.
- Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area.

Furthermore, and as a result, there would be an increased likelihood in the extent,

magnitude and frequency of the adverse environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring, including:

- Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:
 - Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;
 - Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and
 - Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. swifts) and bats.
- Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors.
- Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands.
- Potential for riverbank erosion.
- Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology.
- Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events.
- Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).
- Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).
- Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).
- Increases in waste levels.
- Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.
- Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter.
- Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives.
- Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality.
- Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors.
- Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management.
- Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities.

- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape.

4.5 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Natural capital comprises renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) that combine to yield a flow of ecosystem services that provide benefits to people. These benefits can include clean air and water, a stable climate, protection from floods, food, resources for fuel, building materials, clothes and medicines, recreation. Managing natural capital so that it can continue to deliver the ecosystem services that provide these benefits is important in order to ensure sustainable development. Unmanaged natural capital risks the continued degradation and depletion of these assets, and in turn, of their capacity to provide the economy and society with the ecosystem benefits that they depend on. These services also regulate climate, regulate water flows (e.g. through wetlands and forests), sequester and store carbon in peatlands and improve soil quality for crops.

Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing. There are four main types; provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services. Provisioning services are the products obtained from ecosystems such as food, fresh water, wood, fibre, genetic resources and medicines. Regulating services are defined as the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes such as climate regulation, natural hazard regulation, water purification and waste management, pollination or pest control. Support services highlight the importance of ecosystems to provide habitat for migratory species and to maintain the viability of gene-pools. Cultural services include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation and aesthetic values⁷.

⁷ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/topics/ecosystem-services>

In preparing the Plan and developing policy objectives, the Councils have followed these ecosystem services approach principles (including through the strategic aims and various policy objectives):

- Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function.
- Taking into account of the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation, resources for food, fibre or fuel, or for recreation, culture and quality of life.
- Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them.

The following natural capital and ecosystem services issues are relevant to this SEA and have been taken into account in the provisions of the Joint Local Area Plan and associated higher-tier Laois and Offaly County Development Plans:

- Air quality;
- Noise pollution;
- Light pollution;
- Water quality and river basin management including interactions with soil;
- Soil and vegetation carbon, which helps to regulate greenhouse gas emissions;
- Soil/geological storage of water, contributing towards flood control;
- Land supporting food production; and
- Natural resources supporting energy production and recreation.

4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

4.6.1 Overview

Information on biodiversity and flora and fauna which is relevant to project planning and development and associated environmental assessment and administrative consent of projects includes available information on designated ecological sites and protected species, ecological connectivity (including stepping stones and corridors) and non-designated habitats.

Key ecological sensitivities within and surrounding the Plan area include:

- **River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation, situated partially within the central parts of the Plan area.** The sensitive features of the River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation include: estuaries; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; reefs; annuals

colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; Mediterranean salt meadows; water courses of plain to montane levels and associated vegetation; European dry heaths; tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels; petrifying springs with tufa formation; old sessile oak woodlands; alluvial forests; Desmoulin's whorl snail; freshwater pearl mussel; white-clawed crayfish; sea lamprey; brook lamprey; river lamprey; twaite shad; salmon; otter; Killarney fern; and Nore pearl mussel.

- **Mountmellick Special Area of Conservation**, located c. 4.6 km to the south-west of the Plan area.
- **Non-statutorily proposed sites surrounding the Plan area, comprising:**
 - **Emo Court proposed Natural Heritage Area**, located c. 3.4 km to the south of the Plan area.
 - **Derries Wood proposed Natural Heritage Area**, located c. 4.8 km to the south-east of the Plan area.
 - **Grand Canal proposed Natural Heritage Area**, located c. 4.8 km to the south-east of the Plan area.
- Peatland areas adjacent to the northern parts of the Plan area: **Derryounce Bog and Derrylea Bog;**
- **Locally important, non-designated habitats within the Plan area**, including the River Barrow nature corridor, the People's Park, the woodland area at the rear of Kilnacourt House (Formerly Odlums Wood), Carrick Woods, the Derryounce Lakes and Trails recreation area, various woodlands, parks, gardens, hedgerows, old buildings/stone walls and lands used for agriculture within and surrounding the Plan area, providing habitats for flora and fauna and facilitating linkages and corridors to the surrounding countryside for the wildlife; and
- **Aquatic and riverine ecology** associated with rivers and streams and their tributaries and riparian buffer zones, including the **River Barrow and River Kilkeeran.**

The following information is relevant to ecological networks and connectivity and non-designated habitats:

- CORINE land cover mapping (including areas likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive)⁸;
- Trees, groups of trees and woodlands;
- Watercourses, wetlands and peatlands;
- Other relevant County Development Plans designations;
- The EPA's Framework National Ecological Network for Ireland⁹; and

⁸ The CORINE land cover mapping classifies land cover under various headings. This dataset allows for the identification of lands that are likely to be most valuable to biodiversity including those which are likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive e.g., natural grasslands, peat bogs, salt marshes. CORINE Land Cover is a map of the European environmental landscape based on interpretation of satellite images. Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface.

⁹ The EPA's Framework National Ecological Network provides a classification of the relative importance of areas by virtue of the biodiversity and flora that they contain and the connectivity they provide. Many of the areas identified are corridors.

- Other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance as identified by, for example, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (badger sets), relevant datasets from the National Biodiversity Data Centre and BirdWatch Ireland's 'Important Bird Areas' (Crowe et al., 2009)¹⁰.

Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers/streams, which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range. They are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna particularly for mammals, especially for bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, the non-designated surrounding countryside and urban areas.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained.

Man-made habitats within the Plan area can also include important biodiversity features. Gardens provide habitats for a range of wildlife including various bird species, invertebrates such as bees and butterflies and mammals such as hedgehogs, mice, rats and foxes. These species move around between gardens using hedgerows and vegetated areas. These urban green spaces are of importance as they form part of a network of green spaces across the Plan area including gardens, parks, graveyards, amenity walks, railway lines and patches of woodland and scrub within which animals and plants continue to thrive.

Ecological islands or areas of habitat that are not connected to surrounding ecologically valuable habitats can also be important.

The zone of influence of the Plan beyond the Plan area with respect to impacts upon ecology via surface waters – including

designated ecology – can be estimated to be areas within 15 km of the Plan area and all downstream areas of catchments which drain the area.

4.6.2 European Sites

European sites comprise Special Areas of Conservation¹¹ (SACs) and Special Protection Areas¹² (SPAs). Such sites within a 15 km buffer around the Plan area are mapped on Figure 4.1). There are a total of three European sites (two SACs and one SPA) designated within 15 km of the Plan boundary (as listed below and shown on Figure 4.1):

- River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site Code: 002162)¹³;
- Mountmellick SAC (Site Code: 002141)¹⁴; and
- Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA (Site Code: 004160)¹⁵.

There is one SAC, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, situated partially within the central parts of the Plan area, as mapped on Figure 4.2. There are three additional hydrologically connected European sites within the wider region beyond a 15 km buffer zone (i.e. downstream of the Plan boundary), the Hook Head SAC (Site Code: 000764)¹⁶, the Lower

¹¹ SACs have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

¹² SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

¹³ Sensitive features comprise: petrifying springs with tufa formation; old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*; Atlantic salmon; Atlantic salt meadows; brook lamprey; Desmoulin's whorl snail; estuaries; European dry heaths; freshwater pearl mussel; *Hydrophilous* tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to Alpine levels; Killarney fern; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Nore pearl mussel; reefs; river lamprey; otter; sea lamprey; twaite shad; water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation; *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Mediterranean salt meadows; and white-clawed crayfish.

¹⁴ Sensitive features comprise Desmoulin's whorl snail.

¹⁵ Sensitive features comprise hen harrier.

¹⁶ Sensitive features comprise: large shallow inlets and bays; reefs; vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts; common bottlenose dolphin; and harbour porpoise.

¹⁰ Including: available habitats mapping at a suitable scale; trees; groups of trees and woodlands; and hedgerows.

River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137)¹⁷ and the Seas off Wexford SPA (Site Code: 004237)¹⁸ as shown on Figure 4.3.

For more detail on European sites please refer to the AA document that accompanies the Plan and this SEA Environmental Report.

4.6.3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated due to their national conservation value for ecological and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. They cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wildlife plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. NHAs are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Proposed NHAs (pNHAs) were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated.

There are a total of two NHAs and 10 pNHAs designated within and within a 15 km buffer of the Plan area, as mapped on Figure 4.4 and listed on Table 4.1. Some of these areas include peatlands.

Active blanket bogs and active raised bogs are priority habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. Peat soils are often indicative of areas that are the most sensitive to development due to ecological sensitivities and impeded drainage issues.

Cutover bog is a variable habitat, or complex of habitats, that can include mosaics of bare peat and re-vegetated areas with woodland, scrub, heath, fen and flush or grassland communities. It occurs where part or all of the original peat has been removed through turf cutting, by the traditional hand method or mechanically, for either domestic or

commercial purposes. This habitat is widespread surrounding industrially and traditionally cutover raised bogs across the country. Cutover bogs have the potential to facilitate land uses such as employment, renewable energy generation, waste management, industrial, and tourism and recreation.

Table 4.1 NHAs and pNHAs within 15 km of the Plan area

Designation	Site Code	Site Name
NHAs	002357	Clonreher Bog
	002033	Daingean Bog
pNHA	000876	Ridge of Portlaoise
	000865	Emo Court
	000416	Derries Wood
	000881	The Great Heath of Portlaoise
	001491	Dunamase Woods
	000878	Rock of Dunamase
	000867	Kilteale Hill
	002104	Grand Canal
	001800	Stradbally Hill
	000917	Rasheen Lough

4.6.4 Land Cover

Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface.

The CORINE 2018¹⁹ mapping (shown on Figure 4.5) identifies the land cover of central parts of the Plan area as urban fabric with adjacent areas of pastures, non-irrigated arable land, complex cultivation patterns and land principally occupied by agriculture with significant areas of natural vegetation. Mixed forests, broad leaved forests, transitional woodland scrub and peat bogs are identified to the north and south of the Plan area.

¹⁷ Sensitive features comprise: Atlantic salt meadows; water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation; *Hydrophilous* tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels; old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*; *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles; freshwater pearl mussel; white-clawed crayfish; sea lamprey; brook lamprey; river lamprey; twaite shad; salmon; and otter.

¹⁸ Sensitive features comprise: red throated diver; fulmar; manx shearwater; gannet; cormorant; shag; common scoter; Mediterranean gull; black-headed gull; lesser black-backed gull; herring gull; kittiwake; sandwich tern; roseate tern; common tern; Arctic tern; little tern; guillemot; razorbill; and puffin.

¹⁹ The CORINE (Co-ordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data series was devised as a means of compiling geo-spatial environmental information in a standardised and comparable manner. CORINE has become a key data source for informing environmental and planning policy on a national and European level. The main land cover type in Ireland is agricultural land including forestry, which accounts for two-thirds of the national landmass. Most of this is permanent grassland pastures. Peatlands and wetlands are the second most widespread land cover type, covering almost one-fifth of the country. While forested areas cover about one-tenth of the country. Despite rapid development in the past two decades, Ireland's landscape is predominantly rural and agricultural.

Categories from CORINE mapping that may indicate areas with the potential for Annex I habitats (Figure 4.6) comprise mixed forests, broad leaved forests and peat bogs and are situated to the north and south, beyond the Plan area.

4.6.5 Register of Protected Areas

In response to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) a number of water bodies or parts of water bodies that must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). Entries to the RPAs within and adjacent to the Plan area, designated by virtue of their value to biodiversity include a number of water-dependent habitats within the area that have been listed on RPAs relating to biodiversity – these relate to designated SACs and SPAs (see Section 4.6.2) and associated surface and groundwaters.

RPAs designated by virtue of their value to humans are addressed under Section 4.9.7.

4.6.6 Margaritifera Sensitive Areas

Freshwater pearl mussel is a globally threatened, long-lived and extremely sensitive species that can be impacted by many forms of pollution, particularly sediment and nutrient pollution and by hydrological and morphological changes, which may arise from developments, activities or changes in any part of the catchment. There are two species of freshwater pearl mussel in Ireland (*Margaritifera* and *Margaritifera durrovensis*) and both are protected under Annex II and Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive. Within the Plan area, Margaritifera Sensitive Areas²⁰ are found within the Barrow River catchment (as mapped on Figure 4.7).

Twenty-seven Management Plans for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel have been published, the objective of which is to restore the freshwater pearl mussel populations in 27 rivers, or stretches of rivers that are within the

boundaries of Special Areas of Conservation. The most significant pressures across these catchments were identified as: point sources in relation to quarries, sand/gravel pits and wastewater treatments plants; and diffuse sources associated with agriculture (including overgrazing), forestry and on-site wastewater treatment systems.

4.6.7 Existing Problems

Ireland's Article 17 report on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (DCHG, 2019) identifies various Irish, EU-protected habitats and species to be of unfavourable status and many to be still declining, although it also identifies that a range of positive actions are underway. Categories for pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species identified by the report comprise:

- Agriculture;
- Forestry;
- Extraction of resources (minerals, peat, non-renewable energy resources);
- Energy production processes and related infrastructure development;
- Development and operation of transport systems;
- Development, construction and use of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas;
- Extraction and cultivation of biological living resources (other than agriculture and forestry);
- Military action, public safety measures, and other human intrusions;
- Alien and problematic species;
- Mixed source pollution;
- Human-induced changes in water regimes;
- Natural processes (excluding catastrophes and processes induced by human activity or climate change);
- Geological events, natural catastrophes;
- Climate change; and
- Unknown pressures, no pressures and pressures from outside the Member State.

Ireland's Article 12 Birds Directive Reports and the 6th National Report under the Convention of Biological Diversity identify similar issues.

The Plan includes measures to contribute towards the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna and associated ecosystem services.

Previous changes in land uses arising from human development have resulted in a loss of biodiversity and flora and fauna; however, legislative objectives governing biodiversity and fauna were not identified as being conflicted with.

²⁰ Within the Plan area, part of a "Catchment with previous records of Margaritifera, but current status unknown" is identified. Other types of Margaritifera Sensitive Areas comprise: "Catchments of other extant populations"; and "Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. No. 296 of 2009".

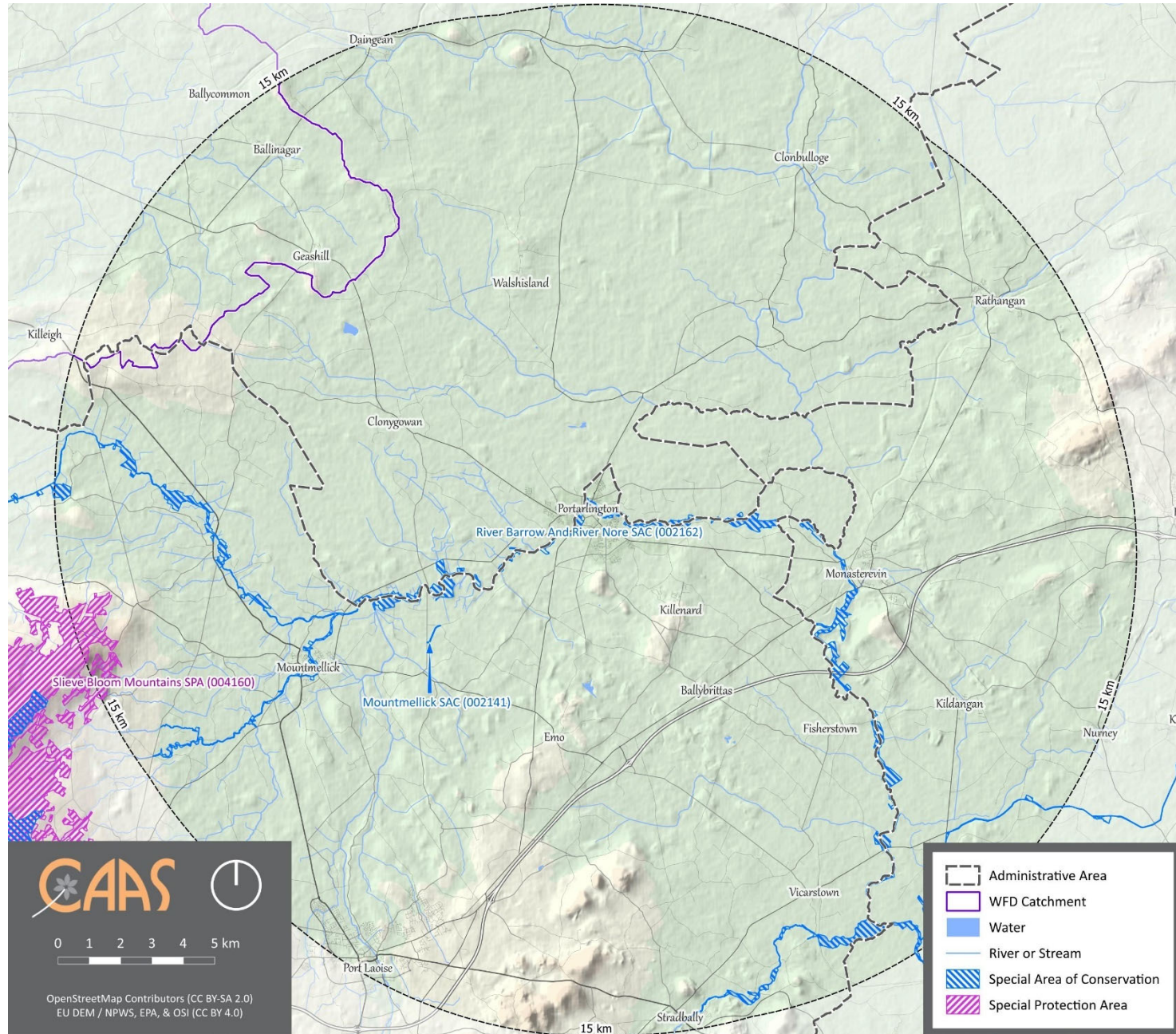


Figure 4.1 European sites within and within a 15 km buffer of the Portarlington Plan area

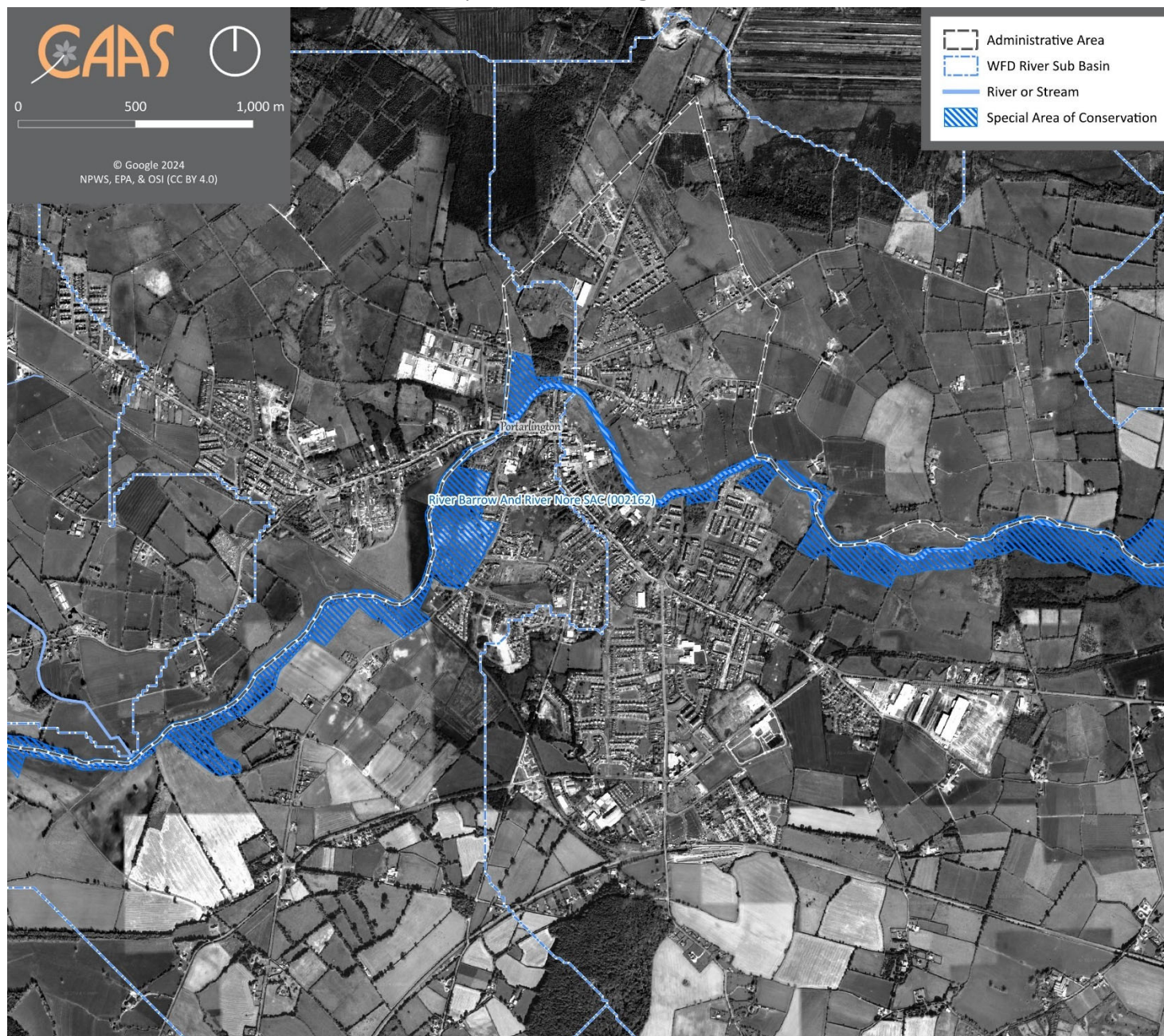


Figure 4.2 SAC within and adjacent to the Portarlington Plan area

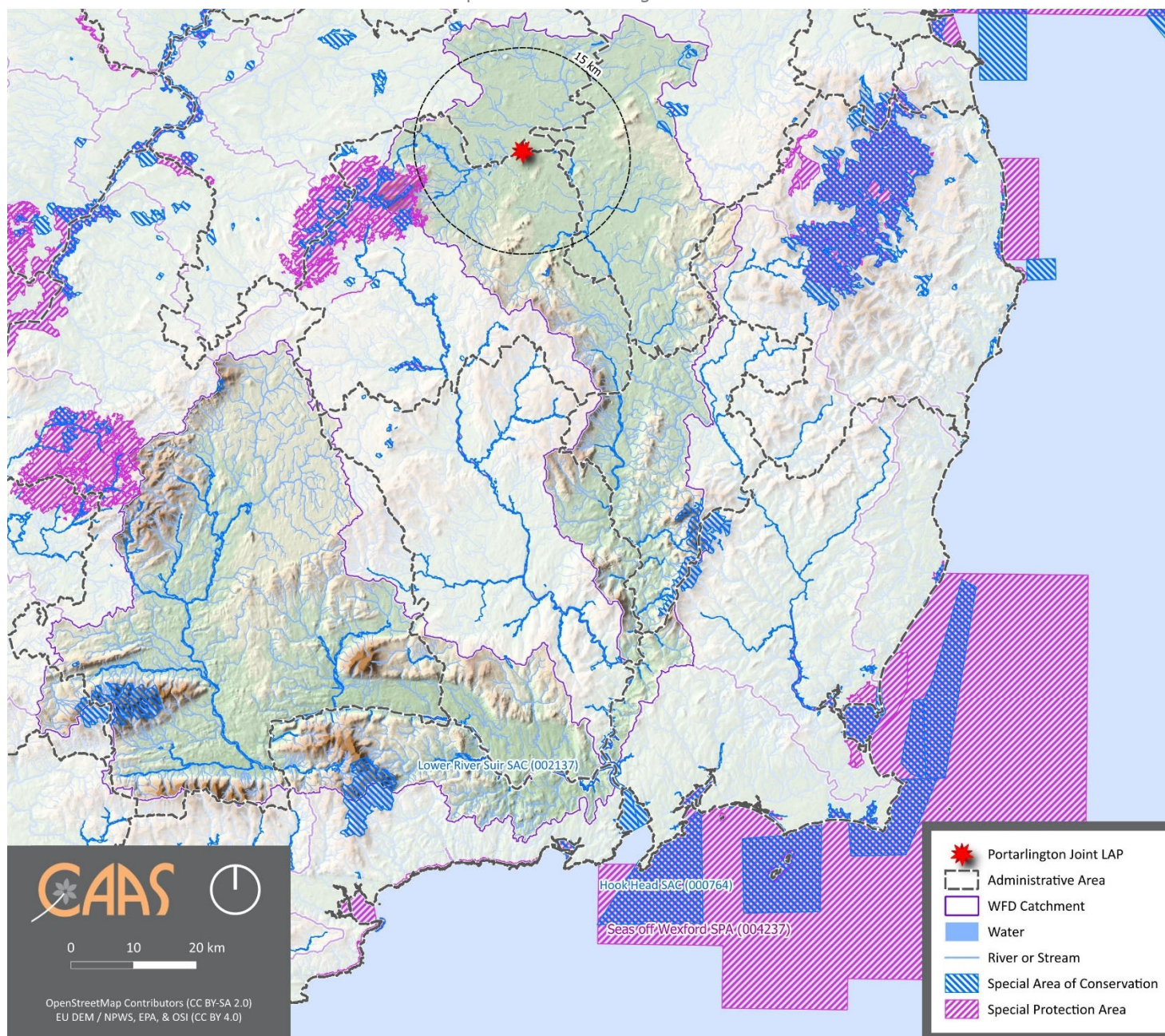


Figure 4.3 Other connected European sites beyond a 15 km buffer of the Portarlington Plan area and hydrologically linked

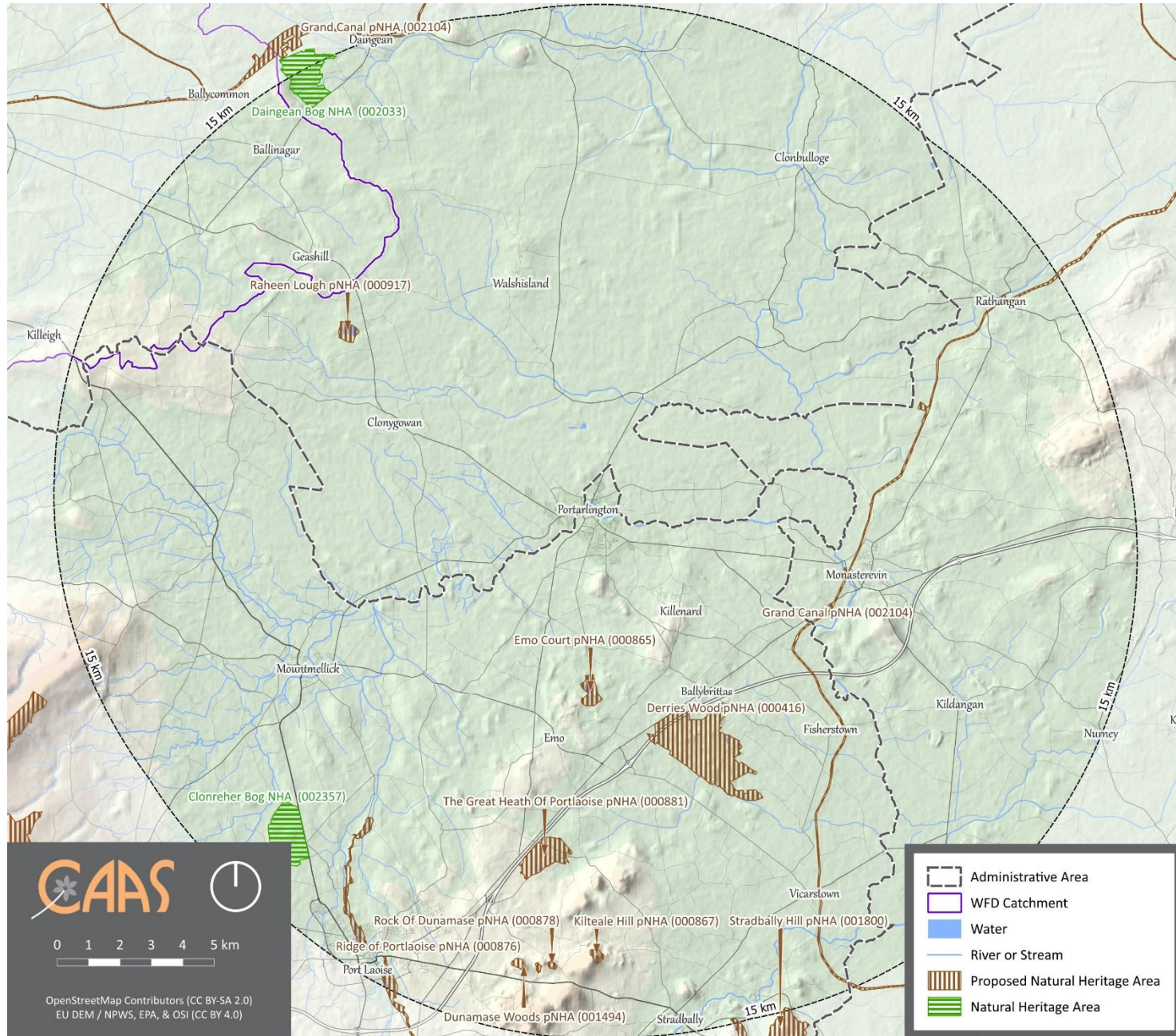


Figure 4.4 NHAs and pNHAs within a 15 km buffer of the Portarlington Plan area

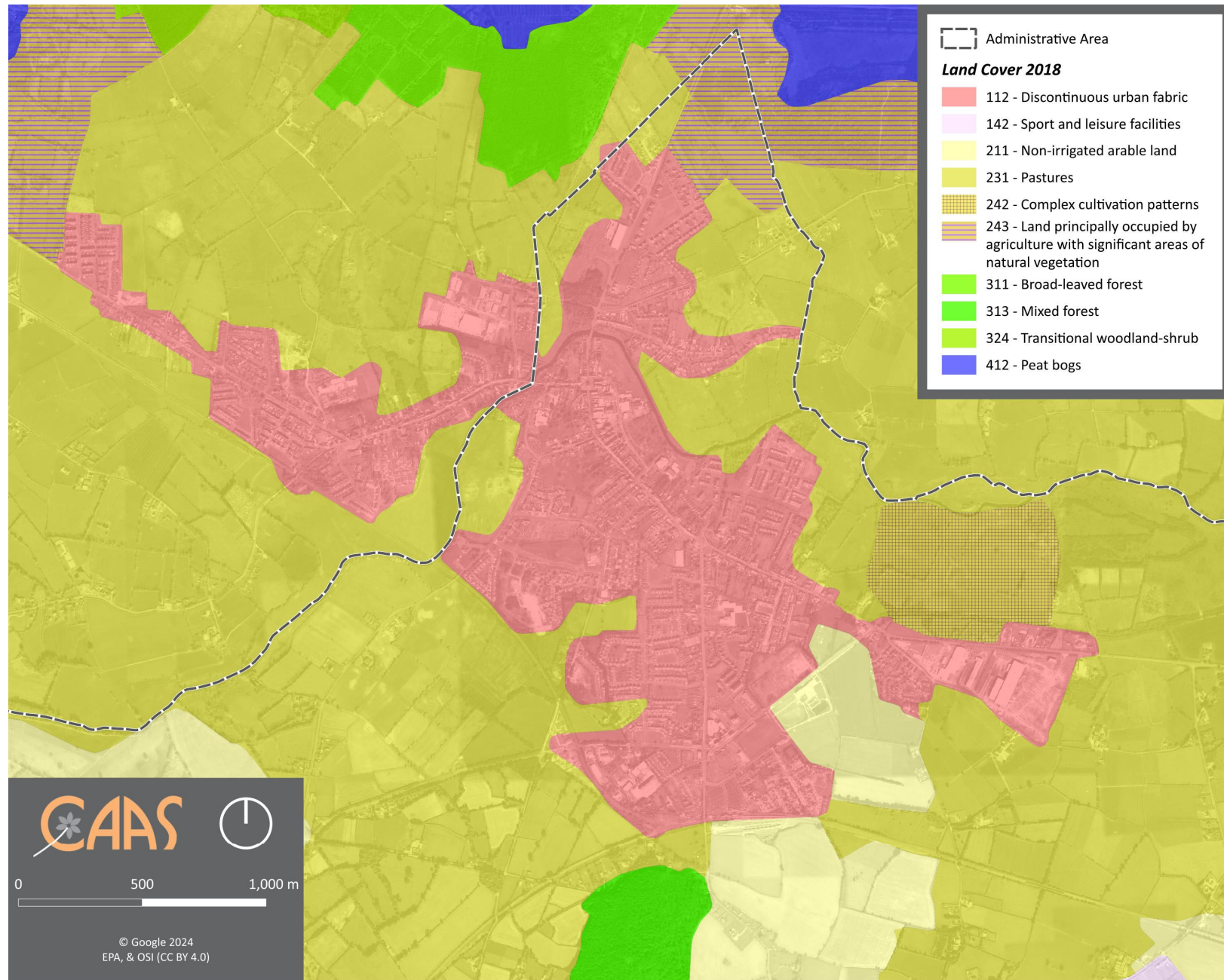


Figure 4.5 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018

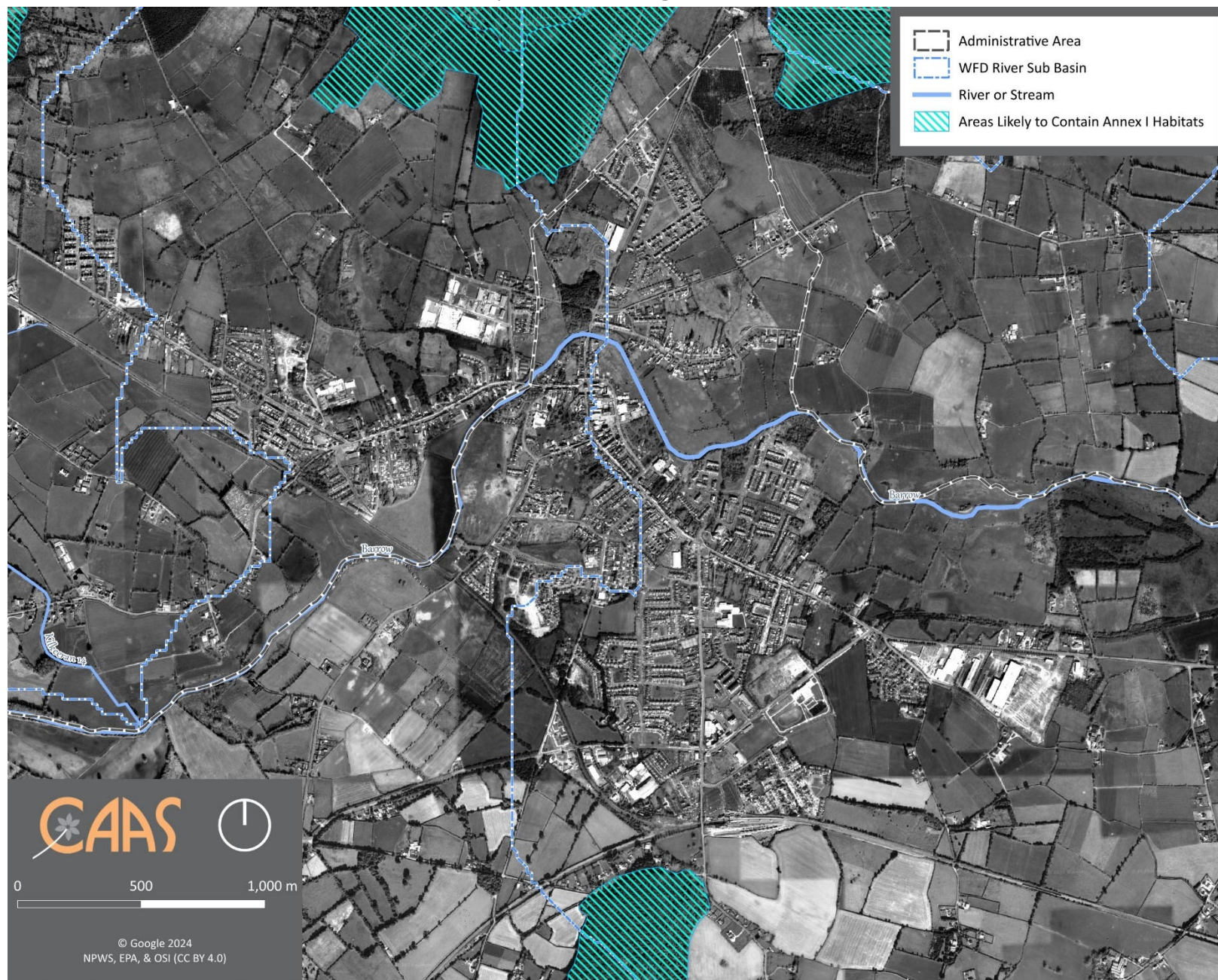


Figure 4.6 Areas likely to contain Annex I Habitats

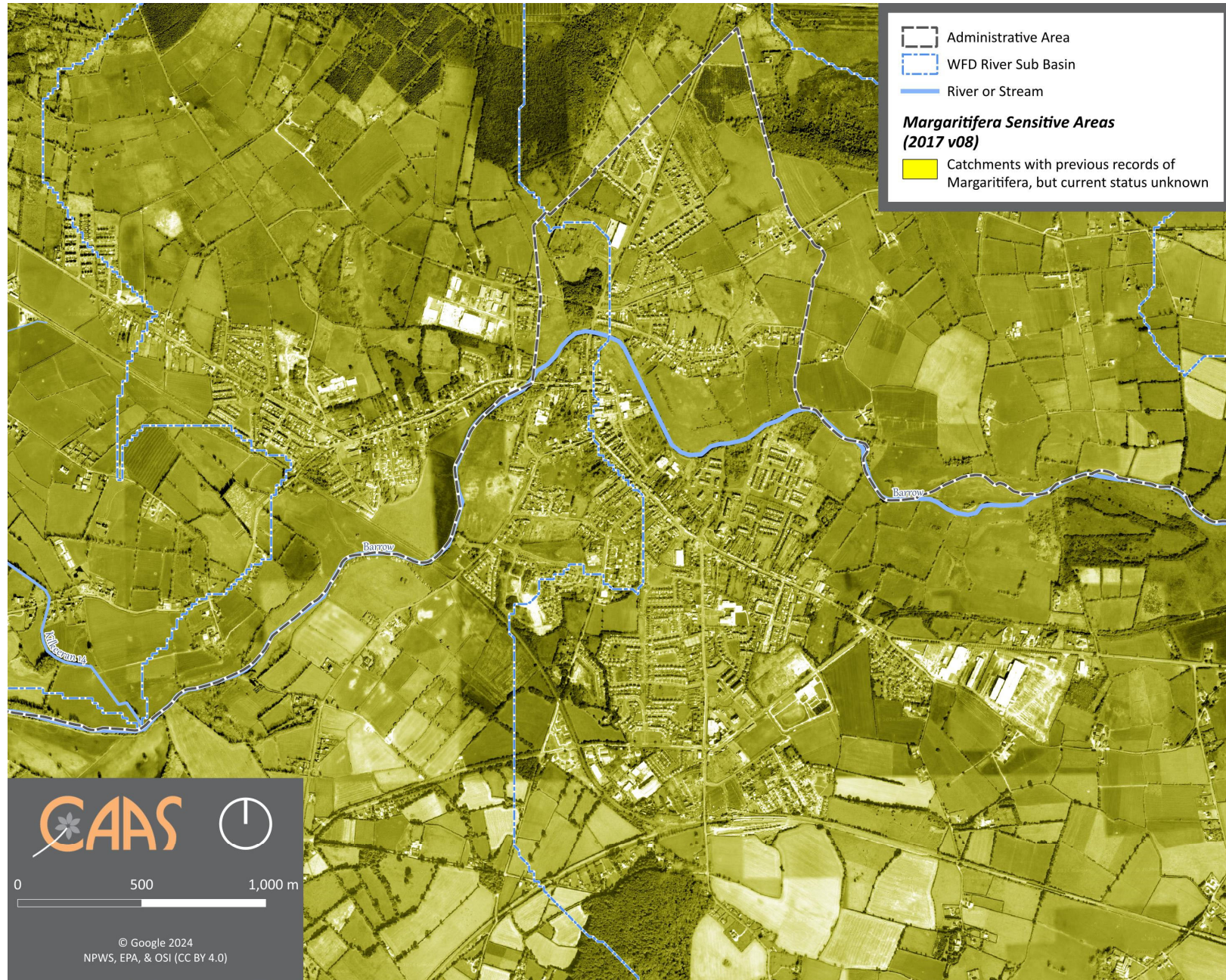


Figure 4.7 Margaritifera Sensitive Areas

4.7 Population and Human Health

4.7.1 Population

The results of Census 2022 within the CSO boundary of Portarlington recorded a population of 9,288 persons. This represents a 10.9% increase in population since Census 2016.²¹

The Core Strategy in Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 provides for a population growth in Portarlington up to 1,000 persons over the Plan period, and an associated housing allocation of 400 units. The Core Strategy of the Offaly County Development Plan indicates a population increase for its functional area in Portarlington of 207 persons over the Plan period, and an associated housing allocation of 140 units.

Portarlington is identified as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and a Self-sustaining Town within the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. As set out in the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns are *'settlements that act as regionally important local drivers providing a range of functions for their resident population and their surrounding catchments including housing, local employment, services, retail and leisure opportunities'*. Portarlington therefore performs an important retail, residential, service and amenity function for its population and for its local rural hinterlands. It also supports the upper tiers of the urban hierarchy including the larger towns of Portlaoise in County Laois and Tullamore in County Offaly.

The population provided for in the Plan will interact with various environmental components. Potential interactions include:

- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for waste water treatment at the municipal level;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction;

- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive areas; and
- Potential effects on water quality.

4.7.2 Human Health

With regard to human health, impacts relevant to the SEA are those which arise as a result of interactions with environmental vectors (i.e. environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors e.g. interactions with human health that could occur in urban locations that experience high-levels of traffic congestion and associated particulate matter and noise emissions to air.

Emission limits for discharges to air, soil and water are set with regards to internationally recognised exposure limit values. These are generally set to be many times the safe exposure limit - in order to provide protection. In the event that a plan or programme began to have adverse health effects on surrounding populations it is likely that it would have been identified as being in breach of such emission standards at a very early stage - and long before the manifestation of any adverse health effects in the population.

These factors have been considered with regard to the description of: the baseline of each environmental component; and the identification and evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

4.7.3 Soil

In the absence of mitigation, contaminated materials have the potential to adversely impact upon human health, water quality and habitats and species.

As is the case with other historically developed areas across the country, there is potential for contamination at local sites within the Plan area, especially where land uses occurred in the past in the absence of the high standards of today's environmental protection legislation.

²¹ Portarlington JLAP 2025-2031.

4.7.4 Existing Problems

The number of homes within the Plan area with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country²².

Parts of the Plan area are vulnerable to adverse effects from changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events and associated flooding from surface water. Flooding in certain circumstances could pose a risk to human health. There is historic and predictive evidence of flooding within the Plan area (see subsection 4.9.8).

Also refer to the other sections of this report referred to above with respect interactions with other environmental components.

4.8 Soil

Soil is the top layer of the earth's crust. It is formed by mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Soil can be considered as a non-renewable natural resource because it develops over very long timescales. It is an extremely complex, variable and living medium and performs many vital functions including: food and other biomass production, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. Such functions of soil are worthy of protection because of their socio-economic as well as environmental importance. Soils in any area are the result of the interaction of various factors, such as parent material, climate, vegetation and human action.

To date, there is no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources. However, the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 sets out a framework and concrete measures to protect and restore soils, and ensure that they are used sustainably. It sets a vision and

objectives to achieve healthy soils by 2050, with concrete actions by 2030. In 2023, the EU proposed a new Soil Monitoring Law to protect and restore soils and ensure that they are used sustainably.

4.8.1 Soil Types

Main soil types²³ (Figure 4.8) surrounding the built-up areas²⁴ of Portarlington are: groundwater gleys (wetland soils with slowly permeable horizons resulting in seasonal waterlogging), alluvial soils (associated with alluvial clay, silt or sand river deposits of the River Barrow) and peat soils²⁵ (these are often indicative of areas that are the most sensitive to development due to ecological sensitivities and impeded drainage issues).

Other soil types (also shown on Figure 4.8) within and surrounding the Plan area include luvisol soils (generally fertile, widely used for agriculture and associated with significant accumulation of clay).

The GSI (Geological Survey Ireland) have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:

- Aggregate Potential Mapping;
- Bedrock mapping;
- Quaternary and Physiographic mapping; and
- National Aquifer and Recharge mapping.

4.8.2 County Geological Sites

Geological Survey Ireland coordinate the Irish Geological Heritage Programme, whereby an objective has been set to identify and select sites of geological interest within each county across the country. County Geological Sites (CGSs) do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. The audit of CGSs in County Laois was

²² The greatest health risk from radiation in Ireland is caused by radon. The presence of radon gas, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils, occurs across the country. It accounts for more than half of the total radiation dose received by the Irish population. As a known carcinogen, in the same category as tobacco smoke and asbestos it is a cause of lung cancer. Exposure to radon for long periods or at high concentrations can lead to lung cancer. Mapping available at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap>

²³ All soil types belong to a Sub-Group and so in turn to one of the 11 soil Great Groups. Great Groups and Sub-Groups are a hierarchical arrangement of soils used for taxonomical classification (<http://gis.teagasc.ie/soils/soilguide.php>).

²⁴ The built-up areas are mainly made up of urban soils. Urban soils are soils, which have been disturbed, transported or manipulated by human activity in the urban environment and are often overlain by a non-agricultural, man-made surface layer that has been produced by mixing, filling or by contamination of land surfaces in urban and suburban areas.

²⁵ Peatlands are a very characteristic habitat in County Offaly, with groundwater and rain fed peat soils being a prominent and typical feature in the landscape.

completed in 2016, which identified 33 CGSs in County Laois. The audit of CGSs in County Offaly was completed in 2016, which identified 28 CGSs in County Offaly. There are no County Geological Sites occurring within the Plan area.

4.8.3 Landslides

The term "landslide" describes a wide variety of processes that result in the downward and outward movement of materials such as rock, debris, earth, mud and peat under the force of gravity. Issues such as existing ground conditions, slope stability and storage of excavated material have the potential to influence susceptibility to landslides/bog bursts. The potential impacts of landslides include loss of human life/injury, flooding, pollution of watercourses and impacts upon aquatic biodiversity.

There are no landslide events recorded within the Plan area, however there is an event²⁶ recorded immediately to the south of the Plan boundary. The GSI have identified²⁷ the Plan area as having mainly low levels of landslide susceptibility (mapped on Figure 4.9).

4.8.4 Potentially Contaminated Lands and Landfill Sites

In the absence of mitigation, contaminated materials have the potential to adversely impact upon human health, water quality and habitats and species. As is the case with other urban, semi-urban and port areas across the country, there is potential for contamination at sites within the Plan area, especially where land uses occurred in the past, in the absence of environmental protection legislation.

4.8.5 Existing Problems

Legislative objectives governing soil were not identified as being conflicted with.

²⁶ Cooltederry (2008), landslide on train tracks after exceptional rainfall.

²⁷ <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/geohazards/projects/Pages/Landslide-Susceptibility-Mapping.aspx>

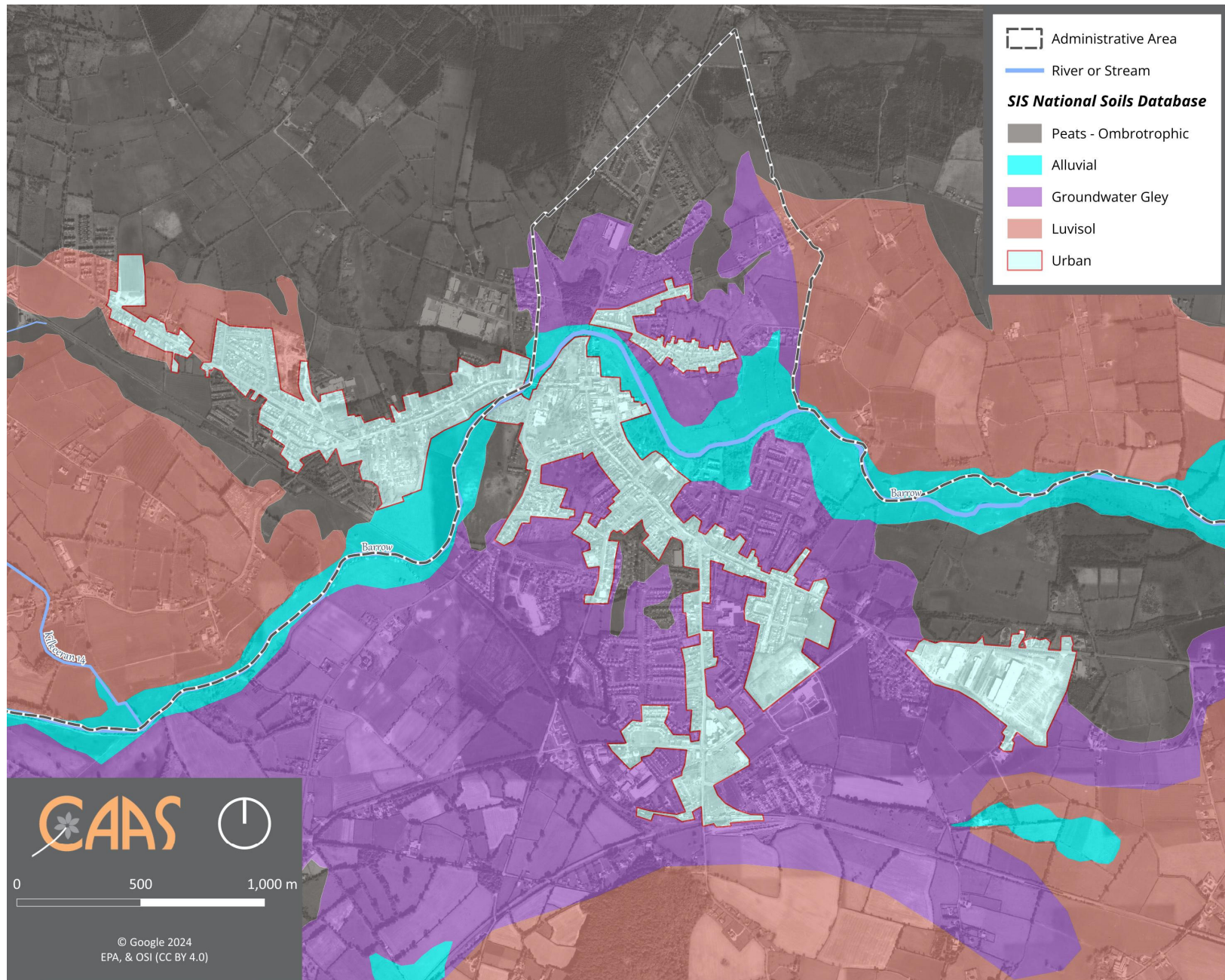


Figure 4.8 Soil Types

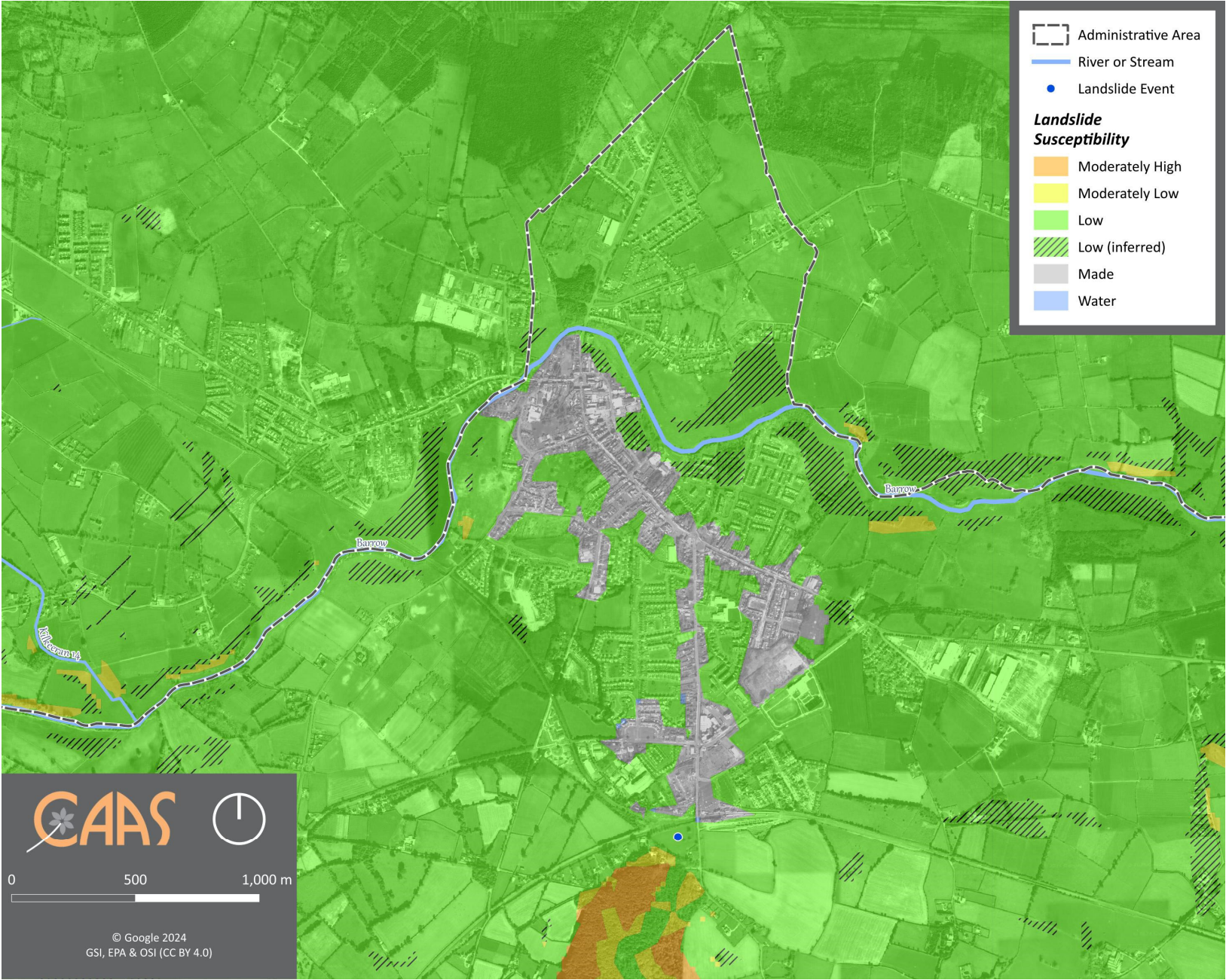


Figure 4.9 Landslide Susceptibility

CAAS for Laois County Council and Offaly County Council

4.9 Water

4.9.1 The Water Framework Directive

Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD). The WFD requires that all Member States implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all waters - surface, ground, estuarine and coastal - and protect, enhance and restore all waters with the aim of achieving *good status*. All public bodies are required to coordinate their policies and operations so as to maintain the *good status* of water bodies that are currently unpolluted and improve polluted water bodies to *good status*.

Article 4 of the WFD sets out various exemptions for deterioration in status caused as a result of certain physical modifications to water bodies. This is provided: all practicable mitigation measures are taken; there are reasons of overriding public interest or the benefits to human health, safety or sustainable development outweigh the benefits in achieving the WFD objective; there are no better alternatives; and the reasons for the physical modification are explained in the River Basin Management Plan.

The EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Documents No. 20 and 36 provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the WFD.

For the purpose of assessment, reporting and management, water is divided into groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine waters and coastal waters which are in turn divided into specific, clearly defined water bodies.

4.9.2 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence of the Plan beyond the Portarlington Plan area with respect to impacts upon waters can be estimated to be all groundwater and surface water bodies that are downstream of catchments which drain the Plan area.

4.9.3 Surface Water Drainage

A catchment is an area of land contributing to a waterbody, with all the water ultimately running off to a single outlet. The WFD requires water quality management to be based on natural river catchments i.e. by reference to the natural, environmental unit rather than by reference to administrative or legal boundaries, which often fragment river catchments.

Surface water within and around the Plan area is channelled by rivers, streams and their tributaries. The River Barrow flows west to east through the Plan area.

4.9.4 Surface Water Status

The WFD defines 'overall surface water status' as the general expression of the status of a body of surface water, determined by the poorer of its ecological status and its chemical status. Thus, in order to achieve 'good surface water status' both the ecological status and the chemical status of a surface water body need to be at least 'good'.

The ecological status is an expression of the structure and functioning of aquatic ecosystems associated with surface waters. Such waters are classified as of 'good ecological status' when they meet Directive requirements.

Chemical Status is a pass/fail assignment with a failure defined by a face-value exceedance of an Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) for one or more Priority Action Substances (PAS) listed in Annex X of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The EQS values for individual PAS substances are set at European level. Good surface water chemical status means that concentrations of pollutants in the water body do not exceed the environmental limit values specified in the Directive.

The current WFD (2016-2021) status²⁸ of the rivers and streams draining the Plan area is *moderate* (identified by the EPA as 'Kilkeeran_010') and *poor* (identified by the EPA as 'Barrow_070' and 'Barrow_080'). Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD, some of these water bodies will

²⁸ As per EPA's WFD Status 2016-2021 classification (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>).

need improvement in order to comply with the objectives of the WFD. Figure 4.10 illustrates the WFD surface water status within and surrounding the Plan area.

The River Barrow is currently identified in the combined 2016-2021 data as being at risk of not meeting the WFD's objectives due to damage caused by significant pressures related to²⁹:

- **Urban wastewater pressures**, which may include direct discharge of nutrients from urban wastewater treatment plants and discharge from combined storm overflows or storm water overflows. Discharges of elevated concentrations of phosphorus, ammonium and nitrogen impact on the ecology of surface waters;
- **Urban run-off pressures**, which may include leaking sewers and run-off from paved and unpaved areas and misconnections where private foul connections are connected to storm sewers instead of the foul sewer network; and
- **Agricultural pressures**, which may include issues related to farming including loss of excess nutrients and sediment loss to surface waters from diffuse sources such as spreading of fertilisers and manures. Excess phosphorous and sediment are typically issues for rivers and lakes, and too much nitrogen is the main issue for estuaries and coastal waters.

4.9.5 Groundwater Status

Groundwater is stored in the void spaces in underground layers of rock, or aquifers. These aquifers are permeable, allowing both the infiltration of water from the soils above them and the yielding of water to surface and coastal waters. Groundwater is the part of the subsurface water that is in the saturated zone - the zone below the water table, the uppermost level of saturation in an aquifer at which the pressure is atmospheric, in which all pores and fissures are full of water.

For groundwater bodies, the approach to classification is different from that for surface water. For each body of groundwater, both the chemical status and the quantitative must be determined. Both have to be classed as either *good* or *poor*. The WFD sets out a series of criteria that must be met for a body to be classed as good chemical and quantitative status.

The WFD status (2016-2021) of all groundwater underlying the Plan area (mapped on Figure 4.11) is currently identified

as being of *good* status and meeting the objectives of the WFD, except for an area of *poor* status³⁰ in the south-east of the Plan area, which is identified as being at risk of not meeting the WFD's objectives due to groundwater contamination with trichloroethene³¹.

4.9.6 Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

The GSI rates groundwaters according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution.

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The aquifers underlying most of the Plan area (mapped on Figure 4.12) are classified mainly as being of "moderate" and "high" vulnerability, while an "extreme" and "extreme (rock at or near surface or karst)" and "low" vulnerability are identified in some parts within and surrounding the Plan area.

The GSI also rates aquifers based on the hydrogeological characteristics and on the value of the groundwater resource. This is referred to as aquifer productivity and is mapped on Figure 4.13. Aquifers in the vicinity of the Plan area are classified as being 'Locally Important Aquifer Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones', 'Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (Diffuse)', 'Locally Important Aquifer Bedrock which is Generally Moderately Productive' and 'Locally Important Aquifer Karstified'.

4.9.7 WFD Registers of Protected Areas

The WFD requires that Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs) are compiled for a number of water bodies or part of water bodies which must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife.

The WFD requires that these RPAs contain: areas from which waters are taken for public or private water supply schemes; designated

²⁹ <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water>

³⁰ Overlying an Industrial Facility (License Number: P0274-01). The facility has been demolished and the site is currently undergoing groundwater and soil remediation works for groundwater contamination monitored by the EPA.

³¹ https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_SE_G_005?_k=210or7

shellfish production areas; bathing waters; areas which are affected by high levels of substances most commonly found in fertilizers, animal and human wastes - these areas are considered nutrient sensitive; areas designated for the protection of habitats or species e.g. Salmonid areas, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Also refer to Section 4.6.5.

The groundwater bodies underlying the Plan and surrounding areas are used for drinking water abstraction in accordance with European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278/2007) and are identified on the RPAs for Groundwater for Drinking Water, as mapped on Figure 4.14 and RPAs for Groundwater and Rivers in Nutrient Sensitive Areas³², as mapped on Figure 4.15.

4.9.8 Flooding

Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014.

Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 and related provisions have been integrated into the Plan. The land use zoning contained within the Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones. In addition to this, a Flood Relief Scheme is currently being progressed as part of the Government's National Development Plan 2018-2027.

The following indicators of historical flooding are mapped on Figure 4.16 (these indicate elevated levels of flood risk adjacent at various locations across the Plan area, including adjacent to the River Barrow):

- Single Flood Events recorded by the OPW (a flood event is the occurrence of recorded flooding at a given location on a given date. The flood event is derived from different types of information (reports, photographs etc.).

- Recurring Flood Events, recorded by the OPW (a flood event that has occurred more than once at a certain area); and
- Synthetic Aperture Radar Seasonal Flood Mapping 2015-2021, as prepared by GSI, which outlines the peak observed surface and groundwater flood extents over each winter season from 2015 to 2021. A lack of flooding in any part of the map only implies that a flood was not observed; however, it does not imply that a flood cannot occur in that location at present or in the future.

Predictive flood risk mapping is available from the Office of Public Works and is included in the SFRA document that accompanies the Plan.

The most significant source of flood risk within the Plan area is from fluvial sources (from rivers and streams). There are other sources of flooding present, including from pluvial (rainwater) and from surface drainage systems sources.

4.9.9 Existing Problems

Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD, based on available water data, the recorded status of certain surface and groundwater bodies will need improvement in order to comply with the objectives of the WFD. The Plan includes provisions that will contribute towards improvements in the status of waters.

There is elevated levels of flood risk from fluvial sources at various locations across the Plan area. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SFRA have informed both the Plan and the SEA.

³² Groundwater bodies that intersect with areas designated as sensitive under the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) and transposing Regulations.

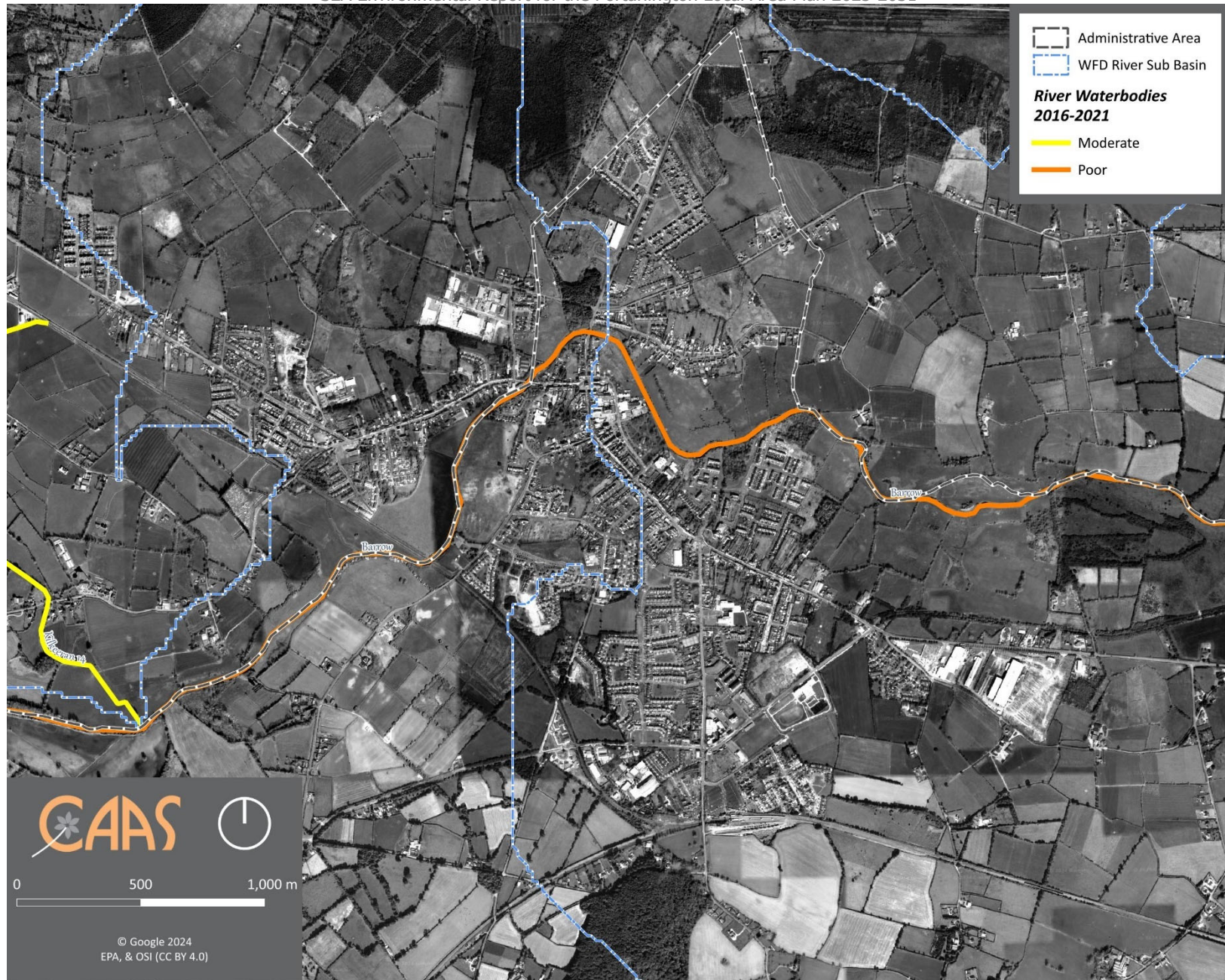


Figure 4.10 WFD Status of Surface Waterbodies (2016-2021)

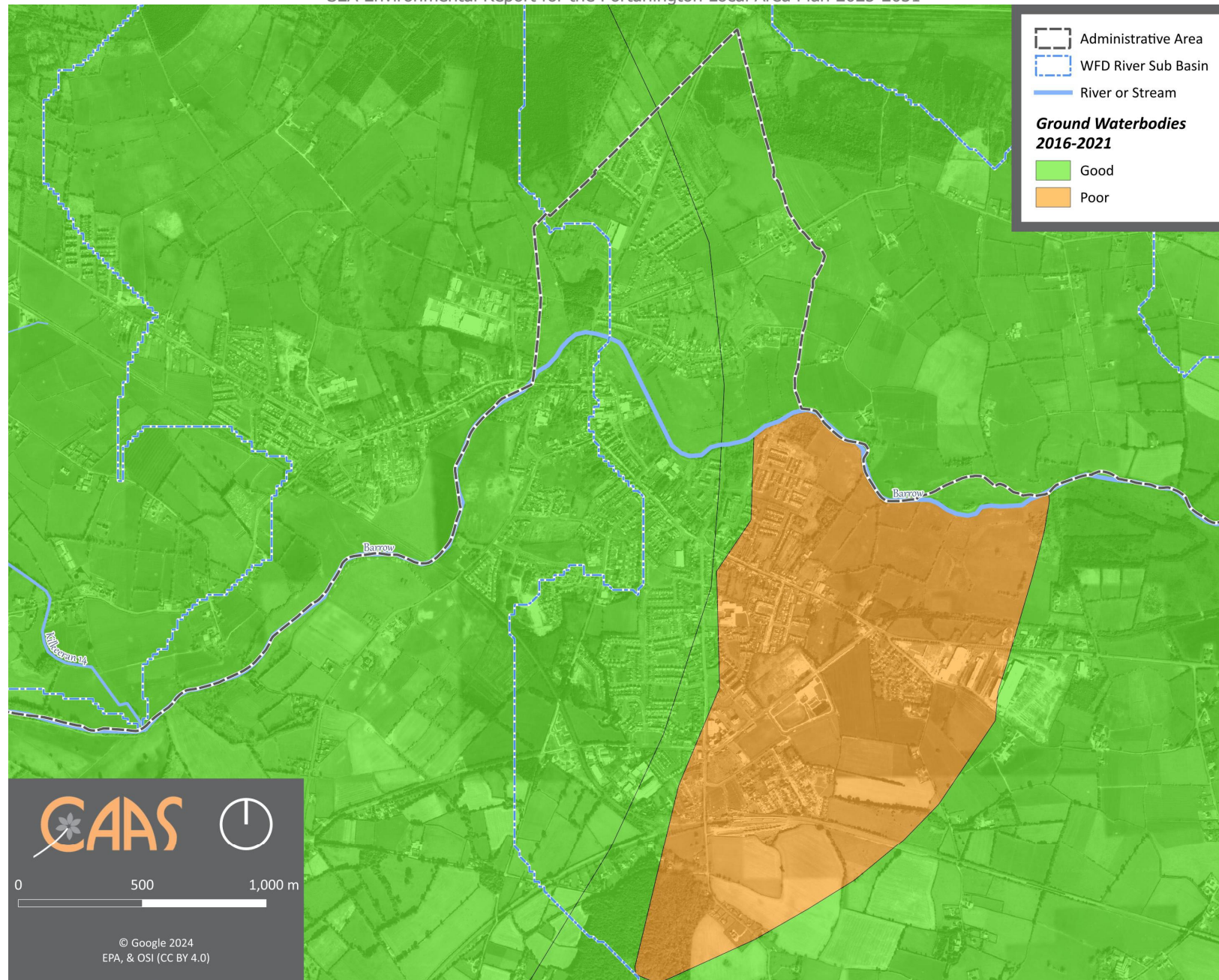


Figure 4.11 WFD Status of Ground Waterbodies (2016-2021)

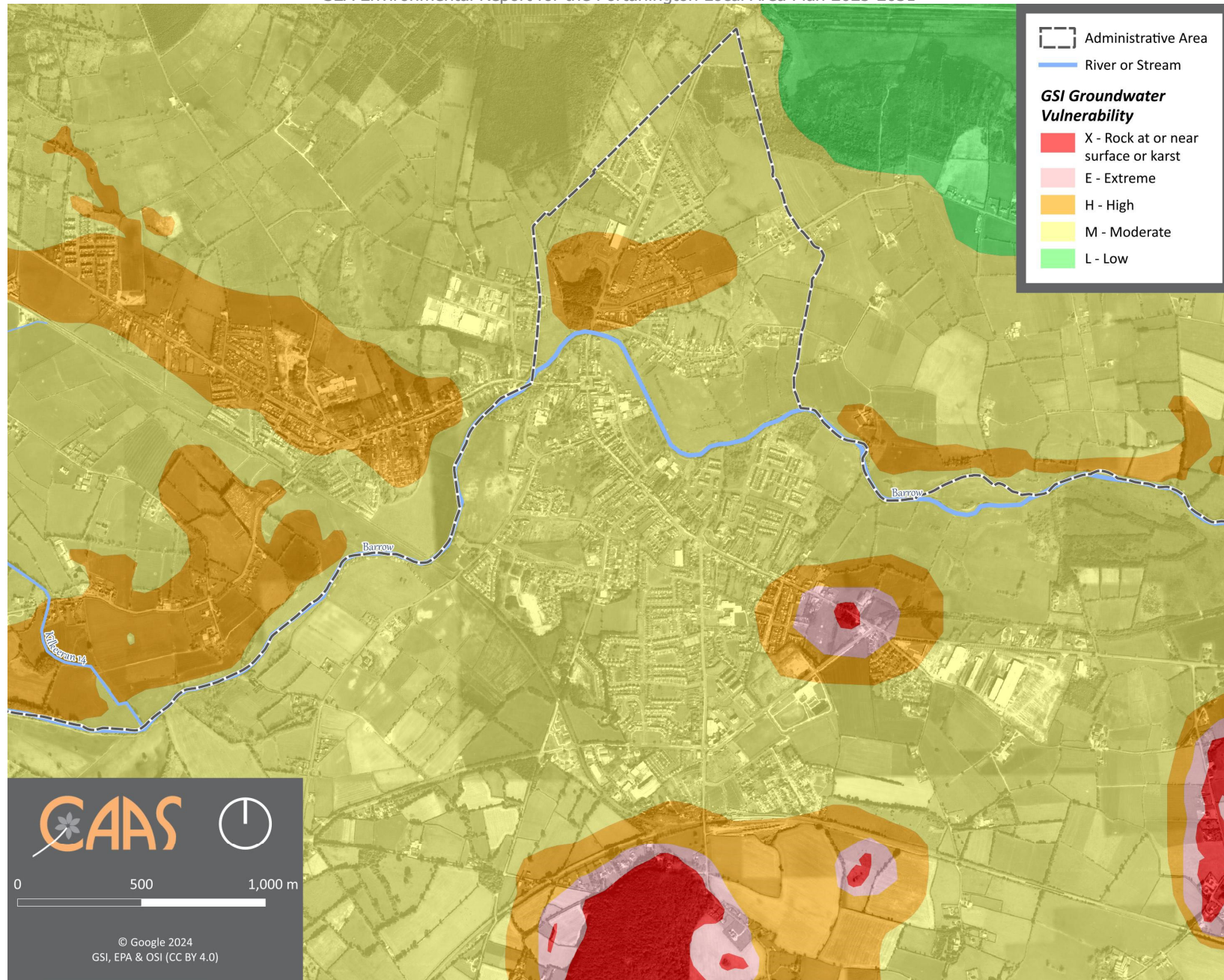


Figure 4.12 Groundwater Vulnerability

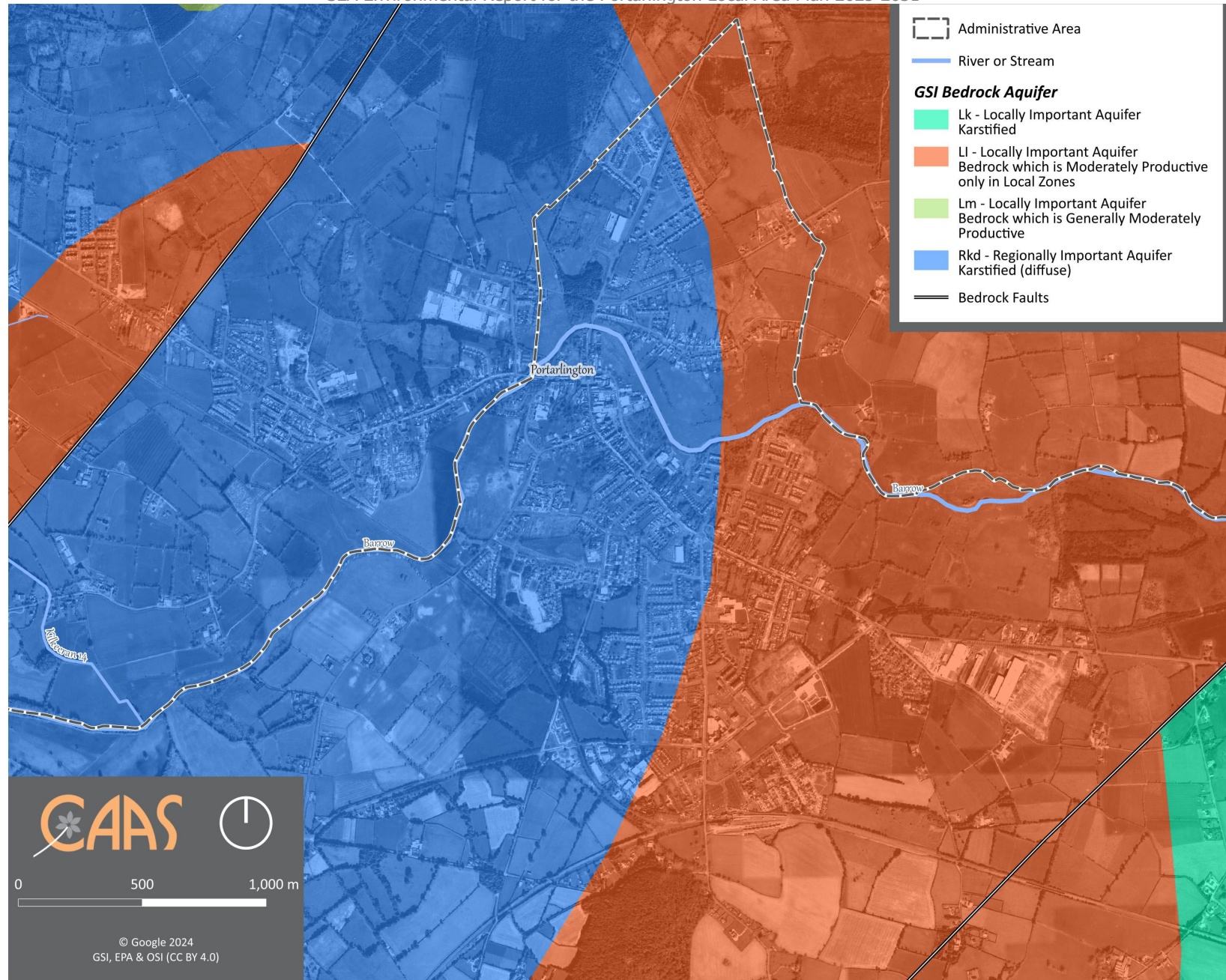


Figure 4.13 Aquifer Productivity

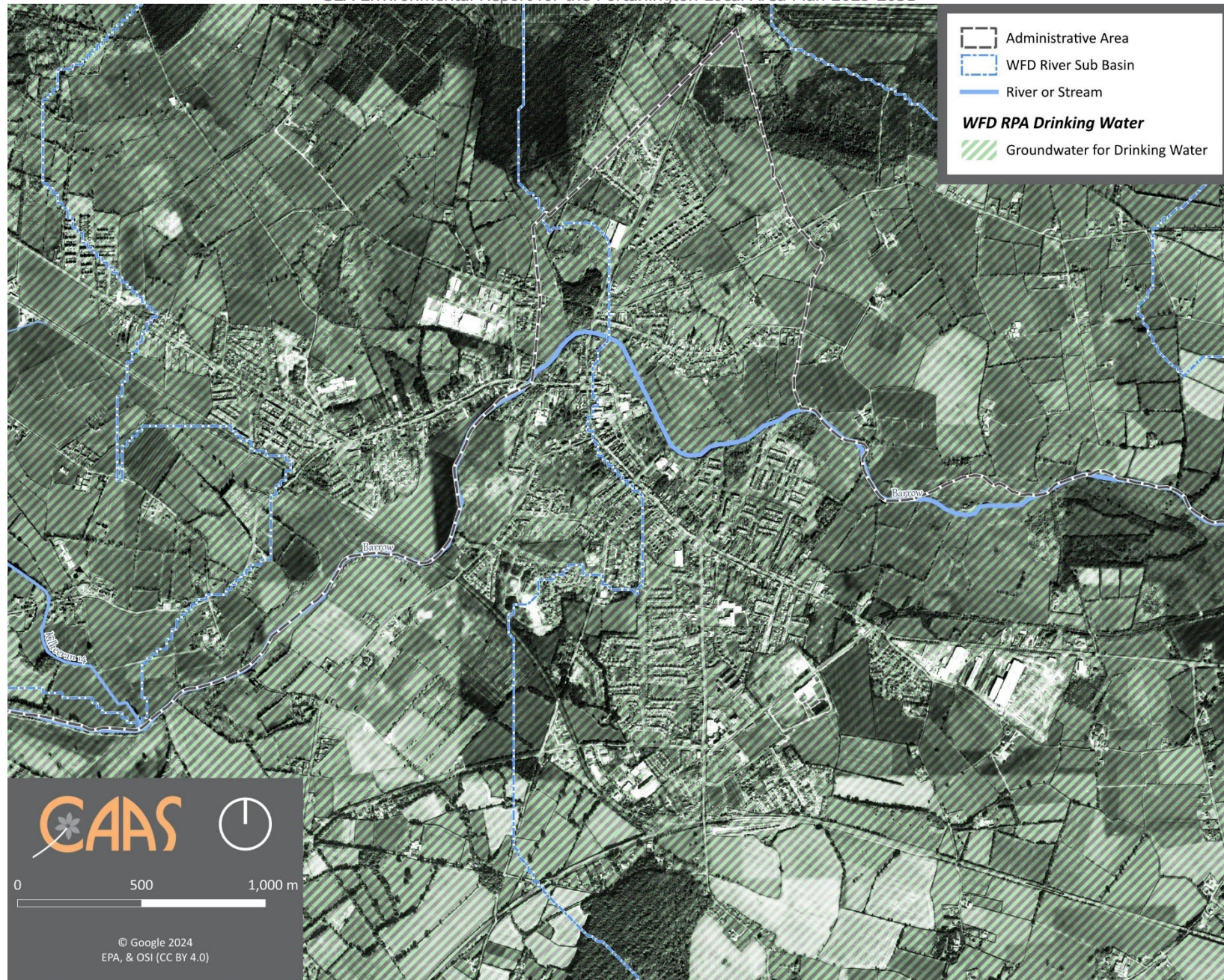


Figure 4.14 WFD RPA Drinking Water

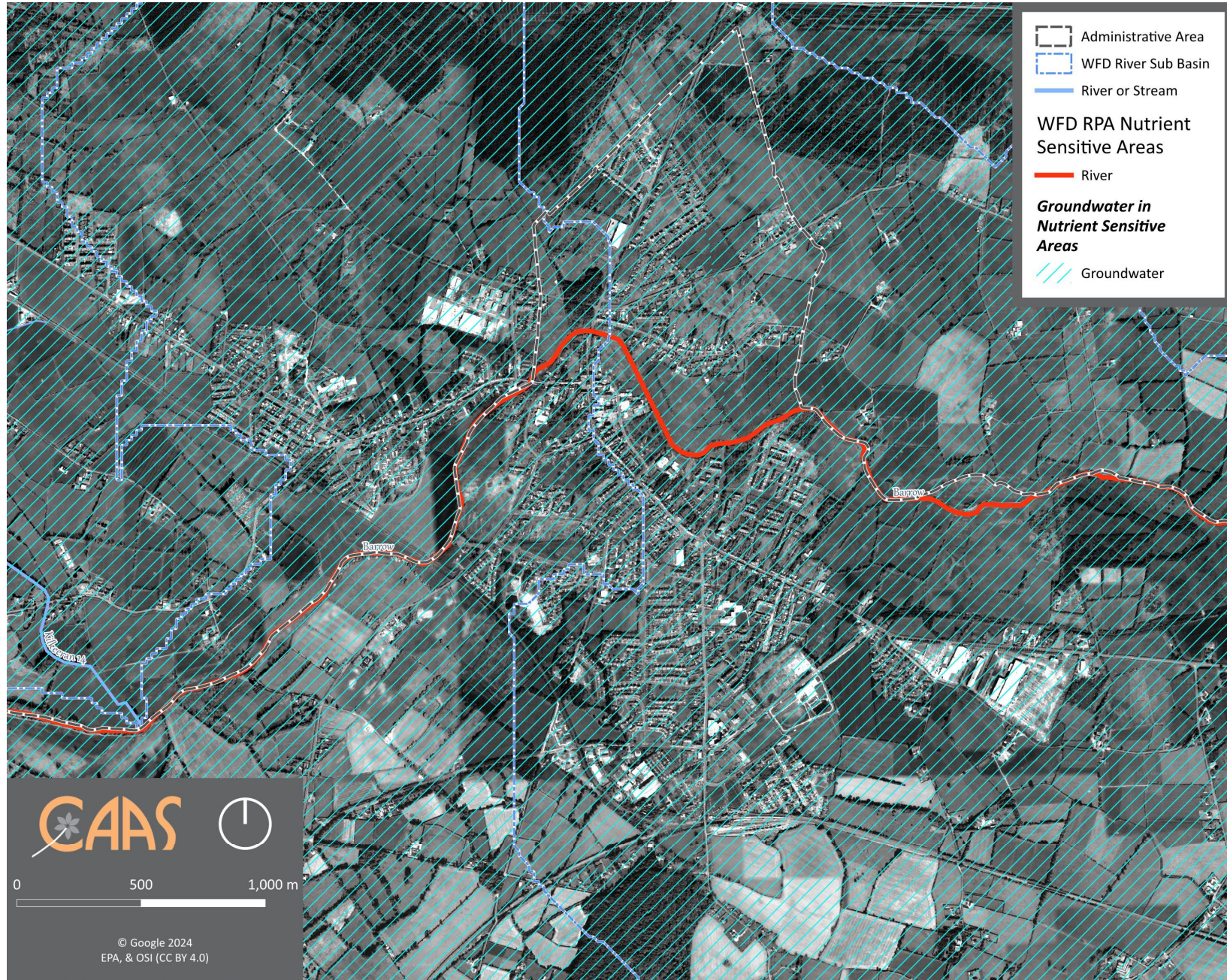


Figure 4.15 WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas

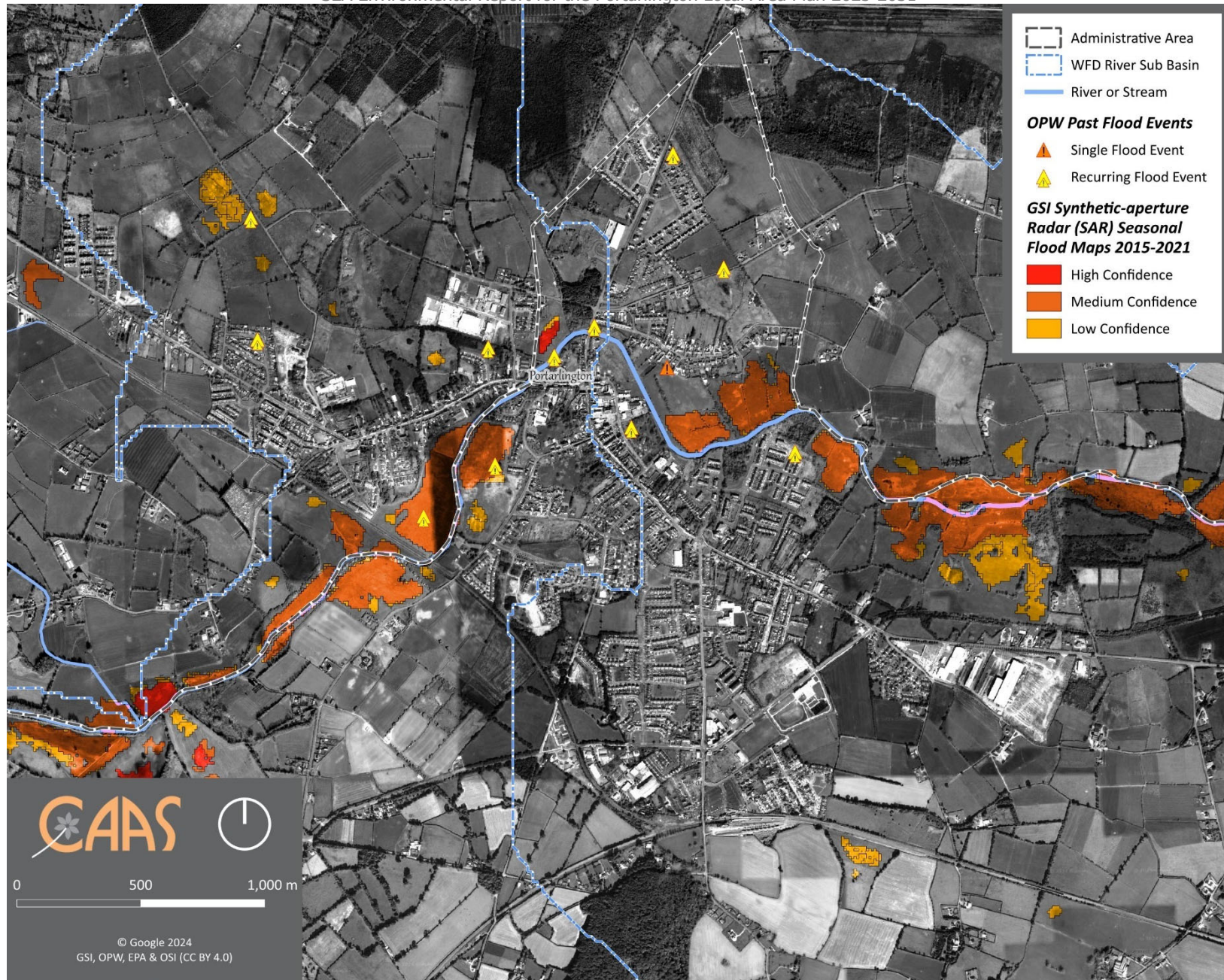


Figure 4.16 Selection of OPW and GSI Flood Risk Indicators

4.10 Air and Climatic Factors

4.10.1 Climatic Factors³³

Interactions with climatic factors are also present with other environmental components including water/flooding (see Section 4.9.8).

Total emissions of greenhouse gases by humans come from various sectors including transport, agriculture, energy industries, manufacturing combustion, industrial processes, residential developments, commercial services developments, waste management processes and fluorinated gases equipment (such as refrigeration and fire protection systems).

In 2023, Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 55.01 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂ eq), which is 6.8% lower (or 4.00 Mt CO₂ eq) than emissions in 2022 (59.00 Mt CO₂ eq) and follows a 2.0% decrease in emissions reported for 2022. Emissions are 1.2% below the historical 1990 baseline for the first time in 33 years.

In 2023, emissions in the stationary EU Emissions Trading System emissions (covering emissions from sectors including Agriculture, Transport, Energy, Industries, Residential, Manufacturing Combustion and Industrial Processes) decreased by 17%. When land use, land-use change and forestry is included, total national emissions decreased by 3.8%.

Emissions under the Effort Sharing Regulation (covering emissions from the electricity and heat generation, industrial manufacturing and aviation sectors) decreased by 3.4%.

Decreased emissions in 2023 compared to 2022 were observed in the largest sectors except for transport which showed an increase of 0.3%.

The EPA's 2024 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2023-2040* provides an updated assessment of Ireland's total projected greenhouse gas

emissions to 2040, using the latest Inventory data for 2021 as the starting point. The report provides an assessment of Ireland's progress towards achieving its national ambitions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and EU emission reduction targets for 2030 as set out under the Effort Sharing Regulation³⁴. Key findings identified as part of the report are that:

- Ireland is not on track to meet the 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections, which include most 2024 Climate Action Plan measures.
- The first two carbon budgets (2021-2030), which aim to support the achievement of the 51% emissions reduction goal, are projected to be exceeded by a significant margin of between 17% and 27%.
- Sectoral emissions ceilings for 2025 and 2030 are projected to be exceeded in almost all cases, including agriculture, electricity, industry, and transport.
- Ireland will not meet its non-ETS³⁵ EU targets of a 42 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 under the With Additional Measures Scenario.
- Emissions in the 'Planned Additional Measures' scenario are projected to be 29% lower in 2030 (compared with 2018) whereas in the 'Implemented Existing Measures' scenario the emissions reduction is projected to be 11%. There has been no improvement in these figures since EPA projections published in 2023.
- Faster implementation of measures is necessary to meet both National and EU targets. The pace at which planned policies and measures are implemented needs to be accelerated.
- Total emissions from the agriculture sector are projected to decrease by between 1% and 18% over the period 2022 to 2030. Savings are projected from a variety of measures including limiting usage and switching to different fertilisers, methane reductions measures and water table management.
- Transport emissions are projected to decrease by 5% to 26% over the period 2022-2030. Measures that are projected to contribute to greater emissions reductions include 945,000 EVs by 2030, a 20 per cent biodiesel blend rate by 2030 and avoid/shift measures such as 50% increase in daily active travel journeys and a 130% increase in daily public transport journeys.

³⁴ Regulation (EU) 2018/842 of on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement.

³⁵ Any company or body within the EU that emits a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions is included in the Emissions Trading System, commonly known as the ETS for short. This includes large industries, electricity generators, and the aviation industry. All greenhouse gas emissions that are not from companies in the ETS are called non-ETS emissions. Non-ETS emissions include greenhouse gas emissions from homes, cars, small businesses and agriculture. These are often collectively called the non-ETS sector.

³³ This section uses information from the provisional 1990-2023 inventory data (updated July 2024), available at epa.ie

- Emissions from the Energy Industries sector are projected to decrease by between 57% to 62% over the period 2022 and 2030. Renewable energy generation at the end of the decade is projected to range from 69% to 80% of electricity generation as a result of a projected rapid expansion in wind energy and other renewables.
- Emissions from the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector have been revised significantly to reflect new science. Total emissions from the LULUCF sector are projected to increase over the period 2022 to 2030. It is unlikely with the currently planned measures that the target set under the EU LULUCF Regulation and included in the Climate Action Plan 2024 will be met.

4.10.2 Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate mitigation describes the action to reduce the likelihood of climate change occurring or reduce the impact if it does occur. This can include reducing the causes of climate change (e.g. emissions of greenhouse gases) as well as reducing future risks associated with climate change.

The National Climate Action Plan 2024 is the second statutory update to the plan since the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law, committing Ireland to 2030 and 2050 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It builds on Climate Action Plan 2023, outlining how Ireland will accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development. The National Climate Action Plan 2025 is the third statutory update to the plan since the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law, committing Ireland to 2030 and 2050 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It builds on Climate Action Plan 2024, outlining how Ireland will accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

Climate adaptation is a change in natural or human systems in response to the impacts of climate change. These changes moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities and can be in response to actual or expected impacts.

The National Adaptation Framework (2024) aims to create a unified approach involving both government and society to adapt to climate change. It outlines how various sectors and local authorities can implement adaptation measures to minimise Ireland's vulnerability to climate change's adverse effects while taking advantage of any beneficial impacts. The Framework emphasises the importance of integrating adaptation strategies into all levels of policy making, infrastructure development, and local planning.

In 2018, four Climate Action Regional Offices were established for the purpose of coordinating climate action at regional and local levels. As specified in its Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly supports the work of the Climate Action Regional Offices.

The Laois Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Offaly Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 will contribute towards addressing the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation, and strengthening the alignment between national climate policy and the delivery of local climate action.

The Laois Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 includes the following strategic goals for County Laois:

- To improve energy efficiency within Laois County Council, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to achieve a high standard of climate action in Laois County Council;
- Mobilise the community, voluntary, and business sectors to deliver on climate action within their respective areas of influence;
- Through actions in Laois County Council and through partnerships with others in the public sector, and with the community, voluntary and business sectors, to provide leadership within the county (and further afield) on the matters related to climate change;
- Through active travel, environmental awareness, and other programmes, to enhance opportunities for individuals to choose the better, climate friendly, options;
- To make the county more resilient through a range of climate adaptation measures;
- Recognising that climate change will not affect all in the community in an equal manner and to apply the principles of "Just Transition" in Laois County Council operations; and
- To recognise the opportunities which may arise through mitigation and adaption, whether these are potential business opportunities, or other quality of life improvements such as air quality.

The local objectives of Offaly County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 are grouped under six thematic areas as follows:

Governance and Leadership

- To demonstrate leadership in climate action;
- To ensure climate action is mainstreamed into all activities and operations;
- To build capacity within Offaly County Council to deliver effective climate action; and
- To identify opportunities that may arise from the challenge of climate change.

Built Environment

- To increase the efficiency and reduce GHG emissions of council buildings in line with 2030 targets;
- To align with energy directives and successfully achieve 2030 targets;
- To increase use of nature-based solutions and enhance biodiversity in all developments; and
- To reduce the need for new construction by repurposing existing buildings.

Transport

- To migrate the Offaly Council fleet towards low carbon fuels and electric vehicles;
- To provide infrastructure and support modal shifts to low carbon methods of transport; and
- To work in partnership with public transport providers to expand networks and connections; and
- To increase the resilience of roads and transport infrastructure.

Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

- To enhance biodiversity, protect natural assets and foster environmental sustainability; and
- To reduce negative impacts associated with extreme weather events.

Community Resilience and Transition

- To collaborate with communities to enhance effectiveness of climate related programmes;
- To build climate action capacity within communities; and
- To support the development of green enterprise, employment and efficiencies.

Sustainability and Resource Management

- To promote sustainability across internal practices, external business and communities;
- To explore opportunities arising from sustainability practices and material reuses; and
- To promote a circular economy by awareness raising to reduce waste.

4.10.3 Alternative Fuels and Renewable Electricity Generation Targets

The use of alternative fuels, including electricity, forms a significant part of government policy to reduce transport emissions. The Plan facilitates a mode shift away from the private car to public transport, walking and cycling and provisions relating to electric vehicles. This will contribute towards reductions in the consumption of non-renewable energy sources and achievement of legally binding renewable energy targets.

The first Renewable Energy Directive (RED)³⁶ was the most important legislation influencing the growth of renewable energy in the EU and Ireland for the decade ending in 2020. From 2021, RED was replaced by the second Renewable Energy Directive (REDII)³⁷, which continues to promote the growth of renewable energy out to 2030. RED set out two mandatory targets for renewable energy in Ireland to be met by 2020, while REDII sets new targets and criteria to be met by Ireland in 2030 and the interim.

The overall renewable energy share is referred to as the overall RES target. REDII introduced a binding EU-wide target for overall RES of 32% in 2030 and requires Member States to set their national contributions to the EU-wide target. As per the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030, Ireland's overall RES target is 34.1% in 2030. The sectoral targets are referred to as RES-E (electricity), RES-T (transport) and RES-H (heat). Ireland's NECP 2021-2030 set targets for RES-E of 70%, RES-H of 24% and RES-T of 14%, by 2030.³⁸

Greater use of alternative fuels, including renewable energy, has the potential to contribute towards energy security.

4.10.4 Ambient Air Quality

In order to protect human health, vegetation and ecosystems, EU Directives set down air quality standards in Ireland and the other

³⁶ Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources.

³⁷ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources (recast).

³⁸ SEAI (2022): *Energy in Ireland 2022 Report*. Available at: <https://www.seai.ie/publications/Energy-in-Ireland-2022.pdf>

Member States for a wide variety of pollutants. These pollutants are generated through fuel combustion, in space heating, traffic, electricity generation and industry and, in sufficient amounts, could affect the well-being of the areas inhabitants.

The new Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (2024/EC) simplifies EU rules on ambient air quality by merging the two existing EU directives into one³⁹. Its goal is to bring quality standards in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations. The Directive introduces stricter limits on key air pollutants, aligning EU standards more closely with World Health Organization guidelines. The revised Directive prioritises the health of EU citizens: it sets new air quality standards for pollutants to be reached by 2030 which are more closely aligned with the WHO air quality guidelines. Those pollutants include, among others, particulate matter PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, all known to cause respiratory problems.

The EU Directive include details regarding how ambient air quality should be monitored, assessed and managed. In order to comply with the directive mentioned above, the EPA measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. For the purposes of monitoring in Ireland, four zones are defined in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 271 of 2002).

The EPA's (2024) *Air Quality in Ireland 2023 Report* identifies that:

- Ireland's latest monitoring shows we are in compliance with current EU standards.
- Ireland is not on track to achieve its ambition, set out in the National Clean Air Strategy, to meet the health-based WHO air quality guideline limits in 2026.
- Main pollutants of concern are fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) from solid fuel combustion and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from vehicle emissions/traffic.
- Air pollution can be a major environmental risk to people's health, with approximately 1,600 premature deaths annually in Ireland due to poor air quality.

The report further identifies the critical role of local authorities in the enforcement and implementation of existing plans and

investment in infrastructure to encourage cleaner and healthier air quality choices, including:

- Local authorities must provide more resources to increase air enforcement activities and implement the new solid fuel regulations.
- Investment in clean public transport infrastructure across the country must be maintained and increased.
- More safe footpaths and cycle lanes must be created to continue to increase active travel as a viable and safe alternative to car use and associated NO₂ emissions.

In order to apply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at monitoring stations across the country.⁴⁰ There is no such station within the Plan area and the closest station is in Emo Court, c. 5 km to the south of the Plan area.

4.10.5 Noise

Noise is unwanted sound. The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing EU policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

- Draw up *strategic noise maps* for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people who may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels;
- Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and,
- Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.

Under the EU Environmental Noise Directive, which was transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (as amended), Strategic Noise Maps and Noise Action Plans are required to be made or revised every five years. Noise Action Plans have been prepared

³⁹ Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe Directive 2008/50/EC and Fourth Daughter Directive 2004/107/EC

⁴⁰ For more detail on current daily air quality data for the Plan refer to: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>.

for each local authority area within the country, including for Laois County Council (Laois Noise Action Plan 2024-2028) and Offaly County Council (Offaly County Noise Action Plan 2024-2028). The purpose of the Noise Action Plan is to avoid, prevent and reduce, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance due to the long-term exposure to environmental noise.

4.10.6 Existing Problems

Significant progress is being made in the reduction of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. The EPA's 2024 publication Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2023-2040 identifies that Ireland's emissions, under the Emissions in the 'Planned Additional Measures' scenario, which includes most 2024 Climate Action Plan measures, are projected to be 29% lower in 2030 (compared with 2018). However, this would not meet the 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections.

In the Climate Change Advisory Council's *Annual Review 2024*, the findings of an assessment of the degree to which progress is being made solely in the implementation of adaptation policy and increasing resilience for the period April 2023 to March 2024 is provided. The Review details that four sectors (Transport, Flood Risk Management, Built and Archaeological Heritage and Local Government) demonstrated good overall progress, six showed moderate progress (Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood, National Adaptation Framework, Communications Networks, Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure, Health and Electricity and Gas Networks) and one (Biodiversity) showed no progress and supplied insufficient evidence. This was a slight improvement compared with the results in 2023.

Air quality and noise can present challenges, especially in urban areas, as detailed under the relevant sub-sections above. With regard to air quality, air pollution from transport is dominated by NO_x emissions. Of these, NO₂ is particularly impactful from a health perspective. The Plan will help to facilitate reductions in emissions and a transition from dependence on fossil fuel combustion powered transport.

4.11 Material Assets

Other material assets, in addition to those detailed below, covered by the SEA include archaeological and architectural heritage (see Section 4.12) natural resources of economic value, such as water and air (see Sections 4.9 and 4.10).

4.11.1 Public Assets and Infrastructure

Public assets and infrastructure that have the potential to be impacted upon by the Plan, if unmitigated, include: the town of Portarlinton; resources such as public open spaces, parks and recreational areas; public buildings and services; transport and utility infrastructure (electricity, gas, telecommunications, water supply, waste water infrastructure etc.); and natural resources that are covered under other topics such as water and soil.

4.11.2 Land

The Plan has the potential to assist with the reuse and regeneration of brownfield sites thereby contributing towards sustainable mobility and reducing the need to develop greenfield lands and associated potential adverse environmental effects. Brownfield lands are generally located within urban/suburban areas.

4.11.3 Green Infrastructure

Parks and open space promote health and well-being, provide recreational facilities and range of habitats for various species. Green infrastructure is also a crucial component in building resilient communities capable of adapting to the consequences of climate change with trees, woodlands and wetlands providing carbon capture and slowing water flows while improving air quality.

Portarlinton and its hinterland has a rich green infrastructure. It includes: the River Barrow, which provides a nature corridor extending through the centre of the town; the People's Park; the woodland area at the rear of Kilnacourt House (Formerly Odlums Wood);

Carrick Woods; and the Derrycastle Lakes and Trails recreation area.⁴¹

4.11.4 Woodland

Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity, recreation and tourism, and also important as links in the green infrastructure network.

4.11.5 Transport

Portarlington is served by three Regional Roads, the R419, R420 and R423. These facilitate access to the N80 National Secondary Road and to other major national road links such as the M7, M8 and M9 motorways via Portlaoise to the south, and the M6 via Tullamore to the north-west. These links provide access to the east, south and west of Ireland, including Rosslare, the Greater Dublin Area, Dublin Port and Dublin Airport. Portarlington is a focal point of the Irish railway network, being situated on the junction for services to the west (Galway, Mayo), the south (Cork, Limerick, Tralee) and the east (Dublin, Kildare). Portarlington Train Station provides regular daily services to major urban areas in Ireland including Cork, Killarney, Limerick and Dublin. There are also a number of bus services connecting Portarlington to Kildare, Monasterevin, Portlaoise, Tullamore and Dublin.⁴²

A Local Transport Assessment has been integrated into the Plan to help ensure a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport.

4.11.6 Minerals and Aggregates

The GSI have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:

- Aggregate Potential Mapping;
- Bedrock mapping;
- Quaternary and Physiographic mapping; and
- National Aquifer and Recharge mapping.

4.11.7 Water Services

4.11.7.1 Wastewater

The EPA's 2024 report '*Urban Waste Water Treatment in 2023*' identified that:

- 10 large urban areas that did not meet European Union treatment standards in 2023 require improvements to comply with these standards and protect the environment;
- 16 towns and villages discharging raw sewage into the environment every day must be connected to wastewater treatment plants;
- 6 collecting systems (sewers) were subject to a judgement from the Court of Justice of the European Union and must be prioritised;
- 34 priority areas require improvements to protect rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters that are adversely impacted by wastewater;
- 3 collecting systems must be upgraded to prevent sewage pollution at bathing waters that were classified as having poor water quality; and
- 12 areas need improvements in wastewater treatment to protect endangered freshwater pearl mussels.

Based on the EPA's assessment of monitoring information provided by Uisce Éireann and the enforcement activities carried out by the EPA, this report identifies urban areas with the most important environmental issues that must be addressed.

From January 2014, Irish Water, now Uisce Éireann, became responsible for all public water services, involving the supply of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. Uisce Éireann is also responsible for the treatment and disposal of the sludge that is generated from both its water and waste water treatment plants. The Councils are agents of Uisce Éireann for operations and remains the designated Water Authority for the assessment and approval of on-site wastewater treatment systems and are responsible for surface water drainage in the town.

The provision of well-maintained quality wastewater treatment infrastructure is essential to facilitate sustainable development of the town while also protecting the environment and public health. Uisce Éireann is now responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of waste water where public wastewater facilities exist in towns and villages.

⁴¹ Portarlington JLAP 2025-2031

⁴² Portarlington JLAP 2025-2031

Uisce Éireann, working in partnership with Laois County Council and Offaly County Council, is making investments to undertake essential upgrade works to waste water treatment plants in towns and villages across the Counties. The upgrading of infrastructure will contribute towards compliance with the Water Framework Directive, EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Drinking Water Regulations and will help to protect human health and maintain the quality of surface and ground waters.

4.11.7.2 Wastewater Infrastructure

The Portarlinton Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) serving the Plan area is currently listed as a priority area⁴³ (such areas are those where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues), due to significant pressure on waters at risk of pollution. The proposed action plan includes upgrades to the waste water collecting systems, with a completion date from Uisce Éireann still to be confirmed. As identified in the Plan, this WWTP serves the majority of the Plan area and the settlements of Ballybrittas and Killenard, operating with no capacity issues.⁴⁴

The Portarlinton WWTP has a design capacity of 13,000 Population Equivalent (PE)⁴⁵, with current load of 11,090 PE.⁴⁶ As indicated by Uisce Éireann, there is spare capacity available.⁴⁷

The Portarlinton WWTP (Registration No. D0158-01) is currently fully compliant with the Emission Limit Values (ELVs) set in the Wastewater Discharge Licence in the most

recent available Annual Environmental Report 2022 (published in April 2023).⁴⁸

Uisce Éireann have indicated that there are issues with storm water overflows from the combined sewer system in Portarlinton and that there is a Drainage Area Plan underway that will investigate these issues. In the interim, to allow some phased development to go ahead, it will be necessary to remove storm water from the system.⁴⁹

4.11.7.3 Water Supply

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public water supply infrastructure throughout County Laois and County Offaly.

Portarlinton is located within the Portarlinton Water Resource Zone⁵⁰ and as identified by Uisce Éireann, there is potential capacity available to meet targeted population growth by 2032, although an improvement in level of service is required.⁵¹

Portarlinton is supplied by water treatment plants at: La Bergerie (producing approximately 1,400 m³/day of water), Doolough (producing approximately 450 m³/day of water) and Ballymorris Treatment Plant. Uisce Éireann have indicated that there are some constraints in the water network and that a project is currently being planned to address this issue.⁵²

Under Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, the EPA is required to collect and verify monitoring results for all water supplies in Ireland covered by the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. The EPA publishes their results in annual reports that are supported by Remedial Action Lists (RALs). The RAL identifies water supplies that are not

⁴³ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/waste-water/Priority-areas-for-website-April-2024.pdf>
⁴⁴ Portarlinton JLAP 2025-2031

⁴⁵ Population Equivalent (PE) is a measurement of the organic biodegradable load. A population equivalent of 1 (1 PE) means the organic biodegradable load having a five-day biochemical oxygen demand (BOD₅) of 60 g of oxygen per day; the load is calculated on the basis of the maximum average weekly load entering the treatment plant during the year, excluding unusual situations such as those due to heavy rain.

⁴⁶ https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/docs/aers/2022/D0158-01_2022_AER.pdf

⁴⁷ Uisce Éireann: Settlements with Waste Water Discharge Authorisations - *Wastewater Treatment Capacity Register*. The register provides an indication of available wastewater treatment capacity based on loads received in 2021 and available treatment plan capacity now or by completion of a project by 2024 (where relevant). Available at: <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/wastewater-treatment-capacity-register/laois> (Published in June 2023).

⁴⁸ https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/docs/aers/2022/D0158-01_2022_AER.pdf

⁴⁹ Portarlinton JLAP 2025-2031

⁵⁰ A Water Resource Zone (WRZ) is an independent water supply system serving a region, city, town or village and is governed by topography or the extent of the water distribution network in an area. A WRZ may include multiple Water Treatment Plants and/or sources.

⁵¹ This may take the form of leakage reduction and/or capital investment to maintain/improve levels of service as the demand increases. Proposed solutions will be developed and prioritised through the National Water Resources Plan and investment planning process. <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/water-supply-capacity-register/laois> (Published in June 2023).

⁵² Portarlinton JLAP 2025-2031

in compliance with the Regulations mentioned above. The most recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q2 of 2024, published in September 2024)⁵³ does not include any water scheme that supplies the Plan area.

4.11.7.4 Surface Water Drainage

Laois County Council and Offaly County Council is responsible for surface water drainage in the Plan area. Sustainable urban Drainage systems (SuDS) is a method to minimise the quantity and increase the quality of surface water runoff and to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change. SuDS can also provide amenity and biodiversity benefits. The Councils seek to ensure the sustainable management of surface water discharges in urban areas through the use of SuDS.

4.11.8 Waste Management

The National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, 2024) sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024 to 2030. The Plan seeks to influence sustainable consumption and prevent the generation of waste, improve the capture of materials to optimise circularity and enable compliance with policy and legislation.

4.11.9 Existing Problems

The provisions of the Plan will contribute towards protection of the environment with regard to impacts arising from material assets.

The provision of infrastructure and supporting services for development, particularly water and wastewater services, is critical.

4.12 Cultural Heritage

The built heritage of Portarlington includes Lea Castle (a medieval castle on the banks of the River Barrow on the western side of Portarlington), 18th and 19th century two, three and four storey town houses, walled gardens and burgages, vernacular structures, industrial heritage, Huguenot artefacts, ecclesiastical

architecture and a considerable number of features of interest including stone walls and street furniture.

4.12.1 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology is the study of past societies through the material remains left by those societies and the evidence of their environment. Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in form and date; examples include earthworks of different types and periods, (e.g. early historic ringforts and prehistoric burial mounds), megalithic tombs from the Prehistoric period, medieval buildings, urban archaeological deposits and underwater features.

Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004), Natural Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts.

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is an inventory, put on a statutory basis by amendment to the National Monuments Act 1994, of sites and areas of archaeological significance, numbered and mapped. It is available from the National Monuments Service and at archaeology.ie.

The term 'monument' includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. All monuments in existence before 1700 A.D. are automatically considered to be historic monuments within the meaning of the Acts. Monuments of architectural and historical interest also come within the scope of the Acts. Monuments include: any artificial or partly artificial building, structure or erection or group of such buildings, structures or erections; any cave, stone or other natural product, whether or not forming part of the ground, that has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the place where it is) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position; any, or any part of any, prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, or, ritual, industrial or habitation site; and any place comprising the remains or traces of any such building, structure or erection, any such cave, stone or natural product or any such tomb, grave, burial deposit or ritual, industrial or habitation site, situated on land or in the territorial waters of

⁵³ Available at: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/Q2-2024-RAL-for-public-drinking-water-supplies-FINAL.pdf>

the State', but excludes 'any building or part of any building, that is habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes' (National Monuments Acts 1930-2004). A recorded monument is a monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the RMP set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Notification within which requirements for notifications of proposed works apply.

There are various entries to RMP within the Plan area. These Recorded Monuments are mostly identified within Portarlington town centre. The historical core of the town is a Recorded Monument with an associated Zone of Notification centred around Market Square. This zone is an area in which significant archaeology has been found and where there is a high likelihood of further such findings. Figure 4.17 shows the spatial distribution of Recorded Monuments within and beyond the Plan area, their associated Zones of Notification.

The Underwater Archaeology Unit was established within the National Monuments Service to manage and protect Ireland's underwater cultural heritage, including the quantification of the underwater resource and assessing development impacts in order to manage and protect this aspect of Ireland's heritage. The Shipwreck Inventory is principally a desktop survey with information gathered from a broad range of cartographic, archaeological and historical sources, both documentary and pictorial. Wrecks over 100 years old and archaeological objects found underwater are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Acts 1987 and 1994. Significant wrecks less than 100 years old can be designated by Underwater Heritage Order on account of their historical, archaeological or artistic importance. Such Orders can also be used to designate areas of seabed or land covered by water to more clearly define and protect wreck sites and archaeological objects. Under the legislation all diving on known protected wreck sites or with the intention of searching for underwater cultural heritage is subject to licensing requirements.

Waterbodies within and surrounding the Plan area may contain many features and finds

associated with riverine heritage such as shipwrecks, piers, quay walls, fords, stepping stones and associated archaeological objects and features.

4.12.2 Architectural Heritage

The term architectural heritage is defined in the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments Act 1999 as meaning all: structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings; groups of structures and buildings; and, sites which are of technical, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.

Records of Protected Structures are legislated for under Section 12 and Section 51 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Protected structures are defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view.

In relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, the following are encompassed:

- The interior of the structure;
- The land lying within the curtilage⁵⁴ of the structure;
- Any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors; and,
- All fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii).

There are approximately 96 entries in the RPS within the Plan area, as set out in the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. Clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within Portarlington town centre, as shown on Figure 4.18. Notable Protected Structures include: 13th Century Lea Castle; Kilnacourt

⁵⁴ Curtilage is normally taken to be the parcel of ground immediately associated with the Protected Structure, or in use for the purposes of the structure. Protection extends to the buildings and land lying within the curtilage. While the curtilage sometimes coincides with the present property boundary, it can originally have included lands, features or even buildings now in separate ownership, e.g. the lodge of a former country house, or the garden features located in land subsequently sold off. Such lands are described as being attendant grounds, and the protection extends to them just as if they were still within the curtilage of the Protected Structure.

House; Garda Station; Portarlington Market House; The Weighbridge Inn; St. Paul's Church of Ireland Church; and Portarlington Railway Station.

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of a Protected Structure. An ACA may or may not include Protected Structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. There are currently no ACAs designated within the Plan area.

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a State initiative under the administration of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and was established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the local authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH includes historic gardens and designed landscapes. Figure 4.18 shows entries to NIAH in the Plan area.

4.12.3 Existing Problems

The context of archaeological and architectural heritage has changed over time however no existing conflicts with legislative objectives governing archaeological and architectural heritage have been identified.

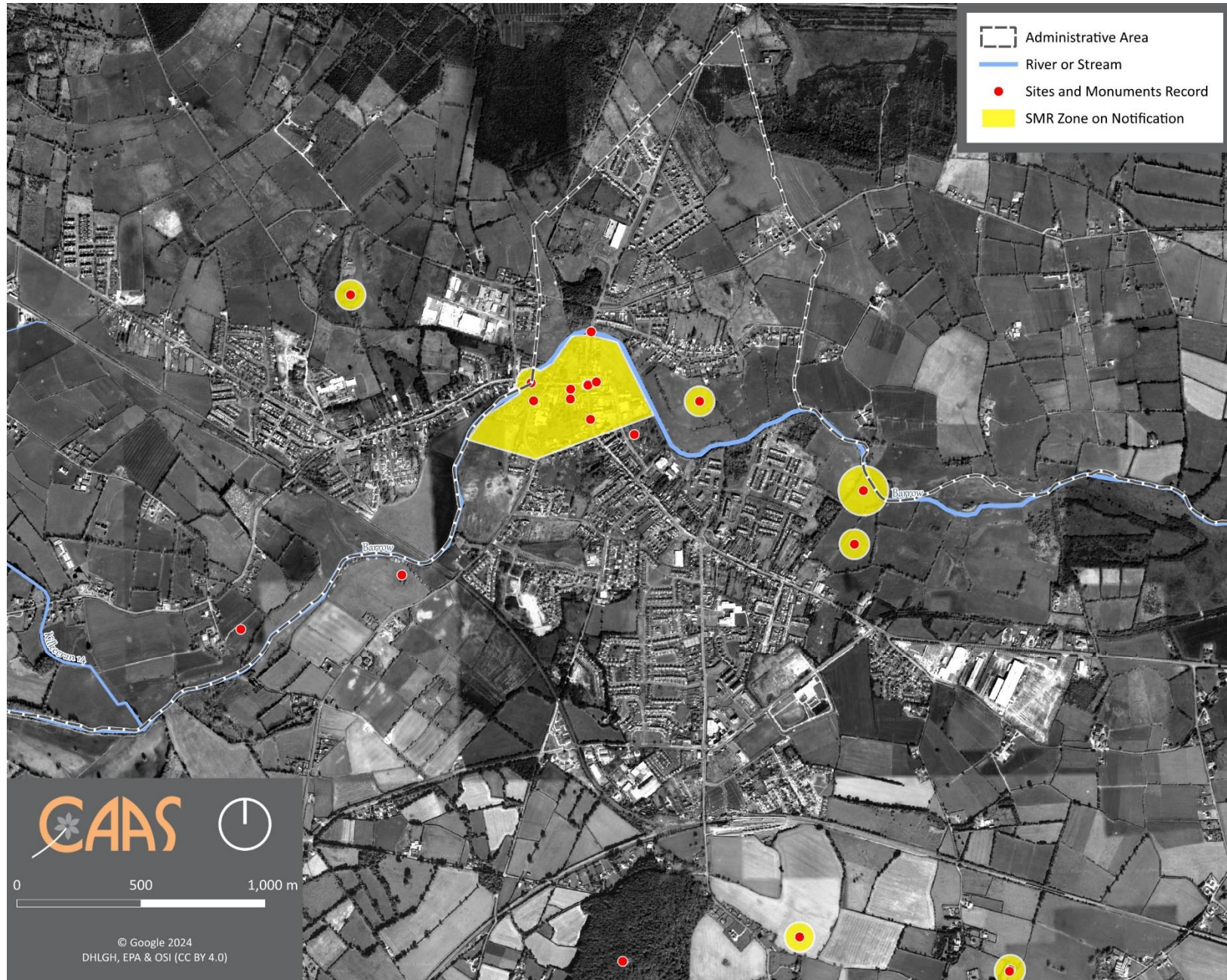


Figure 4.17 Archaeological Heritage



Figure 4.18 Architectural Heritage

4.13 Landscape

4.13.1 Introduction

Article 1 (a) of the European Landscape Convention provides a definition of landscape as follows; "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural/or human factors". The Convention was ratified in Ireland in 2002, requiring the adoption of national measures to promote landscape, planning, protection and management. The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, which requires that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty.

Portarlington is located in the heart of a low-lying agricultural landscape and serves a large agricultural hinterland, that rises up towards the south of the Plan area. The River Barrow, flowing west to east through the centre of the Plan area is an important natural amenity feature with a significant ecological value and sensitivity. The land surrounding the town is predominantly made up of agricultural land with a woodland area to the south (Carrick Wood) and Derrycastle Bog and Lakes and associated walkway partially within and adjacent to the northern parts of the Plan area.

4.13.2 Landscape Character Assessment

The purpose of landscape character assessment is to provide the foundation for policy formulation and decision making for landscape management.

There are a range of different landscapes found in the Plan area, each with varying visual and amenity values, topography, exposure levels and each containing a variety of habitats. Each landscape type has varying capacity to absorb development related to its overall sensitivity.

The existing Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 identifies six Landscape Character Types/Areas and Scenic Views and Prospects

within the Council's administrative area. The landscape sensitivity of County Laois is classified as 'low', 'medium' and 'high'. The Plan area is located within the 'Development Boundary' and 'Lowland Agricultural Areas' (shown on Figure 4.19), which are both classified as of 'low' sensitivity. There are no designated Views or Prospects within the Plan area.

The existing Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 identifies ten Landscape Character Areas, Areas of High Amenity and Key Amenity Routes and Views and Prospects within the Council's administrative area. The landscape sensitivity of County Offaly varies and is thereby classified within the following sensitivity classes: low; medium; and high. Portarlington is predominantly classified as 'low' landscape sensitivity, with an area of 'high' along the River Barrow corridor and an area of 'medium' within Derrycastle Bog and Derrylea Bog adjacent to the north of the Plan area, as shown on Figure 4.19. There are no designated Areas of High Amenity or Views and Prospects within the Plan area.

4.13.3 Existing Environmental Problems

New developments have resulted in changes to the visual appearance of lands within the Plan area however legislative objectives governing landscape and visual appearance were not identified as being conflicted with

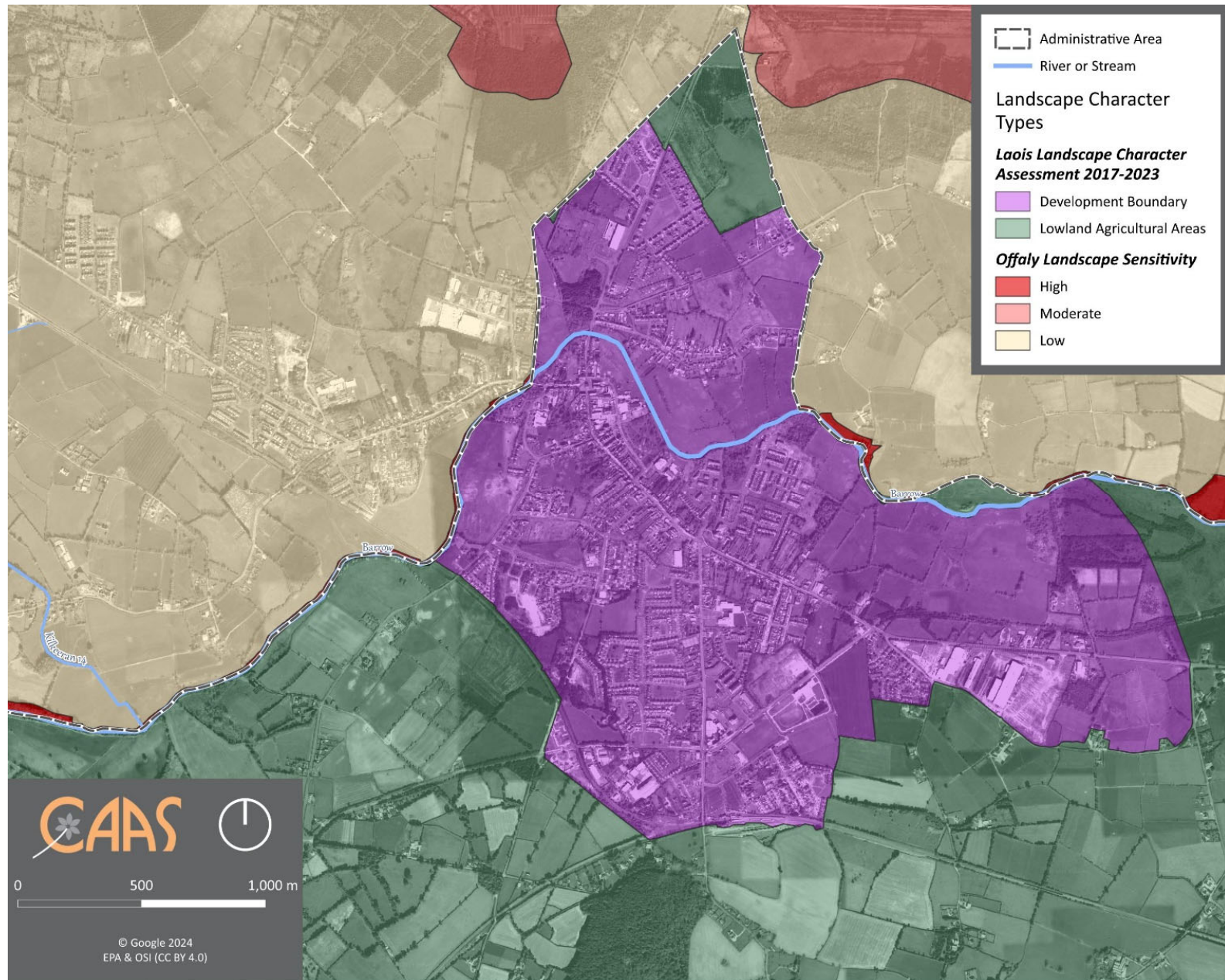


Figure 4.19 Landscape Designations

Section 5 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies that generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level e.g. the environmental protection objectives of various European Directives that have been transposed into Irish law and which are required to be implemented.

The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives are evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if – in the case of adverse effects – unmitigated.

The SEOs are linked to indicators which can facilitate monitoring the environmental effects of the Plan as well as identifying targets which the Plan can help work towards.

All SEOs, indicators and targets are provided on Table 5.1 overleaf.

Further detail on legislation, plans and programmes are provided under Section 2 (and associated Appendix I “Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans, and Programmes”) and Section 4.

Given the position of the Joint Local Area Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans, the measures identified in the SEAs for the County Development Plans have been used as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 5.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs), Indicators and Targets

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity/Heritage Plans
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity/Heritage Plans
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water quality in water bodies Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Laois County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Laois County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape”
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Laois County Development Plan Chapter 6 “Economic Development” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 5 “Economic Development Strategy” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Laois County Development Plan Chapter 6 “Economic Development” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 5 “Economic Development Strategy”
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource • Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield • Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF • In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement • To map brownfield and infill land parcels
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive • Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments • Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion • Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' • Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure • Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels • Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies • Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated • Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan • Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in-combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive • Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure • See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development • Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes • Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, cities and grids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture • Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency • Promote continuing improvement in air quality • Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution • Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive • Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels • NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel
Climatic Factors⁵⁵	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses • Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) • Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets • Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change • Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets • A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy • Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets • Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 • Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030)

⁵⁵ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8.5 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan

Section 6 Description of Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. Alternatives for the Plan are identified under a number of types below and assessed in Section 7.

6.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by the existing, already in force, Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan.

The alternatives available for the Plan are significantly limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the County Plan. These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan including on topics such as land use zoning.

6.3 Alternatives Already Considered

The preparation of the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and associated SEA processes already considered various different types of alternatives. The selected alternatives for the County Development Plans set requirements for lower tier planning in the Counties and have been integrated into the Joint Local Area Plan, as appropriate.

6.4 Description of Alternatives Considered

6.4.1 Local Transport Plan Alternatives

- **Local Transport Plan Alternative 1:** Inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes.
- **Local Transport Plan Alternative 2:** Do not inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plans.

6.4.2 Transport Infrastructure Alternatives

In integrating provisions relating to the provision of transport infrastructure into the Plan, the following alternatives were considered:

- **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1:** Provide new transport infrastructure with all additional environmental mitigation left to be defined until project level.
- **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2:** Provide new transport infrastructure, subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts such as disturbance from lighting – includes minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.

6.4.3 Ecosystem Services Approach Alternatives

The importance of fulfilling natural capital⁵⁶ and ecosystem⁵⁷ service obligations has increasingly emerged in recent years. An Ecosystems Services Approach would provide a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. An Ecosystems Services Approach would include the integration of ecological considerations at a local level across the Plan area.

- **Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1:** A Plan that follows an Ecosystems Services Approach to a greater degree.
- **Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2:** A Plan that that does not follow, or follows to a lesser degree, an Ecosystems Services Approach.

6.4.4 Built Heritage Alternatives

- **Built Heritage Alternative 1:** A Plan that adds detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage.
- **Built Heritage Alternative 2:** A Plan that does not add detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plans.

6.4.5 Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternatives

Alternatives under this heading relate to Opportunity Sites across the Plan area.

- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1:** Do not include specific key planning criteria for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites; development would be market-led and would seek to comply with relevant planning provisions in the absence of additional criteria.
- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 2:** Include specific key planning criteria for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites, but which allow for flexibility in areas such as final design, layout and uses.

⁵⁶ Renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals).

⁵⁷ Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing.

- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3:** Include Opportunity Sites that would outline criteria (which would not allow for flexibility in areas such as design, layout and uses) for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites.

6.4.6 Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives

Two alternatives for compact development/land use zoning are identified as follows (there are various alternative components under each alternative):

Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 1: “More Consolidated, More Compact Development”

- Portarlington to reach population allocation, resulting in balanced orderly development and implementation of the Core Strategies of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- This alternative involves preparing the Plan that is strongly guided by existing and planning infrastructure, including green and blue infrastructure, transport infrastructure and social and community infrastructure.
- The physical infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned.
- At least 30% of all new homes to be provided within the existing built-up footprint on infill and/or brownfield sites.
- Development proposals would be developed in a planned and coordinated manner focused within central and adjacent areas.
- Opportunity Sites are identified with clear design and proposed uses provided.

Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 2 “Less Consolidated, Less Compact Development”

- Portarlington to reach population allocation, resulting in balanced orderly development and implementation of the Core Strategies of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- This alternative involves preparing the Plan that is not strongly guided by existing and planning infrastructure, including green and blue infrastructure, transport infrastructure and social and community infrastructure.
- Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Alternative 1 “More Consolidated, More Compact Development” and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems which would have to be properly maintained.
- A greater proportion of new residential development to take place on certain peripheral, outer fringe lands (beyond the existing development envelope) over the lifetime of the Plan, with 30% less likely to be achieved within the existing built-up footprint on infill and/or brownfield sites (in comparison with Alternative 1 “More Consolidated, More Compact Development”).
- Town centre development would be sporadic and uncoordinated around central areas.
- Opportunity Sites are identified, but no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses is provided.

Section 7 Evaluation of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

This section provides a comparative evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects⁵⁸ of implementing available alternatives that are described in Section 6. This determination sought to understand whether each alternative was likely to improve conflict with or have a neutral interaction with the receiving environment.

7.2 Methodology

The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (see Section 4) and the Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Section 5 and Table 7.1) are used in the assessment of alternatives.

The alternatives are evaluated using compatibility criteria (see Table 7.2 below) in order to determine how they would be likely to affect the status of the existing environment and the SEOs. The SEOs and the alternatives are arrayed against each other in order to demonstrate which interactions would cause effects on specific components of the environment. Where the appraisal identifies an interaction with the status of an SEO the relevant SEO code is entered into the relevant column.

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects:

- Interactions that would be *likely to improve the status* of a particular SEO would be likely to contribute towards a significant positive effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates, including in-combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework.
- Interactions that would *potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in potential significant negative effects; however, these effects could be mitigated by integrating measures into the Plan.
- Interactions that would probably *conflict with the status of an SEO and would be unlikely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in a significant residual negative effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates.

Effects considered include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

The degree of significance of effects occurring cannot be fully determined at this level of decision making due to the lack of exact detail available with regard to the type or scale of development that will be permitted under the Plan. However, a strategic assessment can be undertaken.

Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁵⁹

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species • Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function • Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species • Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets • To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital

⁵⁸ These effects include secondary, cumulative (see also Section 8.2), synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

⁵⁹ See also Section 5

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield sites Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and waste water capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, and grids
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency Promote continuing improvement in air quality Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels.
Climatic Factors	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure). Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets. Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention

Table 7.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of the Alternatives on SEOs

Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
+	-	-	0

7.3 Detailed Assessment of Alternatives

7.3.1 Effects Common to all Alternatives

Each of the alternatives envisage – in compliance with the robust policy framework in place at national, regional and county level – sustainable development and compact growth in the Plan area. As such, various potential environmental effects are common to each of the alternatives. The environmental effects detailed on would be present, some to varying degrees, under the different alternatives.

Table 7.3 Effects Common to All Alternatives

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain. 	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; • Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and • Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. swifts) and bats.
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management. • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. • Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors.
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of soils (including those used for agriculture) and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. • Potential for riverbank erosion.

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Increases in waste levels. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. • Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter.
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. • Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. • Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. • Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape.

7.3.2 Assessment of Local Transport Plan Alternatives

Informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Area Based Transport Assessment Alternative 1**) would provide a more coordinated and more orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, more likely. This approach would be more likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts on environmental components including ecology and water would need to be adequately mitigated at project level.

Not informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Area Based Transport Assessment Alternative 2**) would provide a less coordinated and less orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, less likely. This approach would be less likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts arising from more coherently planned transport developments on environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both JLAP and project level.

Local Transport Plan Alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.4.

Selected Local Transport Plan Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

Table 7.4 Assessment of Local Transport Plan Alternatives against SEOs

Alternative (selected alternative indicated in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated			Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+			-			-	0
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree		
Local Transport Plan Alternative 1	PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L			PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L				
Local Transport Plan Alternative 2			PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L			PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L		

7.3.3 Assessment of Transport Infrastructure Alternatives

Under **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1**, new transport infrastructure would be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This would include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques. By focusing on mitigation at both plan and project levels, Alternative 1 would offer the most certainty for

environmental protection and management and would be more likely to result in important individual projects (relating to sustainable mobility and emissions/energy objectives) receiving permission.

Under **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2**, all additional environmental mitigation would be left to be defined in the future, at project level. This would offer the least certainty for environmental protection and management and would be more likely to result in important individual projects (relating to sustainable mobility and emissions objectives) not been given permission.

Transport Infrastructure Alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.5.

Selected Transport Infrastructure Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

Table 7.5 Assessment of Transport Infrastructure Alternatives against SEOs

Alternative (selected alternative indicated in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated			Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+			-			-	0
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree		
Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L				
Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2			BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

7.3.4 Assessment of Ecosystem Services Approach Alternatives

Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1 would integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Principles that would be integrated throughout the Plan, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, would include:

- Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function;
- Taking into account of the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation or recreation, culture and quality of life; and
- Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them.

This would mean that there would be:

- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues, such as the management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, pollination, flood risk, water bodies and river basins and natural resources supporting energy production and recreation; and
- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2 would not integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

As has been the case over previous plan periods, many natural capital and ecosystem service issues would be integrated into individual Plan Policy Objectives and into decision making at lower tiers of plan preparation and development management. However, this approach would be less coordinated and comprehensive than would be the case under an Ecosystems Services Approach.

This would mean that there would be:

- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues; and
- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

Ecosystem Services Approach Alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.6.

Selected Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

Table 7.6 Assessment of Ecosystem Services Approach Alternatives against SEOs

Alternative (selected alternative indicated in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated			Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+			-			-	0
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree		
Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L				
Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2			BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

7.3.5 Assessment of Built Heritage Alternatives

A Plan that adds detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage (**Built Heritage Alternative 1**) would further contribute the protection of existing heritage that is already contributed towards by the existing planning framework. By integrating heritage considerations into the Plan, Alternative 1 would be most likely to ensure that new development respects the historic grain of the built environment and archaeology that currently exists.

A Plan that does not add detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plans (**Built Heritage Alternative 2**) would not further contribute the protection of existing heritage that is already contributed towards by the existing planning

framework. By not integrating heritage considerations into the Plan, Alternative 2 would be least likely to ensure that new development respects the historic grain of the built environment and archaeology that currently exists.

Built Heritage Alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.7.

Selected Built Heritage Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

Table 7.7 Assessment of Built Heritage Alternatives against SEOs

Alternative (selected alternative indicated in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated			Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+			-			-	0
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree		
Built Heritage Alternative 1	MA CH L	BFF PHH S W A C		MA CH L	BFF PHH S W A C			
Built Heritage Alternative 2		BFF PHH S W A C	MA CH L		BFF PHH S W A C	MA CH L		

7.3.6 Assessment of Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternatives

A Joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington would help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive locations in the wider County areas and to focus on directing compact, sustainable development within and adjacent to the existing built-up footprint of Portarlington. Development of areas within and adjacent to the existing built-up footprint of Portarlington, which is generally more robust, better serviced and better connected than other lands elsewhere in the wider County areas, would contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development would be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable Portarlington to become a more desirable place to live – so it can sustainably accommodate new residents and maintain and improve services to existing and future communities.

Not including specific key planning criteria for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites (**Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1**) would reduce the likelihood of sustainable development. Development would be market-led and would seek to comply with relevant planning provisions in the absence of additional criteria. The sustainable development of the Plan area would be less likely than under Alternative 2.

By including specific key planning criteria for future for Opportunity Sites while, at the same time, allowing for flexibility in areas such as final design, layout and uses, for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites, **Alternative 2** would increase the likelihood of sustainable development.

Including Opportunity Sites that would outline criteria (which would not allow for flexibility in areas such as design, layout and uses) for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites (**Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3**) would increase the potential to hinder compliance with rigid criteria in the longer term, in a context of evolving market needs and planning requirements.

Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.8.

Selected Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 2

Table 7.8 Assessment of Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternatives against SEOs

Alternative (selected alternative indicated in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -			Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated -	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree		
Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1			PHH A MA C BFF S W CH L			PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L		
Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 2	PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L			PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L				
Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3			PHH A MA C BFF S W CH L			PHH A C MA BFF S W CH L		

7.3.7 Assessment of Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives

Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 1: "More Consolidated, More Compact Development"

Under this Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative, the town would reach its population allocation under the core strategies as contained in the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

The approach under this alternative would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree.

The infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned under this alternative.

The development of central and adjacent areas would be more compact and sustainable under this scenario and would better support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential units would be expected to take place within the existing built-up footprint on infill and/or brownfield sites, with a greater focus on use of consolidation and regeneration sites, with potential for wider regeneration benefits to the town centre, including housing provision. Regeneration, reuse and redevelopment of more central and brownfield and infill lands and optimising the use of vacant, derelict, and underutilised sites and buildings would be more likely to be achieved.

Giving a strong preference to lands that have both greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and a more realistic opportunity of being developed over the lifetime of the Plan and giving a focus to Opportunity Sites (with clear design and uses identified – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town more likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to the greatest degree.

There would be greater potential and viability for integrated land use and transportation under this alternative, including proximate development patterns linked by active travel infrastructure and public transport. Associated benefits and improvements to the public realm and appearance of the built environment, including liveability and quality of life improvements, would be more likely.

This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would make the greatest contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those within central and adjacent areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. There would be a reduced need for greenfield land consumption under this alternative. This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would be considered the most effective out of both Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 1 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development' would benefit the protection of various environmental components. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree. Less residual environmental effects would result.

Under this alternative there would be:

- More optimum use of land and resources, with positive role for addressing climate change, such as potential for reduced carbon heavy travel patterns.
- Greater potential for modal shift to sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, with knock on benefits for climate resilience in the Plan area.
- Use of already serviced lands in more central and built-up urban area could lead to potential reduced costs for delivery of new supporting infrastructure.
- Creation of more liveable built environments, with greater accessibility to services and amenities for local communities.

Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 2: "Less Consolidated, Less Compact Development"

Under this Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative, the Town would reach its population allocation under the core strategies as contained in the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

The approach under this alternative would not allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree.

Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Alternative A 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development' and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems which would have to be properly maintained.

The development of the Town and Outer Core areas would be less compact and less sustainable under this scenario and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of

the settlement. 30% of residential development would be less likely to be achieved within the existing built-up footprint on infill and/or brownfield sites in comparison with Alternative A 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development'. Under this alternative there would be potential for greater proportion of housing to be delivered outside of the built-up area, including on urban fringe and outer suburban areas and on greenfield sites, creating unsustainable travel patterns with a reliance on the private car. Giving less of a preference to lands that have both greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and a more realistic opportunity of being developed over the lifetime of the Plan and giving less of a focus to Opportunity Sites (there would be no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses provided – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town less likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a lesser degree.

There would be greater potential for negative impacts on the vitality and viability of the built-up area (including Town and Outer Core areas), due to increased and sustained levels of vacancy and dereliction for existing buildings and brownfield lands. This alternative would be likely to result in a more dispersed pattern of low-density urban development, that would be more difficult to serve with active travel infrastructure and public transport.

This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would make less of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those town centre and adjacent areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services. Demand to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area would be provided for. This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would be considered the least effective out of both Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative 2 'Less Consolidated, Less Compact Development' would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a lesser degree. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to in many cases; however, more residual environmental effects would result.

Under this alternative there would be:

- An increase in car dependency and associated carbon heavy travel patterns, which would undermine efforts aimed at securing climate resilience.
- Increased suburban pattern of residential development with potential for self-contained and disconnected built environments.
- Reduced potential for modal shift to sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- Potential for increased costs associated with the delivery on new supporting infrastructure (roads, footpaths etc.) in more peripheral and outer suburban areas.
- Increased costs for the delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure for urban fringe, outer suburban areas and greenfield sites.

Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.9.

Selected Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1 "More Consolidated, More Compact Development"

Table 7.9 Assessment of Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives against SEOs

Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative (selected alternative indicated in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs		Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated		Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+		-		-	0
	to Greater degree	to Lesser degree	to Lesser degree	to Greater degree		
A. "More Consolidated, More Compact Development"	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L			
B. "Less Consolidated, Less Compact Development"		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

7.4 Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered

Selected alternatives for the Plan from each of the types of alternatives that emerged from the planning/SEA process are indicated above.

These alternatives have been integrated into the adopted Plan having regard to both:

1. The environmental effects which were identified by the SEA and are detailed above; and
2. Planning – including social and economic – effects that also were considered by the Members

Section 8 Evaluation of Plan Provisions

8.1 Introduction

This section provides an assessment of environmental effects using the information on the current state of the environment (provided in Section 4) and the Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Table 8.1) from implementation of the Plan.

The Plan provisions (and, in Section 7, the alternatives) are evaluated using compatibility criteria (see Table 8.2 below) in order to determine how they would be likely to affect the status of the existing environment and the SEOs. The SEOs and the Plan provisions (and, in Section 7, the alternatives) are arrayed against each other in order to demonstrate which interactions would cause effects on specific components of the environment. Where the appraisal identifies an interaction with the status of an SEO the relevant SEO code is entered into the relevant column.

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects:

- Interactions that would be *likely to improve the status* of a particular SEO would be likely to contribute towards a significant positive effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates, including in-combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework.
- Interactions that would *potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in potential significant negative effects; however, these effects will be mitigated by measures which have been integrated into the Plan, or associated County Development Plans, and residual effects would not be significant (see Table 8.3 of this report).
- Interactions that would probably *conflict with the status of an SEO and would be unlikely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in a significant residual negative effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates.

Effects considered include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

The degree of significance of effects occurring cannot be fully determined at this level of decision making due to the lack of exact detail available with regard to the type or scale of development that will be permitted under the Plan. However, a strategic assessment can be undertaken.

Table 8.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁶⁰

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, cities and grids

⁶⁰ See also Section 5

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency Promote continuing improvement in air quality Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels
Climatic Factors⁶¹	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention

Table 8.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of the Plan provisions on SEOs

Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated -	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0
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⁶¹ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8.5 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

8.2 Cumulative Effects⁶²

Cumulative effects are one of the types of effects which have been considered by the assessment of the alternatives. Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are two types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential *intra-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. Where there are elevated levels of environmental sensitivities (such as those identified under Section 4), future development could result in environmental conflicts and lead to a deterioration in environmental integrity. The interrelationships between environmental components that help determine these potential effects are identified on Table 8.5 e.g. interrelationships between: human health and water quality; human health and air quality; human health and flood risk; and ecology and water quality.
- Potential *inter-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, developments, etc.

Effects that may arise as a result of implementing the Plan have been mitigated to the extent that the only residual adverse effects likely to occur as a result of implementation of the Plan are those which are identified under Table 8.3.

Other policies, plans and programmes that have been considered by the assessment of effects include those which are detailed under Section 2.5 (and associated Appendix I "Relationship with Legislation, Plans and Programmes"), Section 4 and Section 5. Plans and programmes from various sectors will interact with the Plan, including those relating to land use planning. These plans and programmes are subject to their own environmental assessment requirements as relevant. Examples include:

- Land use policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans, adjoining County Development Plans and Local Area Plans)
- Laois and Offaly Local Economic and Community Plans and the Local Economic and Community Plans of adjoining counties;
- Energy policy, plans and programmes (e.g. Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1, Ireland's National Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010, Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020, National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 and the Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework);
- Climate related policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Climate Policy Position and Climate Action 2014, Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, the National Climate Action Plans, the National Adaptation Framework 2024 and the Laois and Offaly County Council Climate Actions Plans 2024-2029);
- Water services, waste management, transport and energy infrastructure plans (e.g. Uisce Éireann's Water Services Strategic Plan and associated Capital Investment Plan, Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan and Transportation Policies and Strategies); and
- Environmental protection and management plans (e.g. River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management Plans).

Potential cumulative/in combination effects include:

- Contributions towards reductions in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, reductions in consumption from non-renewables and associated achievement of legally binding targets (in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors, including energy, transport and land use planning) as a result of facilitating:
 - Sustainable compact growth;

⁶² The EPA's guidance note 'Good Practice Guidance note on cumulative effects assessment in SEA' has been considered in the assessment.

- Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport;
- Drainage, flood risk management and resilience;
- Renewable energy; and
- Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green and blue infrastructure.
- Contributions towards travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air (in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors, including transport and land use planning) as a result of facilitating development which must be accompanied by road capacity;
- Facilitation of new development that is accompanied by appropriate levels of water services thereby contributing towards environmental protection;
- Need for and use of water and waste water treatment capacity arising from new developments and associated potential adverse effects;
- Potential cumulative effects upon surface and ground water status as a result of housing, employment, agricultural and forestry – loadings and abstractions;
- Potential cumulative effects (habitat damage, enhancing ecological connectivity, contributing towards sustainable mobility) arising from linear developments, such as those relating to Green Infrastructure, including beyond the Plan boundary;
- Potential cumulative effects on flood risk by, for example, development of greenfield lands or obstruction of flood paths; and
- In combination with plans and programmes from all sectors potential adverse effects on all environmental components arising from all development in greenfield and brownfield areas (e.g. infrastructural, residential, economic, agricultural etc.). The type of these effects are consistent with those described on Table 8.3. These plans and programmes are required to comply with environmental legislation and undergo SEA and AA as relevant comply with environmental legislation while projects are subject to EIA and AA, as relevant.

These effects would have the potential, if unmitigated, if they occurred, to result in changes in the environment within and beyond the Plan area.

A variety of the issues covered by the Plan provisions are regional and county issues which are considered: at Regional Assembly level, in the Eastern and Midland RSES and by planning authorities across the Region; and at County level, including through the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans. The solutions to these issues are often regional solutions which are subject their own consenting procedures. Works arising outside of the Plan area as a result of providing for new development within the Plan area, including works arising as a result of the cumulative provision of development in the wider County and region, would potentially conflict with a number of environmental components, across the wider County and region and beyond, including: ecology, soil function, the status of water bodies and the landscape. Some of these conflicts would be mitigated by measures which will be integrated into the Plan while some will be mitigated by measures arising out of separate consent procedures.

8.3 Overall Evaluation

Laois and Offaly County Councils have integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA process into the Plan (see Section 9). Table 8.3 provides a detailed overall evaluation of the environmental effects arising from the Plan. The effects encompass all in-combination/cumulative effects arising from implementation of the Plan. The potentially significant adverse environmental effects (if unmitigated) arising from implementation of the Plan are detailed as are residual effects, taking into account mitigation integrated into both the Plan and the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans – see Section 9.

Environmental impacts which occur will be determined by the nature and extent of multiple or individual projects and site-specific environmental factors. Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO) codes are taken from Table 8.1.

Table 8.3 Overall Evaluation – Effects arising from the Plan

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and associated ecosystem services, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats. • Contribution towards protection and/or maintenance of biodiversity and flora and fauna by contributing towards the protection of natural capital including the environmental vectors of air, water and soil. Biodiversity and flora and fauna includes biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species (including birds and bats), listed/protected species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats (including terrestrial and aquatic habitats), and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna – including terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and flora and fauna. • Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain. 	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; • Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and • Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. swifts) and bats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces. • Losses or damage to ecology (these would be in compliance with relevant legislation). 	BFF

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management. • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contributes towards protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of natural capital including environmental vectors, including air and water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. • Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors – please refer to residual adverse effects under "Soil", "Water" and "Air and Climatic Factors" below. 	PHH
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of soils (including those used for agriculture) and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination the highest standards of remediation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. • Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces. • Riverbank erosion will continue to occur naturally over time and is likely to be enhanced by climate change. 	S

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contributions towards the protection of water resources including the status of surface and groundwaters and water-based designations. • Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any increased loadings as a result of development to comply with the River Basin Management Plan. • Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan. 	W
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies. • Contribution towards increase in renewable energy use by facilitating renewable energy and electricity transmission infrastructure developments. • Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth. • Contribution towards reductions in average energy consumption per capita including promoting sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility, sustainable design and energy efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Increases in waste levels. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. • Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain, including due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however, such risks will be mitigated by: measures, including those requiring the timely provision of critical infrastructure, and compliance with the Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plan. • Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher-level waste management policies. • Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework. 	MA

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • In combination with other plans, programmes etc., contribution towards the objectives of the wide policy framework relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated contribution towards maintaining and improving air quality and managing noise levels, including through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable compact growth; ○ Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport; ○ Drainage, flood risk management and resilience; ○ Sectors including agriculture, residential heating and infrastructure; ○ Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. • Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality⁶³. • Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors⁶⁴. • Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extent of travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air. This has been mitigated by provisions which have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable compact growth and sustainable mobility. • Interactions between noise emissions and sensitive receptors. Various provisions have been integrated into the Plan to ensure that noise levels at sensitive receptors will be minimised. 	AC
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area. • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within the Plan area by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on known architectural and archaeological heritage and unknown archaeology however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. 	CH
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes will change overtime as a result of natural changes in vegetation cover combined with new developments that will occur in compliance with the Plan's landscape protection measures. 	L

⁶³ Although interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases in traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.

⁶⁴ Although interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases in traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.

8.4 Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA have been undertaken alongside the preparation and adoption of the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of any European Site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.⁶⁵ The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

Requirements in relation to Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The SFRA undertaken for the JLAP has informed its land use zoning and written provisions.

8.5 Interactions with Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

The JLAP will contribute towards climate action in combination with:

- The Climate Action Plan that identifies various climate mitigation and/or adaptation actions.
- The National Planning Framework, which has identified National Strategic Outcome Objectives 8 "Build Climate Resilience" and 9 "Support the transition to low carbon and clean energy" under National Strategic Outcome 8 "Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society".
- The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that includes various provisions relating to climate action; and
- The Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

Climate Action is a cross-cutting theme, with every chapter of the JLAP, contributing to overall efforts to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Table 8.4 briefly summarises how each chapter of the JLAP contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Table 8.4 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Chapter Heading	Contribution to Climate Action
Chapter 6: Development Vision and Strategy	Supports sustainable low carbon compact growth while ensuring the management of flood risk and the protection of the unique built and natural heritage.
Chapter 7: Core Strategy Compliance and Housing	Supports compact growth, including measures that encourage the reuse and refurbishment of underutilised, vacant, and derelict buildings, and the development of opportunity sites within the built-up area of Portarlington.
Chapter 8: Town Centre Revitalisation	Promotes active land management to make the most efficient use of lands in town centre locations, including consolidation of the town centre and compact growth. Supports the implementation of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'.
Chapter 9: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities	Supports the '10 minute' settlement concept in terms of connected communities, with an emphasis on reducing car dependency, active travel, and shorter walking and cycling times to amenities and community facilities in the built environment.
Chapter 10: Climate Change	Outlines the role of spatial planning in addressing the climate change challenge, and the manner in which it can be utilised to support climate action in Portarlington.
Chapter 11: Economic Development	Supports sustainable employment generation and economic development in appropriate locations.

⁶⁵ 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 plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

Chapter Heading	Contribution to Climate Action
Chapter 12: Sustainable Travel and Transportation	Supports the transition of Portarlington to a low-carbon and climate resilient town through the promotion of sustainable development patterns, sustainable and active travel, and sustainable energy use.
Chapter 13: Infrastructure, Environmental Services and Flood Risk Management	Facilitates future growth in line with the capacity and availability of supporting infrastructure and environmental services, and in line with appropriate flood risk management measures.
Chapter 14: Built Heritage	Seeks to protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Portarlington, and to promote the appropriate development and use of heritage assets to ensure that they contribute to the sustainable development and heritage-led regeneration of the town for future generations.
Chapter 15: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage	To protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of Portarlington to ensure that it contributes to the sustainable future of the town.
Chapter 16: Implementation and Monitoring	Aims to manage and deliver new development in Portarlington in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

8.6 Interrelationship between Environmental Components

The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

Likely significant effects on environmental components which are identified include those which are interrelated; implementation of the Plan will not affect the interrelationships between these components. The presence of significant interrelationships between environmental components is identified on Table 8.5.

Table 8.5 Presence of Interrelationships between Environmental Components

Component	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Water	Air and Climatic factors	Material assets	Cultural heritage	Landscape
Biodiversity, flora and fauna		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Population and Human Health			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Soil				Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Water					No	Yes	No	No
Air and Climatic Factors						Yes	No	No
Material Assets							Yes	Yes
Cultural Heritage								Yes
Landscape								

8.7 Detailed Evaluation

For an explanation of SEO codes e.g. **BFF**, **PHH**, **S**, **W**, etc. refer to Table 8.1 on page 73.

The following applies to each of the sub-sections 8.7.1 to 8.7.12 below:

The Plan is situated in a hierarchy of documents setting out public policy setting out public policy for, among other things, land use planning, infrastructure, sustainable development, tourism, environmental protection and environmental management, such as the National Planning Framework, the National Development Plan, the National Climate Action Plans, the National Adaptation Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region and the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans (for additional detail please refer to Section 2.5 "Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes" in this report).

These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and already provide for various measures that have been compiled into the Plan. The Plan aligns with these documents and will be incorporated into the review and preparation of these documents.

Lower tier plans and projects must be consistent and comply with the provisions of the Plan and of these other policies, plans etc. and will be subject to their own project level EIA and AA requirements as relevant. An assessment of cumulative effects is provided at Section 8.2 of this report.

8.7.1 Chapter 6 Development Vision and Strategy

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out, among other things, the Development Vision and Strategy (and associated Policies and Objectives) for the Plan.</p> <p>The Joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington is underpinned by the following Vision Statement, which is intended to guide the future growth of the town over the period 2025-2031: "To develop Portarlington as a sustainable low carbon settlement centred on a compact, vibrant town centre utilising locational strengths to attract employment and to promote the unique settlement as an attractive town in which to live, work and play, while ensuring the management of flood risk and the protection of the unique built and natural heritage".</p> <p>Key Plan Objectives in relation to the delivery of the above Vision Statement are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 6.1: Support new development that will enable sustainable housing growth, employment and prosperity for Portarlington as a 'Key Service Centre' in line with the Strategic Objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (2019), the Laois County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (designated as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town) and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (designated as a Self-Sustaining Town). Objective 6.2: Promote and support positive placemaking and the development of sustainable communities, with an emphasis on active travel and shorter walking and cycling timeframes to social and community facilities, improving permeability in the built environment, and encouraging a reduction in car dependency. Objective 6.3: Support and facilitate the regeneration and consolidation of the town centre, in line with the objectives of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'. Objective 6.4: Work in partnership with community groups for the regeneration and revitalisation of Portarlington, and to actively seek and secure 	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

<p>funding and investment under available national and regional investment and funding programmes in line with the development strategy as set out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 6.5: Support compact residential growth in Portarlington through the sustainable intensification, and consolidation of the town centre and in established residential areas, to meet identified housing targets and requirements. Objective 6.6: Monitor and manage the delivery of housing in Portarlington, in line with national, regional and county level objectives, through the development strategy in this plan and also through the development management process. Objective 6.7: Promote and support balanced economic development and employment growth. Objective 6.8: Protect, conserve and enhance the built, natural and cultural environment, by promoting awareness and high-quality urban design and utilising relevant heritage legislation. Objective 6.9: Develop and improve flood mitigation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland. Objective 6.10: Enhance climate adaptation and mitigation, and accelerate a transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy in Portarlington. Objective 6.11: Ensure that Portarlington grows at a sustainable level in line with the Core Strategy Table and deliver consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment in services, infrastructure, amenities and local employment in order to become more self-sustaining. Objective 6.12: Development within flood risks areas shall be limited to that appropriate to the level of flood risk, as identified in Map 3 (Land Use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning) in accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended. New development within this area is limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been prepared. <p>Objective 6.3 supports and facilitates the regeneration and consolidation of the town centre, in line with the objectives of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'. This Strategy focuses on a study area of the town centre comprising the main routes' leading to the 300-year-old Market House and its historic Square setting. The Vision Statement therein is: 'To create a more viable and visually attractive Town Centre in Portarlington for residents, visitors and workers through the appropriate rehabilitation of the Market House and Square and other key buildings, with improvements to connectivity, public realm and amenities'.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 			
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8.7.2 Chapter 7 Core Strategy Compliance and Housing

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Core Strategy Compliance and Housing, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Function and Population of Portarlington Future Population and Housing Targets Laois County Development Plan Core Strategy and Estimated Residential Land Capacity Offaly County Development Plan Core Strategy and Estimated Residential Land Capacity Compliance with Core Strategies Housing Strategies and Housing Need Demand Assessments Tiered Approach to Land Zoning <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

8.7.3 Chapter 8 Town Centre Revitalisation

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Town Centre Revitalisation, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration • Public Realm • Vacancy • Land Activation • Retail • Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Core • Town Centre Opportunity Sites – five such sites (1 Lands off Foxcroft Street, 2 Arlington House, 3 Lands to the rear of Main Street, 4 Health Centre site and 5 Kilmalogue Crossroads) are identified with Key Planning Criteria provided for. <p>Policy 8.2 requires new development proposals to be in accordance with the objectives set out in the Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030 and Objective 8.1 seeks to improve the quality, vitality and vibrancy of the town centre through the delivery of the vision that is set out in the Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030. This Strategy focuses on a study area of the town centre comprising the main routes' leading to the 300-year-old Market House and its historic Square setting. The Vision Statement therein is: 'To create a more viable and visually attractive Town Centre in Portarlington for residents, visitors and workers through the appropriate rehabilitation of the Market House and Square and other key buildings, with improvements to connectivity, public realm and amenities'.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

8.7.4 Chapter 9 Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Placemaking and Sustainable Communities, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 10-Minute Settlement Concept • Social and Community Facilities • Education and Training Facilities • Childcare Facilities • Healthcare Facilities • Sports, Recreation and Play • Arts and Culture • Inclusive Communities • Key Placemaking Sites - two such sites (1 Landholding off SandyLane and 5 Market House and Market Square) are identified with Key Planning Criteria provided for <p>Objective 9.4 seeks to facilitate the implementation of the Laois Age Friendly County Strategy 2023-2027. This strategy provides a framework plan to make Laois a great place in which everyone, regardless of age, is valued and respected. It provides the structure for cross-sector cooperation which is essential to improve the quality of life for older people in Laois.</p> <p>Objective 9.5 seeks to facilitate the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) for County Laois and County Offaly. These LECPs set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the respective counties over a six-year period.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p>	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.7.5 Chapter 10 Climate Change

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Climate Change, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authority Climate Action Plans Integration of land use planning and sustainable mobility Compact Growth and Regeneration Nature-based Solutions (Green Infrastructure, Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) Energy Efficiency (Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Renewable Energy, Low Carbon District Heating and Public Lighting) <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to tackle the challenge of climate change in Portarlington, focusing on the role of spatial planning in contributing to the transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient future, through targeted climate change mitigation and adaptation measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gases and increasing energy efficiency and conservation.</p> <p>Climate Action is a cross-cutting theme, with every chapter of the JLAP contributing to overall efforts to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change – refer also to Section 8.5 above.</p> <p>The development of green infrastructure, including new or enhanced walking and cycling routes, has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations. The development of such infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.</p> <p>Sustainable drainage and flood risk management provisions would contribute towards the protection and management of human health, biodiversity, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, water status and existing infrastructure and services. Flood risk management infrastructure (if required) has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental effects during construction and operation on most environmental components. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas and adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can contribute towards the maintenance and improvement in the status of water bodies and flood risk management and positively interact with other environmental components including biodiversity and flora and fauna.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-served and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

<p>can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.7.6 Chapter 11 Economic Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Economic Development, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Economic Framework Local Business Stakeholders Addressing the Challenges of Economic Development Zoned Lands Serviced Business and Industrial Parks (Employment Land) - five such sites (1 Canal Road Business Park, 2 Portarlington Business Park, 3 Lea Road Business Park, 4 Edenderry Road Business Park and 5 Industrial Estate Botley Lane) are identified with Development Guidance provided for Supporting Established Employment Bases <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to support sustainable employment generation and economic development in appropriate locations in Portarlington, by leveraging its strategic location, accessibility, and Key Service Centre designation to build a competitive economy.</p> <p>Objective 9.5 seeks to facilitate the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) for County Laois and County Offaly. These LECPs set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the respective counties over a six-year period.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of</p>	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

<p>the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.7.7 Chapter 12 Sustainable Travel and Transportation

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Sustainable Travel and Transportation, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning • Local Transport Plan <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to promote and develop a sustainable, integrated and universally accessible transport system for Portarlington that prioritises walking, cycling, and public transport, in addition to the provision of an appropriate level of road infrastructure, road capacity and associated traffic management.</p> <p>Sustainable transport and travel related provisions, including those arising from the Local Transport Plan that accompanies the Plan, would contribute towards the planning framework for the future development of sustainable transport and movement, in combination with the implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans and programmes. Many of these provisions would primarily contribute towards maximising sustainable mobility and associated interactions with emissions to air (including noise and greenhouse gas emissions), energy usage, air quality and human health. The development of new, and enhancement of existing, walking and cycling routes has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of sustainable transport and travel related infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are sometimes constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.</p> <p>The facilitation of journeys by car, in particular, would give rise to emissions to air. Although interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

<p>traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.</p> <p>As identified in the Plan: "The identification of transport infrastructure proposals in this Plan and associated Local Transport Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that is not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative. New transport infrastructure will be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This will include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques. Proposals would need to be subject to a Corridor and Route Selection Process, as relevant and as per Objective TRANS 15 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Chapter 8.6.4 "Corridor & Route Selection Process" of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements."</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.7.8 Chapter 13 Infrastructure and Environmental Services

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Sustainable Travel and Transportation, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Demand and Renewable Energy • Broadband and WIFI in Public Spaces • Water and Wastewater 	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Surface Water Management • Circular Economy and Waste Management • Flood Risk Management <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to facilitate future growth in Portarlington in line with the capacity and availability of supporting infrastructure and environmental services, and in line with appropriate flood risk management measures and nature-based solutions, ensuring such growth occurs in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>This part of the Plan will help to ensure that development takes place in line with the capacity of supporting infrastructure and requires the timely provision of infrastructure needed for planned sustainable development.</p> <p>Provisions relating to water supply, wastewater, surface water, groundwater and sustainable urban drainage systems would, by protecting water resources, providing safe drinking water and appropriately treating waste water, contribute towards the protection of various environmental components including: human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna, the status of waters, flood risk management and soil. There would be potential for significant adverse environmental effects upon various environmental components to arise during construction of water services infrastructure. Such potential significant adverse effects could also arise during operation: the protection of human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the status of waters, could all be conflicted with by outflows and abstractions.</p> <p>Objective 13.7 seeks to ensure that developments, individually as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments, will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the European Water Framework Directive and Ireland's "Water Action Plan 2024: River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027" (DHLGH, 2024).</p> <p>Waste Management provisions incorporate circular economy principles that are supported in the RSES.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.7.9 Chapter 14 Built Heritage

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Built Heritage, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage-Led Regeneration Record of Protected Structures Architectural Conservation Area Vernacular Architecture Archaeology Lea Castle <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Portarlington, and to promote the appropriate development and use of Heritage assets to ensure that they contribute to the sustainable development and heritage-led regeneration of the town for future generations.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

8.7.10 Chapter 15 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Biodiversity and Natural Heritage, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Infrastructure (including River Barrow and associated riparian habitat, The People's Park, Carrick Wood and The Derrycastle Lakes and Trails recreation area) Trees Pocket Parks, Community Gardens and Allotments Pollination Zones/Biodiversity Zones <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of Portarlington, thereby ensuring it makes a significant and positive contribution to the public realm and to the health, well-being and recreational needs of residents, and to ensure increased connectivity along the green infrastructure network in Portarlington and its hinterland.</p> <p>The development of green infrastructure, including new or enhanced walking and cycling routes, has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations. The development of such infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

8.7.11 Chapter 16 Land Use Zoning Objectives

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Land Use Zoning Objectives. Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach.</p> <p>Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.</p> <p>The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input seeks to facilitate zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>The Strategic Aim of this Chapter is to manage and deliver new development in Portarlington to ensure that it occurs in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development, and to implement the objectives of this Joint Local Area Plan and to monitor their implementation in a timely manner.</p> <p>The development of green infrastructure, including new or enhanced walking and cycling routes, has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations. The development of such infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other 	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.7.12 Chapter 17 Implementation and Monitoring

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>This chapter sets out details and provisions relating to Implementation and Monitoring, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation Funding Development Contributions Environmental Monitoring <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.6 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in this Chapter would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils are helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

Section 9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Introduction

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Plan. Various environmental sensitivities and issues have been communicated to the Councils through the SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) processes. By integrating various related recommendations into the Plan, the Councils have ensured that both the beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan have been and will be maximised and that potential adverse effects have been and will be avoided, reduced or offset.

Mitigation was achieved through:

- Strategic work undertaken by the Councils to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development;
- Considering alternatives for the Plan;
- The integration of environmental considerations into zoning provisions of the Plan;
- The integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA provisions into the text of the Joint Local Area Plan; and
- The integration of individual provisions into the text of the existing, already in force, County Development Plans.

9.2 Strategic work undertaken by the Councils to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development

Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display and adopting the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

Strategic work undertaken by the Councils includes background work in relation to Plan provisions, including those relating to:

- Core Strategy;
- Climate change;
- Town centre revitalisation;
- Placemaking;
- Housing;
- Economic development;
- Transport and movement;
- Community services development;
- Built heritage; and
- Biodiversity and natural heritage.

The undertaking of the SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions as detailed under Table 9.1.

9.3 Consideration of Alternatives

Although strategic alternatives in relation to the content of the Plan were significantly limited for the Plan (see Section 6), as part of the Plan preparation/SEA process alternatives for the Plan were considered.

These alternatives were assessed by the SEA process (see Section 7) and the findings of this assessment informed the selection of alternatives for the Plan, facilitating an informed choice with respect to the type of Plan that was prepared, placed on public display and adopted.

9.4 Integration of environmental considerations into zoning provisions of the Plan

Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach.

Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input seeks to facilitate zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.

9.5 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Plan

Various provisions have been integrated into the text of the Plan through the Plan-preparation and SEA, SFRA and AA processes. Both the Planning and the assessment teams contributed towards the mitigation which was developed over multiple iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

Table 9.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

9.6 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plans

In addition to the individual provisions integrated into the text of the Joint Local Area Plan, individual provisions relating to environmental protection and management have been integrated into the existing, already in force, Laois and Offaly County Development Plans. These measures, which must be complied with by development under the Joint Local Area Plan, are identified alongside the Joint Local Area Plan measures on Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan⁶⁶

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
Various – see below	Various – see below	<p>Subsection 1.1 Background: It is a specific provision of this Plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 identified in the SEA Environmental Report and/or AA Natura Impact Report that accompany this Plan shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Plan.</p> <p>Chapter 11 Transport and Movement The identification of transport infrastructure proposals in this Plan and associated Local Transport Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that is not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative.</p> <p>New transport infrastructure will be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This will include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.</p> <p>Proposals would need to be subject to a Corridor and Route Selection Process, as relevant and as per Objective TRANS 15 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Chapter 8.6.4 "Corridor & Route Selection Process" of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.</p>	<p>Laois County Development Plan Overarching Core Strategy Policy Objectives CS 03 In the assessment of development proposals, to take account of transport corridors, environmental carrying capacity, availability and/or capacity to provide waste water and water supply services, potential to conflict with Water Framework Directive objectives, potential to impact on the integrity of European sites and Annexed Habitats and species, features of biodiversity value including ecological networks, impact on landscape and visual characteristics, education and other socioeconomic objectives Ecosystems Approach Policy Objectives CS 35 Promote an Ecosystem Services Approach in the preparation of lower-level plans, strategies and Development Management CS 36 Contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which came into force in 2016 NRE 3 Ensure the provision, where feasible, of electricity cables been located underground, especially in the urban environment, and generally within areas of public open space. Where undergrounding of cables is being pursued, proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties); • Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered; • Impacts on underground archaeology; • Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and • Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation. <p>Volume 2 Environmental considerations and imitations in the types of uses There are a wide range of land use types identified under each of the Land Use Zoning Objectives. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate compliance with the various written provisions of the Plan, as relevant, including those relating to environmental protection and management. Environmental considerations, such as those related to elevated levels of flood risk or European site ecological designations, may limit the types of uses that may be possible at certain sites. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the planning authority at the earliest opportunity to seek guidance as to the appropriateness of emerging proposals.</p> <p>TRANS 15 It is a Policy Objective that where projects for new roads or other linear projects, identified in Chapter 10 and Volume 2, are not already provided for by existing plans/programme or are not already permitted, that the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and • Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection. <p>Offaly County Development Plan Ecosystems Services In preparing this Plan and developing policies and objectives, the Council have followed these Ecosystem Services Approach principles:</p> <p>a) Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function (including in Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy).</p> <p>b) Taking into account the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation (including in Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy), resources for food, fibre or fuel (including in Chapter 5 Economic Development Strategy), or for recreation, culture and quality of life (including in Chapter 4 Biodiversity and Landscape, Chapter 6 Tourism and Recreational Development, and Chapter 10 Built Heritage).</p> <p>c) Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them. Public consultation has informed the preparation of the Plan.</p> <p>The Council will promote an Ecosystem Services Approach, following the above principles, in its decision-making processes, including those relating to the preparation of statutory land use plans.</p> <p>In recognition of the need to manage natural capital, provisions have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, water quality and integrated catchment management. United Nations Sustainability Goals Sustainability is at the heart of planning. Since 2015, Ireland has been a signatory for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as outlined in Figure 1.2 and which frame national agendas and policies to 2030. The following Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for relevant new infrastructure, however this would not apply to national road schemes which are progressed in accordance with statutory processes and TII publications, including various TII Planning Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Impacts that include headings such as "Constraints Study", "Route Corridor Selection" and "Environmental Impact Assessment":</p>

⁶⁶ Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in this report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental constraints (including those identified in Section 4 of the accompanying SEA Environmental Report) and opportunities (such as existing linear infrastructure) will assist in the identification of possible route corridor options; • Potentially feasible corridors within which infrastructure could be accommodated will be identified and these corridors assessed. The selection of the preferred route corridor will avoid constraints and meet opportunities to the optimum extent, as advised by the relevant specialists; and • In addition to the constraints identified above, site-specific field data may be required to identify the most appropriate corridors. <p>Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially feasible routes within the preferred corridor will be identified and assessed. The selection of preferred routes will avoid constraints and meet opportunities to the optimum extent, as advised by the relevant specialists, taking into account project level information and potential mitigation measures that are readily achievable; • In addition to the constraints identified above, site specific field data may be required to identify the most appropriate routes; and • In addition to environmental considerations, the identification of route corridors and the refinement of route lines is likely to be informed by other considerations. <p>Construction and Environmental Management Plan</p> <p>Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures contained in any accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment Report or Appropriate Assessment and in this Development Plan. CEMPs shall typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including where applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and details of site compounds, refuse storage areas, construction site offices and staff facilities, site security fencing and hoardings, on-site staff car parking; • Details of construction traffic - timing and routing, directional signage, measures to obviate queuing, alternative arrangements for pedestrians and vehicles, and measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris; • Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels; • Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater; • Disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment; • A water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains; • Details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan; • If peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan; • Measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed); • Appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases; and <p>Details of appropriate mitigation measures for lighting specifically designed to minimise impacts to biodiversity, including bats.</p> <p>DMS-107 Undergrounding of Services</p> <p>All services, including ESB, telephone and television cables shall be placed underground, where possible. Service buildings or structures shall be sited as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened.</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties); • Short to medium-term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered; • Impacts on underground and underwater archaeology; • Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and • Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation. <p>Reasonable Alternatives and Existing Infrastructural Assets</p> <p>It is Council policy to require that environmental assessments should address reasonable alternatives for the location of new energy developments, and where existing infrastructural assets such as sub-stations, power lines and roads already exist within the proposed development areas, then such assets should be considered for sustainable use by the proposed development where the assets have capacity to absorb the new development. Environmental considerations and Limitations in the types of uses</p> <p>There are a wide range of land uses identified under each of the Land Use Zoning Objectives. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate compliance with the various written provisions of the Plan, as relevant, including those relating to environmental protection and management. Environmental considerations, such as those related to elevated levels of flood risk or European site ecological designations, may limit the types of uses that may be possible at certain sites. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the Planning Authority at the earliest opportunity to seek guidance as to the appropriateness of emerging proposals.</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. swifts) and bats. 	<p>Policy 15.1 Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of species in any Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), Natural Heritage Area (NHA) and Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).</p> <p>Policy 15.2 Promote and support (a) the development of Derryounce Lakes and Trails as an important local amenity and key tourism asset and (b) the implementation of the recommendations of the 10-year plan for Derryounce.</p> <p>Policy 15.3 Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network in Portarlington, with a particular emphasis on connecting the recreational areas of Derryounce Lakes and Trails, the River Barrow and the People's Park; and strengthen green infrastructure linkages to the wider regional network.</p> <p>Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.</p> <p>Policy 15.6 Support the conservation and enhancement of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, and to protect the SAC from any plans and projects that are likely to have a significant effect on the coherence or integrity of the designated site, in accordance with relevant EU environmental directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines.</p> <p>Objective 15.1 Investigate the feasibility of providing a bridge crossing and walkway over the River Barrow in the indicative location to the south west of the town, as shown in the Map 2: Objectives, taking into account environmental sensitivities identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan and the Offaly County Development Plan. The development of</p>	<p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>CS 20 Promote higher densities at appropriate locations, owing to position on public transport network where appropriate to do so having regard to Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas (DEHLG, 2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required;</p> <p>CA ST 1 Protect and enhance the County's floodplains subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" where appropriate and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive;</p> <p>RH 4 Provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2005) ', EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required;</p> <p>NRPO 4 Prepare an Open Space Plan for the County having regard to the town parks, riverside walks and other amenity spaces and resources and ensure that any plan or project associated with open space planning or tourism is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required</p> <p>NRPO 7 Investigate the feasibility of the following specific recreation and leisure projects subject to the Habitats and Birds Directives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the ongoing development of an athletic track, including provision of dressing rooms and tartan resurface in Portlaoise; Investigate and facilitate where appropriate the provision of strategic greenways throughout the county. Facilitate where appropriate the provision of additional handball facilities throughout the county. <p>NRPO 13 Facilitate the development of greenways / blueways along the main waterways through the county – Grand Canal, River Barrow and River Nore and their tributaries subject to the Habitats and Birds Directives and the proper planning and development of the areas</p> <p>ABT 2 Support in principle and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive, developing and marketing off-road Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking Trail by Coillte, Mountmellick –Portlaoise – Abbeyleix Greenway (and potential extensions onto Portarlington to connect with the Offaly Greenway network) and Durrow Green Network Cycle Trail in co-operation with relevant stakeholders including Durrow Development Forum.</p> <p>ABT 3 Develop on-road cycle trails in the Slieve Blooms along existing lightly-trafficked roads in partnership with cycling clubs, Offaly County Council, Laois Sports Partnership, Laois Partnership Company and the National Trails Office, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive</p> <p>ABT 6 Promote and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the habitats and Birds Directives, sustainable developing and improving of facilities and infrastructure supporting water based tourism activities, (including shore side interpretive centres and jetties). Development proposals outside settlement centres will be required to demonstrate a need to locate in the area and will be required to ensure that the ecological integrity and water quality of the river or lake, including lakeshore and riparian habitats, is not adversely affected by the development</p> <p>TM 17 Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate</p> <p>CH 2 Take responsibility for the development of a more sustainable tourism industry which minimises adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, habitats and species; leaving them undiminished as a resource for future generations, while supporting social and economic prosperity</p> <p>Support the development and marketing of the Barrow Blueway and facilitate related commercial opportunities in Vicarstown, Portarlington, Graiguecullen and Portlaoise, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive</p> <p>NH 2 Support the development and marketing of the Erkina River Blueway in association with all relevant stakeholders and facilitate related commercial opportunities in the area, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive</p> <p>NH 3 Promote and facilitate the continued development of the Slieve Bloom Mountains bike trail as a key tourism asset for the county and as part of the tourism offer on the Slieve Bloom Mountains, in conjunction with Offaly County Council.</p> <p>In addition, it is the Council policy to (i) promote the further development of walking trails on the mountains, (ii) connect to and develop Clonaslee, Camross, Coolrain and Rosentalis as a service hubs for the area and (iii) promote and facilitate links to / from other existing and proposed greenways, blueways and peatways (iv) Support the development of visitor centre facilities in Baunreagh , , subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive</p> <p>RL 2 Facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</p> <p>RL 7 Encourage, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, access to forestry including private forestry for amenity and educational purposes including the provision of walking routes, cycling routes, mountain biking routes, mountain trails, nature trails and orienteering;</p> <p>RL 14 Support in principle the expansion of the aggregates and concrete products industry which offers opportunity for employment and economic development generally subject to environmental , traffic and planning considerations and ensure that any plan or project associated with extractive industry is subject to Appropriate assessment screening in compliance with the Habitats Direction and subsequent assessment as required , applicants for planning permission shall have regard to the GSI-ICF Quarrying Guidelines;</p> <p>TRANS 45 Investigate the feasibility of developing a National Scale Centre for Off-Road Mountain-Biking in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, subject to planning permission & the Habitats' and Birds Directives;</p> <p>TRANS 46 Continue to audit, maintain and promote walking trails and walking events in the Slieve Blooms, subject to planning permission & the Habitats' and Birds Directives:</p> <p>TRANS 47 Designate the following graded on-road cycling trails in the Slieve Blooms; install related signage and improve road surfaces along these trails, as resources allow; produce trail maps and market the trails , subject to the Habitats' and Birds Directives; H1. Cut Cycle Climb; H2. Wolftrap Cycle Climb; H3. Glendine Cycle Climb; H4. Mountrath-Clonaslee Trail; H5. Camross Coolrain Trail; H6. Castletown Mountrath Trail</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>any bridge crossing and walkway proposal shall be subject to the requirements of the EIA, Habitats, Water Framework and Flood Directives where relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Objective 15.2 Support and facilitate the objectives of the Portarlington Town Park Masterplan.</p> <p>Objective 15.3 Support and facilitate the recommendations of the Derryounce 10-year Development Plan.</p> <p>Objective 15.4 Seek to integrate, where possible, existing green infrastructure into new development proposals to strengthen connectivity.</p> <p>Objective 15.5 Support the development of a visitor centre and associated visitor facilities at Derryounce and its potential to be trailhead for the Midlands Cycling Destination.</p> <p>Objective 15.6 Provide high quality directional and way finding signage for green infrastructure within Portarlington and its hinterlands.</p> <p>Objective 15.7 Enhance and develop essential infrastructure to support the growth of Derryounce as a visitor attraction.</p> <p>Objective 15.8 Seek to preserve and protect trees that have a particular local amenity, conservation or landscape value and require the planting of new native tree species in all new developments.</p> <p>Objective 15.9 Promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes respond to the ecological protection needs of each site.</p> <p>Objective 15.10 Promote, protect, and enhance sustainable and appropriate access to natural heritage in Portarlington and recognise the important role of natural heritage in the area, in terms of enhancing the image of the town and contributing to quality of life and</p>	<p>TRANS 51 Establish a new Woodenbridge Walking Trail linking Durrow and Ballacolla, subject to the Habitats' Directive</p> <p>BNH 23 Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries and laneways, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>LCA 17 Maintain the rivers throughout the county whilst ensuring that all works are carried out subject to appropriate environmental assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, site proposed to be designated and any additional sites that may be designated during the period of this Plan</p> <p>LCA 18 Preserve riverside historic features and their landscape settings. Conserve valuable habitats focused on and around river corridors and estuaries including European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 19 Recognise the potential constraints on development created by river flood plains and the value of these flood plains as increasingly rare habitats</p> <p>LCA 24 Conserve valuable habitats including any European and national designations</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Biodiversity and Designated Sites</p> <p>BNH 1 Protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity</p> <p>BNH 2 Conserve and protect habitats and species listed in the Annexes of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2010 (as amended) and the Flora Protection Orders.</p> <p>BNH 3 Support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage proposed or designated sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of Sites under National and European legislation and International Agreements and maintain and /develop linkages between them where feasible.</p> <p>BNH 4 Protect and maintain the conservation value of all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves in the county.</p> <p>BNH 5 Projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 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 not be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) ⁶⁷. Screening for AAs and AAs undertaken shall take into account invasive species as relevant.</p> <p>BNH 6 Assess, in accordance with the relevant legislation, all proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect or cumulative impact) on designated natural heritage sites, sites proposed for designation and protected species.</p> <p>BNH 7 Protect Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) from developments that would adversely affect their special interests.</p> <p>BNH 8 Recognise and protect the significant geological value of sites in County Laois and safeguard these sites, in consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland and in accordance with the National Heritage Plan and "Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry".</p> <p>BNH 9 Engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure Integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura sites (or parts thereof) and ensure that plans are fully integrated with the County Development Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.</p> <p>BNH 10 Support the objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 by encouraging the planting of pollinator friendly trees and plants within grass verges along public roads and existing and future greenways, new hedgerows, public parks and public open spaces in towns and villages, including part of mixed use and residential developments</p> <p>BNH 11 Support measures to protect Swift population such as the creation of Swift nest cavities in all new commercial and public buildings (schools/libraries, etc).</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows</p> <p>BNH 25 Undertake a study within the lifetime of the Plan and for all Local Area Plans to document and map significant trees and groups of trees that require preservation and prepare Tree Preservation Orders for individual trees, groups of trees or woodland areas where expedient and in the interests of visual amenity, biodiversity and the environment.</p> <p>BNH 26 Protect individual trees, groups of trees and woodland in the interests of landscape conservation (including townscapes) and nature conservation as part of the development management process</p> <p>BNH 27 Protect existing hedgerows, particularly of historical and archaeological importance of townland boundaries, from unnecessary removal in order to preserve the rural character of the countryside and promote biodiversity</p> <p>BNH 28 Ensure that hedgerow removal to facilitate development is kept to an absolute minimum and, where unavoidable, a requirement for mitigation planting will be required comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the original and where possible linking in to existing adjacent hedges. Native plants of a local provenance should be used for any such planting</p> <p>BNH 29 Promote and develop urban forests in parkland and street trees in urban settlements to enhance public realm and increase tree canopy coverage and diversity.</p> <p>BNH 30 Ensure that hedgerow and mature tree removal to facilitate development is kept to an absolute minimum and, where unavoidable, a requirement for mitigation planting will be required comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the</p>

⁶⁷ 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.

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>wellbeing, economic growth, tourism and recreation.</p> <p>Objective 15.11 Protect and preserve landscape features which significantly contribute to green infrastructure in Portarlington, including trees, hedgerows, woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, and other habitats.</p> <p>Objective 15.12 Support the provision of the proposed Green Infrastructure projects outlined in Figure x.</p> <p>Objective 15.13 Support and facilitate the objectives of a Derryounce Amenity Area.</p> <p>Objective 15.14 Support and facilitate the provision of a walkway / cycleway to enable safe crossing of the Spa Street bridge and to enable access from the Derryounce Amenity Area onto any future walkway of the banks of the River Barrow.</p> <p>Objective 15.15 Investigate the feasibility of a recreational pedestrian/ cycle route along the River Barrow.</p> <p>Objective 15.16 Support and facilitate any future extensions to the People's Park.</p> <p>Objective 15.17 Ensure the appropriate management of leisure activities in and adjacent to the River Barrow in order to ensure there is no impact on the distribution, populations or breeding grounds of the Qualifying Interests of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.</p> <p>Policy 15.7 To resist unnecessary removal of existing natural features, such as hedgerows and stands of trees in any new development proposals. Where possible, such features should be integrated into the design of schemes as one of the key onsite environmental considerations.</p>	<p>original and where possible linking in to existing adjacent hedges. Native plants of a local provenance should be used for any such planting</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Waterways and Wetlands</p> <p>BNH 31 Protect waterbodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, to ensure they are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the County's rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county.</p> <p>BNH 32 Promote and develop the Barrow Blueway initiative and work with State Agencies, landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to protect and manage inland waters, river corridors and their floodplains from degradation and damage, and to recognise and promote them as natural assets of the urban and rural environment</p> <p>BNH 33 Promote and facilitate the development of the Grand Canal for cycling, walking and nature study in conjunction with the relevant bodies including Waterways Ireland to enhance its amenity. Investigate the possibility of developing long distance walking routes/Greenway, within the lifetime of the Plan, along the disused Mountmellick Grand Canal Line.</p> <p>BNH 34 Protect riparian corridors by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors and maintain them free from inappropriate development. Where developments are proposed adjacent to waterways in previously undeveloped areas, the Planning Authority will require a general setback distance of a minimum of 10 metres from the waterways edge, subject to site-specific characteristics and the nature and design of the development. In previously developed areas, for example, within town centres, this general setback distance is likely to be reduced and should be part of any pre-planning consultations with the Council.</p> <p>BNH 35 Require that development along rivers set aside lands for pedestrian routes and cycleways that could link to the broader area and established settlements in the area.</p> <p>BNH 36 Provide for public access to waterways where feasible and appropriate, in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders, whilst maintaining them free from inappropriate development, subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as appropriate.</p> <p>BNH 37 Protect the Nore Pearl Mussel through the measures set out in the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Nore Sub-Basin Management Plan (2009).</p> <p>BNH 38 Protect the migration of fish in the River Barrow Nore SAC from high risk barriers such as weirs and bridge sills.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Peatlands</p> <p>BNH 40 The County Development will continue to support the objectives of the Strategic Framework for the Future use of Peatlands which identifies new potential future land uses and also seek to progress opportunities under Just Transition Fund.</p> <p>BNH 41 Protect the county's designated peatland areas and landscapes and to conserve and manage their ecological, archaeological, cultural, and educational heritage by promoting high environmental standards in conjunction with Bord na Mona, NPWS, IPPC, NGO's and local communities.</p> <p>BNH 42 Work with relevant agencies such as Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, Bord na Mona, NPWS, Coillte and adjacent Local Authorities to prepare an integrated afteruse framework and management plans for the peatlands and related infrastructure,</p> <p>BNH 43 Support the preparation of a Sustainable Holistic Management Plan for the future use of the Industrial Peatlands in the County, which recognises the role of peatlands in carbon sequestration.</p> <p>BNH 44 Support the designation of a National Park for the peatlands area in the Midlands in conjunction with adjoining Local Authorities.</p> <p>BNH 45 Undertake a feasibility study to identify peatways, where appropriate and examine the tourist potential of same such as a peatway link from Portarlington to the Grand Canal and River Barrow Greenway.</p> <p>BNH 46 Support relevant agencies to provide for the future sustainable and environmentally sensitive use of large industrial peatlands at Cuil Na Mona.</p> <p>Light Pollution Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 49 Ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised, thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species</p> <p>ES 50 Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas</p> <p>ES 51 Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Green Infrastructure</p> <p>BNH 19 Ensure that areas and networks of Green Infrastructure are identified, protected, enhanced, managed and created to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities.</p> <p>BNH 20 Develop and implement a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Laois in partnership with key stakeholders and the public which reflects a long-term perspective, including the need to adapt to climate change. Ensure the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Laois protects existing Green Infrastructure resources and plans for future Green Infrastructure provision</p> <p>BNH 21 Require all Local Area Plans and Master Plans to protect, enhance, provide and manage Green Infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner. Set targets for the provision of Green Infrastructure elements such as trees and green roofs as part of the preparation of Local Area Plans.</p> <p>BNH 22 Promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes respect and where possible enhances the ecological potential of each site</p> <p>BNH 23 Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries and laneways, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>BNH 24 To identify and map Green Infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Designated and Non-Designated Sites</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity.</p> <p>It is Council policy to conserve and protect habitats and species listed in the Annexes of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Wildlife Acts 1976 (as amended) and the Flora Protection Orders.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage proposed or designated sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and maintain the conservation value of all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves in the county.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and take account of any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and the Offaly Heritage Plan Key Actions 2017-2021 and future editions in partnership with relevant stakeholders subject to available resources.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with all state agencies to promote the development of all aspects of park management in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council that no plans, programmes 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).</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council that all projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and subsequent Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000. <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council in accordance with Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive and Regulation 27(4) of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 to strive to avoid pollution or deterioration of bird habitats outside Special Protection Areas.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to take account of the objective and management practices proposed in any management or related plans for European Sites (SACs and SPAs) in and adjacent to the county published by the Department including the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 and any subsequent editions.</p> <p>Peatlands</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect the county's designated peatland areas and landscapes, including any historical walkways through bogs and to conserve their ecological, archaeological and cultural heritage and to develop educational heritage.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with adjacent local authorities and relevant stakeholders in promoting a National Park designation for the peatlands in the midlands and a 'Regional Peatway' connecting natural and cultural attractions.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the provision of outdoor pursuits, walking and cycling routes through the county's peatlands and network of industrial railways linking the River Shannon Blueway, Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Barrow Blueway across the midlands as outlined in the 'Major Cycling Destination in the Midlands of Ireland –Feasibility Study 2016', which is a priority of the 'Outdoor Recreation Plan State Lands and Waters' (2017).</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the National Parks and Wildlife Service in carrying out an EU LIFE fund supported raised bog restoration project in restoring the following Special Areas of Conservation sites in the county to favourable conservation status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clara Bog; • Fermanagh Bog; • Mongan Bog;

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moyclare Bog; • Raheenmore Bog; and • Sharavogue Bog. <p>It is Council policy to support collaboration between Offaly County Council, Regional Transition Team and relevant stakeholders of a partnership approach to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporates the management, rehabilitation and restoration / re-wetting of significant tracts of peatlands in conjunction with appropriate developed after uses.</p> <p>Peatlands</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to require the preparation and submission of a Hydrological Report/Assessment for significant developments within and in close proximity to protected raised bogs and to take account of same in the assessment of impacts on the integrity of peatland ecosystems.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to work with relevant stakeholders on suitable peatland sites in order to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques to promote their heritage and educational value subject to ecological impact assessment and appropriate assessment screening.</p> <p>Waterways, Lakes and Wetlands</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect the landscape associated with the River Shannon, including the Callows and views of special interest, and also to encourage the development of Shannonbridge, Banagher and Shannon Harbour as focal points. It will also be Council policy to investigate the possibility of providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick, which takes account of the sensitive ecological nature of the Callows area.</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve riparian buffer strips free from development by reserving a minimum of 10 metres either side of all watercourses (measured from top of bank) with the full extent of the protection determined on a case by case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote clear span bridging structures as the preferred option for culverts Any development proposal requiring culverting should also document stream habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat where possible. Realignment of water courses should incorporate stream enhancement measures, as outlined in Office of Public Works Environmental Guidance. The Council will consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to riparian and instream works as appropriate.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote the removal of historic culverts and infilling of watercourses.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consider the Waterways Corridor Study 2002 and protect the recreational, educational and amenity potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the county, such as the Grand Canal Corridor, towpaths and adjacent wetland landscapes, taking into account more recent heritage and environmental legislation (including the SEA Directive) and environmental policy commitments.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to maintain a riparian zone for larger and smaller river channels based on the Inland Fisheries Ireland updated guideline document, 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment, a Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning'.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to (a) investigate the feasibility of and cooperate with relevant agencies in providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick, which takes account of the sensitive ecological nature of the Callows area and (b) to support the development of an overall vision/strategy for the Shannon Callows in co-operation with all stakeholders to ensure that the area is appropriately managed at a landscape scale.</p> <p>Trees, Forestry and Hedgerows</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the protection and management of existing networks of woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character, and to strengthen local networks.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the planting of native species in all new residential developments (individual and multiple units) and as part of landscaping for commercial and industrial developments.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require, where practical, the management of mature trees, such as tree surgery instead of felling particularly where the trees contribute to amenity.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to preserve individual trees and groups of trees that are included in Table 4.13 and 4.14.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees and woodlands of high value.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees, not listed in Table 4.13 and 4.14;</p> <p>(a) in particular, on the grounds of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes and on approaches to settlements in the county; and</p> <p>(b) as part of the development management process, require the planting of native, deciduous, pollinator friendly trees in all new developments where possible.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the county. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length and set back within the site in advance of the commencement of construction works on the site (unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority).</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to require all new developments to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (for example, through provision of swift boxes or towers, bat roost sites, green roofs, etc.) and provide ecological links to the wider Green Infrastructure</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>network as an essential part of the design process.</p> <p>All Ireland Pollinator Plan</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the aims and objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 and any subsequent editions by delivering appropriate management actions as set out in their guidance documents.</p> <p>Invasive Species</p> <p>It is Council policy to continue to deliver and support measures for the prevention, control and/or eradication of invasive species within the county, and to seek details of how these species will be managed and controlled where their presence is identified.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to require, as part of the planning application process, the appropriate eradication/control of invasive species when identified on site or in the vicinity of a site, in accordance with Regulation 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 to 2015.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to continue to maintain mapping identifying the location of invasive species in the county in conjunction with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.</p> <p>Light Pollution</p> <p>It is Council policy to require that the design of lighting schemes minimises the incidence of light pollution into the surrounding environment. New schemes shall ensure that there is no unacceptable adverse impact on residential or visual amenity and biodiversity in the surrounding area.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to seek to minimise the harmful effects of light pollution in the future provision of outdoor lighting, including investigating measures to improve the approach to street lighting and ensuring that new developments are lit appropriately and that environmentally sensitive areas are protected.</p> <p>Increases in visitor numbers</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek to manage any increases in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance and impacts on existing infrastructure. Visitor / habitat management plans will be required for proposed tourism projects as relevant and appropriate</p>
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>10.3.4 Energy Efficiency</p> <p>a) Low Carbon District Heating</p> <p>District Heating is a method of delivering thermal energy in the form of hot water through a network of highly insulated pipelines. District heating systems have the ability to distribute heat from many different sources, including heat sources that are typically seen as a by-product and usually go to waste, like the waste heat from electricity production, industry and data centres. This JLAP recognises the potential of District Heating Systems, where technically feasible and cost effective, to provide heating and hot water to houses and businesses at appropriate locations, where feasible, to assist in meeting renewable heat targets and reduce Irelands GHG emissions, reducing our dependency on fossil fuels and our carbon emissions as well as providing better air quality. It is envisaged that such local renewable energy systems will become a feature of towns such as Portarlington with support under the national Climate Action Plan. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provides supports/funding to communities in mapping their energy demands and potential energy resources in an 'Energy Master Plan'.</p> <p>Policy 13.11</p> <p>Require that all construction projects are</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>COMAH Policy Objectives</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>ES 55 Ensure that any COMAH sites in County Laois are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Seveso III Directive</p> <p>ES 56 Have regard to the following in assessing applications for new developments (including extensions);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Major Accidents Directive Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU); The potential effects on public health and safety; The need to ensure adequate distances between such developments and residential areas, areas of public use and any areas of sensitivity <p>ES 57 Any proposals for developments within the vicinity of major accident hazard sites shall have cognisance of the required minimum separation distances as required by the Major Accidents Directive. In this regard all future proposals of this nature shall be forwarded to the Health and Safety Authority</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Human Health</p> <p>It is Council policy to assess, as relevant, proposals for development in terms of, inter alia, potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, mitigation measures shall be introduced in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level. Application of this policy will take into account instances whereby activities are licensed by other bodies through other processes (such as Integrated Pollution Control Licensing or Industrial Emissions Licensing).</p> <p>Major Accidents Directive – Seveso III</p> <p>It is Council policy, for the purposes of preventing / reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident involving dangerous substances, to have regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive, and any regulations under any enactment giving effect to that Directive, and the recommendations of the Health and Safety Authority, in the control of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The siting of new establishments; The modification of existing establishments; and Development within the consultation distance of such establishments. <p>Radon</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the implementation of the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Plan).</p> <p>Wind Farms</p> <p>It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> have regard to the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change 2017 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 which are expected to be finalised in the near future; have regard to 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' in the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy; the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4; have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation.

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		carried out in accordance with EPA's Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects (2021), and any subsequent amendments.	
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. Potential for riverbank erosion. 	Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water and Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna.	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>ES 32 Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality. Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided. <p>Soil Quality Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 52 Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality</p> <p>ES 53 Recognise the significant impacts of land use, land use change and sludge generation and treatment in relation to carbon loss/stocks and recognise the function of soil assessment and management, carbon sinks, carbon sequestration and restoration of degraded lands in plan led settlement and development strategies</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Geology</p> <p>GEO 1 Work with stakeholders to protect, preserve, enhance, maintain, manage, conserve, recognise and, where appropriate, restore the character conservation value and integrity of these sites for their amenity, scientific, heritage and historic values (including County Geological Sites listed in Table 28, proposed NHA's, areas near site and areas of geomorphological interest</p> <p>GEO 2 Protect geological NHAs as they become designated and notified to the Local Authority, during the lifetime of the Plan;</p> <p>GEO 3 Promote and encourage, where practicable and when not in conflict with ownership rights, access to geological and geomorphological features</p> <p>GEO 4 Encourage and facilitate the development of geo-tourism by conserving and managing geological resources, and by the development of a Rock Trail (named), Geoparks or other similar geo-tourism initiatives</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Eskers</p> <p>GEO 5 Protect, preserve and conserve the landscape and natural heritage and geo-diversity values of esker systems from inappropriate development. Ensure that any plan or project affecting eskers are adequately assessed with regard to their potential impact on the environment</p> <p>GEO 6 Assess applications for quarrying activity and gravel extraction and other development in proximity to eskers, with respect to their landscape importance or amenity value and the need to conserve them free from inappropriate development and to conserve their environmental character values and the extent to which proposals would damage these qualities.</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation</p> <p>Offaly County Council require that all undeveloped, contaminated sites be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment (i.e. brownfield development). Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) (waste licence, waste facility permit), and the Environmental Protection Act 1992 (as amended) (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste). These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.</p> <p>Geology, Eskers and Quarries</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect from inappropriate development and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest as contained in the scheduled list of geological heritage sites identified in Table 4.11 Offaly Geological Sites.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage, where practical and when not in conflict with ownership rights, access to geological features in the county.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and conserve the landscape, natural heritage and biodiversity value of esker systems in the county as identified in the Offaly Esker Study, 2006.</p> <p>It is Council policy to assess the impact of proposals for quarry development on nearby eskers, with reference to their status or relative importance, for example, amenity, landscape and scientific value in the context of the overall esker system.</p> <p>It is Council policy to recognise the natural heritage value of disused quarries as rich habitats and to encourage landowners to preserve quarries post extraction as habitats rather than levelling or infilling the quarry area where possible subject to health and safety considerations and the protection of the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interests and integrity of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect county geological sites and mushroom stones identified in Table 4.11 Schedule of County Geological Sites identified by the Irish Geological Heritage Programme for Protection in County Offaly.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to increase pedestrian and cycling access to esker and geological sites in turn increasing appreciation of esker and geological heritage, where possible, subject to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to consider, in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Westmeath County Council, the Geological Survey of Ireland and others, the potential designation of the north Offaly esker landscape as a UNESCO Geopark, to promote the unique geological heritage of the area.</p>

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Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>Objective 6.8 Develop and improve flood mitigation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland.</p> <p>Policy 10.6 Require that all development proposals in Portarlington integrate SUDS, and nature-based solutions to SUDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Objective 12.8 Investigate the feasibility, including compliance with NPF National Strategic Outcome No. 4 "Sustainable Mobility", of providing future relief roads as indicated on the Objectives Map taking into account environmental sensitivities identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan and the Offaly County Development Plan. The development of any relief road proposal shall be subject to the requirements of the EIA, Habitats, Water Framework and Flood Directives where relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Policy 13.1 Require that new developments connect to the public water and wastewater networks in Portarlington where public mains are available, and subject to connection agreements with Uisce Éireann and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>Policy 13.2 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Uisce Éireann to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments.</p> <p>Policy 13.3 Preserve free from development the wayleaves of all public sewers and all public water mains.</p> <p>Policy 13.4 Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Portarlington by promoting the use of natural flood risk management measures including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Policy 13.5 Require the submission of a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), by a suitably qualified and</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>ABT 6 Promote and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the habitats and Birds Directives, sustainable developing and improving of facilities and infrastructure supporting water based tourism activities, (including shore side interpretive centres and jetties). Development proposals outside settlement centres will be required to demonstrate a need to locate in the area and will be required to ensure that the ecological integrity and water quality of the river or lake, including lakeshore and riparian habitats, is not adversely affected by the development</p> <p>WS 3 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.</p> <p>WS 21 Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.</p> <p>Water Quality Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 17 Implement the provisions of water pollution abatement measures in accordance with National and EU Directives and other legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate</p> <p>ES 18 Maintain and improve the water quality in rivers and other water courses in the county, including ground waters. The Council will have cognizance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>ES 19 Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from domestic wastewater treatment systems and other potentially polluting sources. The Council will comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009) and the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code for Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels'</p> <p>ES 20 Assist and support with the Blue Dots Catchment Programme which been established under the current River Basin Management Plan specifically for the protection and restoration of high ecological status water bodies</p> <p>ES 21 Ensure the protection of all High Status Water Bodies in the county by complying with the requirements of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended), the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations.</p> <p>WS 22 Ensure where private wastewater treatment systems are permitted by virtue of their remoteness from Public Wastewater Schemes to serve commercial and business developments, e.g Motorway Service Stations, Tourism and the Hospitality Sector etc, that their performance is monitored and audited so that they are operated in compliance with their wastewater discharge license, in order to protect water quality.</p> <p>Groundwater Protection Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 23 Ensure, through the implementation of the relevant River Basin Management Plan and their associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county</p> <p>ES 24 Protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and control development in a manner consistent with the proper management of these resources, in accordance with the County Water Source Protection Zones</p> <p>ES 25 Assist and co-operate with the EPA, LAWPRO and IW in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive</p> <p>ES 26 Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from septic tanks and other potentially polluting sources through compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009).</p> <p>ES 27 Ensure the protection of groundwater dependant Natura 2000 sites which rely on the continued supply of groundwater resources to secure the key environmental conditions that support the integrity of the site and through the protection of groundwater standards as defined by the National River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 (and any subsequent Plan). Where no detailed Plan for protection of a specific source is available wastewater discharge will not be permitted within a radius of 200 metres of that source</p> <p>ES 28 Ensure that Source Protection Areas are identified for any public and group scheme water supplies or multiple unit housing developments with private water supplies;</p> <p>ES 29 Continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended) and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the Surface Water Legislation Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations</p> <p>ES 30 Ensure that all industrial development is appropriately located, to seek effluent reduction and 'clean production' where feasible, and require that waste water treatment facilities are adequate, and that effluents are treated and discharged in a satisfactory manner</p> <p>ES 31 New developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in an Extreme Vulnerability Inner Source Protection Area shall be restricted to the following categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A dwelling for a full-time farmer; An existing inhabited dwelling in need of replacement; A second family dwelling on a farm where this is required for management of the farm <p>Permission may be granted in the above instances subject to the following stipulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That an alternative site outside the Extreme vulnerability Inner Protection Area is not available

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>indemnified professional, in areas at risk of flooding in Portarlington. The assessment shall be prepared in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (and any future revisions or updates to these Guidelines).</p> <p>Objective 13.1 Support Uisce Éireann in the provision of a sufficient quantity and quality of water to serve the needs of the existing and future population of Portarlington over the period of the Plan and in accordance with the Core Strategies of Laois and Offaly County Councils, and to promote the sustainable management of the water supply for the town.</p> <p>Objective 13.2 Support the investment and provision of public water supply infrastructure by Uisce Éireann, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades to water treatment plants and the associated public mains water network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.3 Support wastewater treatment infrastructure investment and provision by Uisce Éireann in Portarlington, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the associated wastewater network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.4 Manage flood risk in Portarlington in conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), Circular PL02/2014, and any future revisions or updates to these Guidelines.</p> <p>Objective 13.7 (please let me know if numbering is different): Ensure that developments, individually as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments, will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the European Water Framework Directive and Ireland's "Water Action Plan 2024: River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027"</p>	<p>b) The existing water quality of the source is not subject to any significant nitrate and /or microbiological contamination c) The existing water quality of the groundwater source is in compliance with the environmental objectives set out in relevant River Basin District Management Plan.</p> <p>ES 32 Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality. Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements: a) The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands b) Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided.</p> <p>ES 33 Encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets, European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017, as amended and comply with the relevant River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>ES 34 Consult as necessary with other competent authorities with responsibility for environmental management ES 35 To work in co-operation with relevant organisations and major stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the county's water resources ES 36 Ensure that developments that may adversely affect water quality will not proceed unless mitigation measures are employed, such as settlements ponds, interceptors etc ES 37 Promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect both surface water and groundwater bodies Flood Risk Management Policy Objectives FRM 1 Ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of all local area plans through the preparation in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009) FRM 2 Ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG 2009) and to ensure that the Justification Test for Development Management is applied to required development proposals and in accordance with methodology set out in the guidelines and new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff. FRM 3 Support the implementation of recommendations in the CFRAM Programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented. FRM 4 Support the implementation of recommendations in the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP's), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk. FRM 5 Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and to retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto. FRM 6 Assist the OPW in developing catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans for rivers in County Laois and have regard to their provisions/recommendations. FRM 7 Protect and enhance the County's floodplains and wetlands as 'green infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defenses in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria. FRM 8 Protect the integrity of any formal (OPW or Laois County Council) flood risk management infrastructure, thereby ensuring that any new development does not negatively impact any existing defense infrastructure or compromise any proposed new infrastructure. FRM 9 Ensure that where flood risk management works take place that the natural and cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced. FRM 10 Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Flood Risk Management applicable at the time. FRM 11 Consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the provision of flood alleviation measures in the County. FRM 12 Prioritise plans for flood defence works in the towns as indicated in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in order to mitigate against potential flood risk; FRM 13 Ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff; FRM 14 Protect water sinks because of their flood management function, as well as their biodiversity and amenity value and encourage the restoration or creation of water sinks as flood defence mechanisms, where appropriate Surface Water and Drainage Policy Objectives SWD 1 Support in conjunction with Irish Water the improvement of storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments. SWD 2 Implement policies contained in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) in relation to SUDS and climate change. SWD 3 Ensure new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure which meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, associated River Basin Management Plans and CFRAM Management Plans. SWD 4 Require that planning applications are accompanied by a comprehensive SUDs assessment that addresses run-off quantity, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality. SWD 5 Ensure that in public and private developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm, seek to minimise and limit</p>

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		<p>(DHLGH, 2024). Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action. Policy 10.14 Ensure that surface water management in new developments, and the design of nature-based solutions, in line with Policy 13.4, reflect the following guidance: • Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Water Discharges, A National Strategy (May 2024) • "Implementation of Urban Nature Based Solutions -Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO (November 2024) Policy 13.10 Support the mitigation measures outlined in Part 3 of the Justification Tests that: a) Within Flood Zones A and B, highly vulnerable development is limited to extensions, rebuilds and changes of use until the Flood Relief Scheme is completed; and b) Within Flood Zones A and B, bedrooms must be located in the upstairs of two story buildings when extending existing properties; Policy 13.12 Ensure that surface water management in new developments, and the design of nature-based solutions, in line with Policy 13.4, reflect the following guidance: • Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Water Discharges, A National Strategy (May 2024) • "Implementation of Urban Nature Based Solutions -Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO (November 2024) Policy 13.13 Development within flood risks areas shall be limited to that appropriate to the level of flood risk, as identified in Map 3 (Land use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning) in accordance with the provisions of the Planning system and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended. New development within this area is limited to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A</p>	<p>the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks. SWD 6 Ensure appropriate maintenance of surface water drainage infrastructure to avoid flood risk. SWD 7 Ensure that all storm water generated in a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved storm water system; SWD 8 Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and to incorporate design solutions that provide for collection and recycling of surface water in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as recommended in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009) and Laois County Council's Roads and Drainage Standards, or as amended. Offaly County Development Plan Water Quality/Status It is Council policy to ensure that the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and any subsequent Water Management Plans are fully considered throughout the planning process. It is Council policy to manage, protect and enhance surface water and ground water quality to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. It is Council policy to support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and the Local Authority Waters Programme in achieving and maintaining at least good environmental status for all water bodies in the county. Development proposals shall not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands. It is Council policy that in assessing applications for developments, that consideration is had to the impact on the quality of surface waters having regard to targets and measures set out in the River Basin Management Plan, and any subsequent local or regional plans. It is Council policy that all proposed development which may have an impact on a high status water quality site will require site specific assessment to determine localised pressures and demonstrate suitable mitigation measures in order to protect these sites. It is Council policy to promote and comply with the environmental standards and objectives established for: (i) Bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, made to give effect to the measures needed to achieve the environmental objectives established for bodies of surface water by the European Water Framework Directive; and (ii) Groundwater, by the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010, made to give effect to the measures needed to achieve the environmental objectives established for groundwater by the European Water Framework and Groundwater Directives, for which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plan. It is Council policy to protect groundwater sources through the implementation of the Groundwater Protection Scheme and Source Protection Zones. Development proposals within these zones which have the potential to pose a risk to groundwater will be required to demonstrate that no reasonable alternative site is available and that groundwater quality will be protected to the satisfaction of the Council. It is Council policy to encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan. It is an objective of the Council to ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan, and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county. It is an objective of the Council to protect through its regulatory controls and in conjunction with the Local Authority Waters Programme, water bodies with 'high ecological status'; to restore water bodies that have fallen below 'high ecological status'; to maintain water bodies at 'Good Status'; and to mitigate threats to water bodies identified as 'At Risk' i.e. 'Moderate and Poor Status'. It is an objective of the Council to protect both ground and surface water resources; to work with Irish Water to develop and implement Drinking Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment; and to work with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes in respect of Source Protection Plans for Group Water Schemes to protect these sources. It is an objective of the Council to comply with the Blue Dot Catchments Programme. It is Council policy to ensure that agricultural developments are designed and constructed in a manner that will ensure that groundwater watercourses and sources of potable water are protected from the threat of pollution in line with Water Quality Regulations and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. Sustainable urban drainage systems and Surface Water It is Council policy to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) where appropriate, for new developments or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks. Flood Risk Management It is Council policy to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive, the Flood Risk Regulations (S.I. No. 122 of 2010) and the 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version. It is Council policy to protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard DMS-106. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test and site-specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria set out under with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 and Circular PL2/2014 (as updated/superseded). In Flood Zone C, (See DMS-106 where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific</p>

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		<p>and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.</p> <p>Section 16.12 Designations (Offaly) Constrained Land Uses (Offaly) Flood risk areas are represented by a 'Constrained Land Use' designation (shown in Map 3: Land Use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning). This designation generally limits new development, but will facilitate existing development uses within these areas that may require small scale development such as small extensions. Development proposals within these areas shall be accompanied by a site specific flood risk assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>Proposals shall only be considered favourably where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations and be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.</p> <p>Table 23: Land Use Zoning Objectives – Offaly (c) Land Use Zoning Objective – Constrained Land Uses It is an objective of the Council to: Facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as 'Constrained Land Use' in the zoning map in accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for</p>	<p>Flood Risk Assessment may be required and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed. The County Plan SFRA datasets (including Benefitting Lands mapping), emerging CFRAMS mapping (including National Indicative Fluvial mapping), and the most up to date CFRAM Programme climate scenario mapping should be consulted by prospective planning applicants and the planning authority in determining planning applications.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require a Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding (fluvial, pluvial or groundwater), even for developments deemed appropriate in principle to the particular Flood Zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The assessments shall consider and provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW Draft Guidance on Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management (or any superseding document) and available information from the CFRAM Studies shall be consulted with to this effect.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that applications to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following - floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the county, from risk of flooding. Any potential future variations to the Plan shall consider, as appropriate any new and/or emerging data, including, when available, any relevant information contained in the CFRAMS Flood Risk Management Plans and as recommended in the SFRA for the Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to have regard to the findings and recommendations of the current Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared as part of the County Development Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and the Council will retain a strip of 10 metres on either side of such channel where required, to facilitate access thereto.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the construction of flood alleviation measures in Offaly.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with the OPW and other relevant Departments and agencies to implement the recommendations of the CFRAM programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented, and to also work with catchment-based Flood Planning Groups, (including where catchments go beyond the Council's administrative boundary) in the development and implementation of catchment-based strategies for the management of flood risk – including those relating to storage and conveyance.</p> <p>It is Council policy that where resources are available and subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Council will contribute towards the improvement and / or restoration of the natural flood risk management functions of flood plains.</p> <p>It is Council policy to take account of and incorporate into local planning policy and decision making, including possible future variations to this plan, the recommendations of the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of Local Area Plans in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of the Birr, Portarlington and Rahan Flood Relief Schemes and other schemes that may be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>12.6.1 Constrained Land Uses Flood risk areas in settlement plans are represented by a 'Constrained Land Use' designation. This designation generally limits new development, but will facilitate existing development uses within these areas that may require small scale development such as small extensions. Development proposals within these areas shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>Proposals shall only be considered favourably where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations and be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.</p> <p>LUZO-14 Facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as 'Constrained Land Use' on Settlement Plan zoning maps.</p> <p>13.8.3 Flood Risk Assessment The Council will have regard to the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Local Authorities (DEHLG and OPW 2009) when assessing planning applications. The key requirements for the management of development in areas at risk of flooding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All development proposals within or incorporating areas at moderate to high risk of flooding will require site specific and appropriately detailed Flood Risk Assessments. • All development proposals within or incorporating areas at moderate or high risk of flooding will require the application of the Development Management Justification Test in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009). • Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle shall demonstrate the use of the sequential approach to inform the site layout and design of development. Proposals shall also demonstrate that mitigation and management measures can be put in place and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

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		Planning Authorities (2009), as amended, in consultation with the OPW. New development within this area is limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.	DMO-106 Flood Risk Assessments
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<p>Also refer to Section 8.5 of this SEA Environmental Report "Interactions with Climate Mitigation and Adaptation".</p> <p>Also refer to various provisions relating to Transport and Movement</p> <p>Policy 10.1</p> <p>Support the implementation of International and National objectives on climate action including the Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) and any subsequent updates, the National Adaption Framework, Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (and any amending legislation) and both the Laois Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 and the Offaly Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (and any updated Plans).</p> <p>Policy 10.2</p> <p>Support the transition of Portarlington to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency and conservation.</p> <p>Policy 10.3</p> <p>Secure climate resilience and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Portarlington by actively implementing policies which support integrated land use planning and sustainable travel, and maximise such opportunities through development location, form, layout, and design.</p> <p>Policy 10.4</p> <p>Support the effective and efficient use of land in Portarlington, prioritising compact growth through the development and regeneration of vacant and underutilised brownfield/infill land and buildings within the existing built-up footprint of the town.</p> <p>Policy 10.5</p> <p>Secure climate resilience and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Portarlington through support for urban</p>	<p>Also refer to Section 8.5 of this SEA Environmental Report "Interactions with Climate Mitigation and Adaptation". Climate Action is provided for throughout the Plan, and is focused upon at Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy".</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>Air Quality Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 38 Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>ES 39 Encourage more sustainable modes of transport and a more balanced modal split to reduce carbon emissions</p> <p>ES 40 Encourage the use of appropriate mitigation measures, such as dust dampeners, chimney stack scrubbers, etc. to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality</p> <p>ES 41 Require developments of a certain nature to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality</p> <p>ES 42 Ensure the implementation of the radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations</p> <p>Noise Pollution Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 42 Require an assessment of impact of the developments on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications</p> <p>ES 43 Support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006</p> <p>ES 44 Ensure that relevant planning applications comply with the provisions of any Noise Action Plan or noise maps relating to the area.</p> <p>ES 45 Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards</p> <p>ES 46 Regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA.</p> <p>ES 47 Ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to submit a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.</p> <p>ES 48 Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Air Quality</p> <p>It is Council policy to manage air quality in accordance with relevant legislation and policy.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011, or any updated/superseding documents.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require activities likely to give rise to air emissions to implement measures to control such emissions and to undertake air quality monitoring. Application of this policy will take into account instances whereby activities are licensed by other bodies through other processes (such as Integrated Pollution Control Licensing or Industrial Emissions Licensing).</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for the county.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to actively promote measures to reduce air pollution and combat climate change including promotion of energy efficient buildings, cleaner home heating, green infrastructure, active and public transport modes, electric vehicles and innovative design solutions.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to promote sustainable design and construction to help reduce emissions from the demolition and construction of buildings.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to work with relevant agencies to support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring.</p> <p>Noise</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive and associated regulations through the Offaly County Council Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 and any subsequent Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. Planning permission will not normally be granted for new uses / development or extensions of existing uses that produce significant and unacceptable levels of noise and/or vibration at site boundaries or within adjacent noise sensitive areas, especially residential areas.</p> <p>It is Council policy that noise sensitive development proposals located within proximity to a noise source, such as an existing or proposed national road, should include noise attenuation measures.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>regeneration projects and interventions, including the implementation of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'.</p> <p>Policy 10.6 Require that all development proposals in Portarlington integrate SUDS, and nature-based solutions to SUDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Policy 10.7 Require the use of renewable energy technologies in residential, commercial and community developments.</p> <p>Policy 10.8 Support and facilitate the installation of lower carbon and low carbon heating options including district heating systems as a decarbonising technology in new developments in Portarlington, subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.</p> <p>Policy 10.9 Support construction of green routes/cycleways/pedestrian routes throughout the town.</p> <p>Policy 10.10 Support the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electrical vehicles throughout the town, both on street and in new developments, in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.</p> <p>Policy 10.11 In conjunction with the appropriate prescribed bodies, to investigate the feasibility of providing Wetland areas as shown in Appendix 10 (Map 4 – Green Infrastructure) taking into account the environmental sensitivities of the site and Inland Fisheries Guidance document, Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment.</p> <p>Policy 10.12 Support and facilitate the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan, in particular, the development of the electrification of heating</p> <p>Policy 10.13 Support the potential of district heating, including district heating delivered from waste heat, where available, technically feasible and cost effective.</p>	<p>Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation It is Council policy to support and facilitate European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions); • National Mitigation Plan 2017 (or subsequent editions); • National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions); • Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and • Offaly Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. <p>It is Council policy to support the implementation and provision of the decarbonisation projects listed in Table 3.2 of the County Development Plan. It is Council policy to raise general awareness of issues associated with climate action and climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is Council policy to support local, regional, national and international initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation and to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources which make use of all natural resources, including publicly owned lands, in an environmentally acceptable manner. It is Council policy to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency. It is Council policy to support the National Dialogue on Climate Action in an effort to increase awareness of climate change, behavioural change and adaptation actions and in doing so provide an ongoing platform for planning climate resilience with a focus on personal responsibility at all levels. It is Council policy to support the creation of a Sustainable Development Trust, through Green Offaly, a Public Participation Network Initiative, which facilitates, creates and assists in the delivery of Green Projects and Programmes by working in partnership with all sectors of the local community. It is Council policy to cooperate with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) in respect of adaptation and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, and future climate change adaptation strategies. CAEP-15 It is Council policy to support the enhancement of carbon sinks such as peatlands, forestry, and permanent grasslands, with consideration of in conjunction with other climate mitigation actions such as the re-wetting and restoration of cut away peatlands, where appropriate. CAEO-01 It is an objective of the Council to implement the current Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for County Offaly. CAEO-02 It is an objective of the Council to consider a variation of the development plan within a reasonable period of time, or to include such other mechanism, as may be appropriate, to ensure that the development plan will be consistent with the approach to climate action recommended in the revised Development Plan Guidelines as adopted or any relevant guidelines. Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility and Integrated Transport and Landuse Planning It is Council policy to proactively encourage decarbonisation of local journeys by focusing on compact growth and reduced sprawl by targeting infill and brownfield lands in the existing built-up footprint of settlements. It is Council policy to improve walking and cycling connectivity within settlements and in particular with schools, town centres and employment areas, and to work with the National Trails Office, Coillte, the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking and cycling in this regard. Green Infrastructure It is Council policy to maintain existing green infrastructure and encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of open space amenities; • Sustainable management of water; • Protection and management of biodiversity; • Protection of cultural heritage; and • Protection of protected landscape sensitivities. <p>Economic Development: Climate Action REDP-15 It is Council policy to support the agricultural sector to employ green technologies in the provision of its goods and services, while taking measures to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy. REDP-16 It is Council policy to encourage the development of environmentally sustainable practices with a low carbon footprint, particularly agriculture, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the open countryside and that groundwater, watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution. REDP-17 It is Council policy to support the development of renewable energy in rural areas, where it is considered appropriate i.e. where it is demonstrated that such development would not result in significant environmental effects. Such development will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. REDP-18 It is Council policy to encourage state and private afforestation, both native broadleaf and coniferous species, in appropriate locations, in co-operation with Coillte and the Forest Service and in line with national policy and Forest Service Guidelines. In addition, it is policy to encourage the Forest Service to avoid a proliferation of new forest road entrances, particularly in Areas of High Amenity.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Objective 10.1 Support, in conjunction with key stakeholders, the implementation of the Climate Action Plans for County Laois and County Offaly, and to facilitate their role as a driver in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation in Portarlington, and the translation of national climate policy to local and community levels in the town.</p> <p>Objective 10.2 Leverage all available funding streams which will support and deliver urban regeneration outcomes in Portarlington which seek to secure climate resilience and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the town.</p>	<p>Traffic and Transport Assessment A Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) must examine the traffic and transport impacts of a proposed development, incorporating any subsequent measures necessary to ensure roads and junctions and other transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the development are adequate to accommodate the proposed development without causing additional delays to existing and future road based traffic. A TTA is important in demonstrating how to encourage a shift towards sustainable travel modes by those using the retail development in question. The TTA must also address urban design impacts of the proposed public and private transport proposals. A TTA will be required for retail developments over a threshold of 1,000sq.m. gross floorspace; and, at the discretion of the Planning Authority, a TTA may be required for retail developments below this threshold.</p>
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors and various Land Use provisions.</p> <p>Policy 10.6 Require that all development proposals in Portarlington integrate SUDS, and nature-based solutions to SUDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Policy 13.1 Require that new developments connect to the public water and wastewater networks in Portarlington where public mains are available, and subject to connection agreements with Uisce Éireann and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>Policy 13.2 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Uisce Éireann to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments.</p> <p>Policy 13.3 Preserve free from development the wayleaves of all public sewers and all public water mains.</p> <p>Policy 13.4 Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Portarlington by promoting the use of natural flood risk management measures including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Objective 13.1 Support Uisce Éireann in the provision of a sufficient quantity and quality of water to serve the needs of the</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors and various Land Use provisions.</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan Public Water Supply Policy Objectives</p> <p>WS 1 Continue in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that a Safe and Reliable Water Supply by managing the sustainability and quality of drinking water from source to tap to protect human health</p> <p>WS 2 Provide for Resilience in Public Water Schemes and support social and economic growth and meet customer demands particularly during drought conditions by working with IW to deliver on the following priority schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portlaoise PWS – Bring into production the 3 non-producing Boreholes in Coolbanagher and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply; Portarlington PWS – Bring into Production Borehole(s) and Treatment Plant in the Doolough Wellfield and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply and Swan PWS – Bring into Production the Borehole and Treatment Plant at Tollerton. <p>WS 3 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.</p> <p>WS 4 Work with Irish Water to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service zoned development and to require developers to engage with IW in a timely fashion by way of submitting a pre-connection enquiry form to IW.</p> <p>WS 5 Laois County Council will not permit developments of greater than one dwelling which propose standalone developer provided waste water infrastructure in areas remote from Public Water Schemes</p> <p>WS 6 Work with IW to minimise wastage of water supply by requiring existing and new developments to incorporate water conservation measures</p> <p>WS 7 Promote and encourage the harvesting of rainwater to meet non-potable water needs</p> <p>WS 8 Implement Energy Efficiency solutions in Water Systems;</p> <p>WS 9 Encourage industrial and commercial developments with small private water supplies to connect to the public water schemes where technically and financially feasible.</p> <p>WS 10 Ensure Water Conservation through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out further Mains Replacement programmes; Continue with validation of District Metre Areas(DMA's) Carry out focused Find and Fix Programmes to achieve target volumetric reductions in accordance with IW's targets. <p>WS11 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Water and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>WS 12 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol and with the NFGWS on an agreed programme with the Local Authority to take in charge Public Group Water Scheme and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>WS 13 Secure the future sustainability of Laois County Council's INAB Accredited Laboratory and enhance the accreditation status of the Laboratory in order to develop the Laboratory into one of 4 Regional Local Authority Accredited Laboratories nationally.</p> <p>Public Wastewater Objectives</p> <p>WS14 Support and facilitate social and economic growth in line with National, Regional and Local spatial planning policy and the Core Strategy in Chapter 2 of this plan through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure 1: Facilitate Growth: Wastewater Growth Programme: -

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	<p>of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter.</p>	<p>existing and future population of Portarlington over the period of the Plan and in accordance with the Core Strategies of Laois and Offaly County Councils, and to promote the sustainable management of the water supply for the town.</p> <p>Policy 13.6 Require the incorporation of sustainable waste management measures within developments, including the provision of adequately sized facilities for the storage, separation, and collection of waste and recyclable materials.</p> <p>Policy 13.7 Require the use of renewable energy technologies in residential, commercial and community developments.</p> <p>Policy 13.8 Facilitate, promote and encourage the expansion and improvement of telecommunications, broadband (including the rollout of 5g), electricity and gas networks infrastructure.</p> <p>Policy 13.9 Support the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town.</p> <p>Policy 13.11 Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with EPA's Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects (2021), and any subsequent amendments.</p> <p>Objective 13.2 Support the investment and provision of public water supply infrastructure by Uisce Éireann, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades to water treatment plants and the associated public mains water network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.3 Support wastewater treatment infrastructure investment and provision by Uisce Éireann in Portarlington, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the associated wastewater network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.5 Promote and support sustainable forms of waste management by households, communities, and businesses, including</p>	<p>Upgrade to the Portlaoise WWTP – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study.</p> <p>Roll-out agreed priorities for IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent Programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure 2: Network and Treatment Programmes: Roll-out improvements to network in Portlaoise WW Network as identified in the Portlaoise Drainage Area Plan (DAP). Complete DPAs for Portarlington and Mountmellick Wastewater Networks and complete modeling for improvements to these networks. Measure 3: Irish Water Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme Under IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent programmes agree priorities for delivering upgrades/replacements of WWTPs with insufficient headroom or plants that are non-compliant and damaging to the receiving environment so as to enhance and provide for growth in small towns and villages throughout the county. <p>WS 15 Work in conjunction with Irish Water and with the DHPLG during the lifetime of the plan for the provision, extension and upgrading of waste water collection and treatment systems in the County that have existing facilities to serve existing populations and facilitate sustainable development of those towns, in accordance with the requirements of the Settlement Strategy and associated Core Strategy. In particular</p> <p>A. Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Compliance (EPA Licensed Plants)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete upgrade to Portlaoise – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study; Upgrades to Ballinakill; Ballyroan – Phase 3, 4 and 5; Castletown – Sludge and Storm Tank Programmes; Mountmellick – Ortho P and Ammonia Compliance <p>B. Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive Compliance: Complete upgrades to COA WWTPs (plants with <500pe design) under the National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP) on a priority basis as agreed with the Local Authority.</p> <p>WS 16 Promote use of wetland systems for treatment of waste-water in accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines "Integrated Constructed Wetlands –Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications" [2010].</p> <p>WS 17 Deliver Energy efficient Capital Programmes where appropriate and as follows</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Borris-in-Ossory – Install Fine Bubble Diffused Aeration <p>WS 18 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Wastewater Infrastructure and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>Rural Water and Wastewater Policy Objectives</p> <p>WS 19 Work in conjunction with the NFGWSs and with the support and funding of the DHPLG by way of the Rural Water Multi-Annual Programme 2019 to 2021 and subsequent programmes to - through various measures - improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for rural dwellers where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.</p> <p>WS 20 Support, monitor, advise and administer Group Water Schemes on behalf of the DHPLG in conjunction with the NFGWSs by implementation of Source Protection Works, Water Treatment Improvements, Amalgamation/Rationalisation of schemes and administering of Capital Replacement Costs</p> <p>WS 21 Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.</p> <p>WS 22 Embed water conservation at the heart of water policy through prioritising resource management, abstraction control, source protection, tackling leakage and encouraging behavioural change.</p> <p>WS 23 Promoting water conservation and water resource management reflected in investment for leak detection and repair, network improvements, cost effective metering and awareness campaigns among the GWS.</p> <p>WS 24 Ensuring that rural water services investment decisions are aligned with the broad strategic aims of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework and Improve the resilience of rural water supplies by supporting the implementation OF ing the following measures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> New Group Water Schemes and extensions Transition of Group Water and Group Sewerage schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Water Sector Community Connections (Water & Wastewater) Networks Innovation and Research. <p>WS 25 Ensure that the scheme relating to private wells is administered effectively and that improvements to sources and/or treatment works are carried out in accordance with IW and EPA standards</p> <p>WS 26 Work in conjunction with stakeholders through various measures to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for consumers of Small Private Supplies where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.</p> <p>WS 27 Support, monitor, advise and raise awareness among owner/operators of SPSs of the their duties as water suppliers under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 as amended to ensure that a safe and dependable water supply is available to those persons who avail of the service (Customers/service users/children etc).</p> <p>WS 28 Collaborate with stakeholders including LA Water and Environmental Services staff, the HSE, LEO staff, Laois Chamber, representatives from the educational, tourist, childcare and hospitality sectors to raise awareness among their members of the duties of the Owners/Operators in relation to the provision of clean and wholesome drinking water</p> <p>WS 29 Maintain and update its register of SPSs and will focus their enforcement powers on those schemes that are non-compliant with the Drinking Water</p>

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		<p>waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling, and recovery.</p> <p>Objective 13.6</p> <p>Secure high-quality digital connectivity in Portarlington in line with the National Broad Band Plan and enable digital technology.</p> <p>Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.</p>	<p>Regulations by carrying out Audits on these schemes and by further enforcement measures if improvements are not implemented. Where the option exists to connect to a public water supply, the water supplier will be encouraged to make an application to IW for a connection.</p> <p>Waste Recovery & Disposal Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 1 Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025.</p> <p>ES 2 Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and any subsequent Waste Management Plan adopted during the current development plan period.</p> <p>ES 3 Promote circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Waste Management Plan for the Region and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.</p> <p>Waste Management Enforcement Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 4 Implement the provisions of the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended and associated Waste Regulations.</p> <p>ES 5 Investigate and take appropriate legal action against those involved in unauthorised waste activities.</p> <p>ES 6 Implement the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended and the Laois Litter Management Plan 2018 -2020 and any subsequent revisions.</p> <p>ES 7 Implement, complete and report to the EPA on the annual agreed Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).</p> <p>ES 8 Encourage and support the segregation of food waste and the provision of separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the EU (Household Food Waste & Bio-Waste) Regulations 2015, the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>ES 9 Implement the provisions of the Laois Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household & Commercial) Waste Bye-Laws 2018 and to take enforcement action where necessary to protect the environment and local amenities.</p> <p>ES 10 Process and make recommendations of all Waste Facility Permit (WFP) and Certificate of Registration (COR) Applications under the relevant Regulations. To monitor and inspect all authorised facilities with WFPs & CORs.</p> <p>ES 11 Require Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process.</p> <p>ES 12 Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects.</p> <p>ES 13 Encourage best environmental practice in all agricultural, industry, business and local authority activities.</p> <p>Civic Amenity Facilities & Bring Bank Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 14 Provide for, improve and maintain the network of bring infrastructure (e.g. civic amenity facilities, bring banks) in the County to facilitate the recycling and recovery of hazardous and non-hazardous municipal wastes.</p> <p>ES 15 Develop a 10-year roadmap for the strategic planning and development of the Kyletalesha Transfer Station and Civic Amenity Site.</p> <p>ES 16 Develop the Bring Bank Regional Contract to improve the quality of service and frequency of collection.</p> <p>RL 2 Facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Water Services and Surface Water</p> <p>WSP-01 It is Council policy to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements, a cleaner environment and climate change mitigation.</p> <p>WSP-02 It is Council policy to liaise and co-operate with Irish Water in the implementation and delivery of the ‘Water Services Strategic Plan’ (2015, under review in 2020), the ‘Irish Water Business Plan 2015-2021’, the ‘Irish Water National Water Resources Plan’ (expected in 2021) and the ‘Irish Water Investment Plan 2020-2024’ (or any amendment thereof) and other relevant investment works programmes of Irish Water, to provide infrastructure to service settlements in accordance with the Council’s Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.</p> <p>WSP-03 It is Council policy to work in conjunction with Irish Water to protect existing water supply and wastewater infrastructure, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water supply and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate future growth in accordance with the Council’s Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.</p> <p>WSP-04 It is Council policy to require developments to connect to public wastewater infrastructure and public water supplies, where available, including group water schemes, unless otherwise approved by the Planning Authority.</p> <p>WSP-05 It is Council policy as the Regulatory Authority to promote the protection of private water sources, the development of community connections (water and wastewater), and improvement works to septic tanks in accordance with national policy and regulations, and to administer the multi-annual Rural Water Programme (2019-2021).</p> <p>WSP-06 It is Council policy to ensure that development is permitted in tandem with available water supply and wastewater treatment and to manage development, so that new schemes are permitted only where adequate capacity or resources exists or will become available within the life of a planning permission. Prior to applying for planning permission, applicants shall consult with Irish Water regarding feasibility and capacity for water services connection. Applicants shall submit proof of documentation that connection to a group water scheme has been granted, where applicable.</p> <p>WSP-07 It is Council policy to ensure the delivery and phasing of services in the county is subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and shall avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>WSP-08 It is Council policy to ensure any proposal for geothermal or other energy subsurface exploration is accompanied by an assessment that addresses the</p>

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			<p>potential impacts on groundwater quality.</p> <p>Water Supply WSP-09 It is Council policy to collaborate with and support, as relevant and appropriate, Irish Water in its role as the lead authority for water services to provide an adequate and appropriate drinking water supply that complies with the EU (Drinking Water) Regulations and the Drinking Water Regulations 2014 (as amended), and any future amendments. In this respect, Offaly County Council will have regard to the Environmental Protection Agency 2019 publication 'Drinking Water Report for Public Water Supplies 2018' (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the county, and in conjunction with Irish Water, undertake recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failure to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA's remedial Action List. WSP-10 It is Council policy to engage with Irish Water to endeavour to facilitate developments which have requirements for water by allowing potential surface and ground water resources of County Offaly and the potential water resources of the River Shannon to be utilised, where practicable and possible, subject to appropriate safeguards. WSP-11 It is Council policy to promote the conservation and sustainable use of water in existing and new development within the county and to encourage demand management measures among all water users including rain water harvesting and grey water recycling. WSP-12 It is Council policy to monitor and regulate Group Water Schemes in accordance with national policy and regulations. WSP-13 It is Council policy to protect the Irish Water Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project pipeline corridor from inappropriate development that would prejudice the delivery of the project and to refer any planning applications within the development corridor to Irish Water for comment.</p> <p>Waste Water WSP-14 It is Council policy to co-operate and support Irish Water to eliminate untreated discharges from settlements in the short-term, while planning strategically for long-term growth in tandem with Project Ireland 2040 and in increasing compliance with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive to 90% by the end of 2021, to 99% by 2027 and to 100% by 2040. WSP-15 It is Council policy to support strategic wastewater treatment infrastructure investment by Irish Water and to support Irish Water in providing and maintaining adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment infrastructure to service zoned lands and developments over the lifetime of the Plan in accordance with the Council's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy. WSP-16 It is Council policy to liaise with Irish Water to ensure the compliance of wastewater treatment systems with existing licences, EU Water Framework Directive, River Basin Management Plan, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the EU Habitats Directive. WSP-17 It is Council policy to encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available. WSP-18 It is Council policy to ensure that the proposed wastewater treatment system for development in unserved areas complies with the relevant EPA Codes of Practice. WSP-19 It is Council policy to require / implement appropriate buffer zones surrounding all effluent treatment plants suitable to the size and operation of each plant. WSP-20 It is Council policy to have regard to the policies and objectives contained in Irish Water's National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan. WSP-21 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not normally be permitted.</p> <p>Surface Water WSP-22 It is Council policy to ensure adequate surface water drainage systems are in place which meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan and to promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. WSP-23 It is Council policy to limit and manage the permitted stormwater run-off from all new developments. The maximum permitted surface outflow from any new development shall be restricted to that of a greenfield site before any development takes place unless otherwise agreed with Offaly County Council. WSP-24 It is Council policy to require new development to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system and to incorporate Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). WSP-25 It is Council policy to promote the use of green infrastructure, for example green roofs, green walls, planting and green spaces for surface water run-off retention purposes, in the interests of flood mitigation and climate change adaptation.</p> <p>General WSO-01 It is an objective of the Council to work closely with Irish Water to service development with significant economic development potential and to align the supply of water services to the envisaged settlement size as per the Council's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy. The availability of water services must not be a pre-cursor to large-scale growth in inappropriate locations.</p> <p>Water Supply WSO-02 It is an objective of the Council to support Irish Water's National Programme of Investment to reduce leakage minimising the demand for capital investment. WSO-03 It is an objective of the Council to co-operate with Irish Water in the delivery of the Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project and to ensure the maximum benefit from this project to County Offaly, in particular with respect to economic development potential and security of supply. WSO-04 It is an objective of the Council to engage with Irish Water to examine significant raw water sources which may be made redundant by the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region with a view to reserving and protecting them for future back up or 'windfall' type economic development opportunities where high water use is required. WSO-05 It is an objective of the Council to provide guidance and advice regarding the protection of water supply to private wells with the overall responsibility</p>

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			<p>for protection remaining with the householder.</p> <p>Waste Water WSO-06 It is an objective of the Council to support appropriate options for the extraction of energy and other resources from sewage sludge subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process. WSO-07 It is an objective of the Council to support the servicing of small towns and villages through the serviced sites initiative to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside, in accordance with National Policy Outcome 18b of the National Planning Framework and Regional Policy Objective 4.78 of the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>Surface Water WSO-08 It is an objective of the Council to improve surface water infrastructure and sustainable drainage and to reduce the risk of flooding, to facilitate the growth of settlements as per the county's settlement hierarchy. WSO-09 It is an objective of the Council to utilise, where appropriate, the provisions of Section 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to generate financial contributions towards the capital costs of providing surface water infrastructure in the county.</p> <p>Waste Management ENVP-12 It is Council policy to continue to fulfil its duties under the Waste Management (certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal and recovery activity) Regulations 2008, including those in relation to the identification and registration of closed landfills. ENVP-13 It is Council policy to require the provision of recycling infrastructure where it is considered necessary and will assess requirements for recycling facilities on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. ENVP-14 It is Council policy to require Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. Where a CEMP is required, it shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 11.5.2 of this Plan. ENVO-05 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021; the Council's Litter Management Plan and Waste Bye-Laws.</p> <p>Construction and Environmental Management Plan Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures contained in any accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment Report or Appropriate Assessment and in this Development Plan. CEMPs shall typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including where applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and details of site compounds, refuse storage areas, construction site offices and staff facilities, site security fencing and hoardings, on-site staff car parking; • Details of construction traffic - timing and routing, directional signage, measures to obviate queuing, alternative arrangements for pedestrians and vehicles, and measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris; • Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels; • Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater; • Disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment; • A water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains; • Details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan; • If peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan; • Measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed); • Appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases; and <p>Details of appropriate mitigation measures for lighting specifically designed to minimise impacts to biodiversity, including bats.</p> <p>Tourism and Infrastructure Capacity Tourist and recreation facilities, in particular accommodation, shall be generally located within towns and villages unless;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive justification of the need for the development by its nature and space requirements to be located outside towns and villages, for example, golf courses, swimming, angling, sailing/boating, pier/marina development, water sports, equestrian and pony trekking routes, adventure/interpretative centres and associated ancillary uses, tourist related leisure facilities including walking and cycling; • Evidence that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon the scenic value, heritage value and the environmental, ecological or conservation quality of primary tourism asset(s) and its their general environment; • Evidence that potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes have been considered and mitigation measures proposed. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals; • Compliance with development management standards set out in this chapter; and • Evidence that, where feasible, existing ruinous or disused buildings or existing heritage buildings have been re-used to maximum potential. <p>This list is not exhaustive and the Council may consider other requirements contained in the chapter on a case by case basis with planning applications should</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			the need arise.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<p>Policy 14.1 Protect, conserve and enhance the character, setting and special interest of the built heritage of Portarlington, including all Protected Structures and their curtilage, Recorded Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.</p> <p>Policy 14.2 Protect and conserve important heritage items such as, gates, street furniture, post boxes and other significant historic features of interest in Portarlington, and support the re-introduction of traditional features on Protected Structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc.) previously existed.</p> <p>Policy 14.3 Ensure that development proposals do not obscure views, principal elevations or the character and setting of Protected Structures.</p> <p>Policy 14.4 Prevent inappropriate alterations to protected structures, and to prohibit the demolition of any protected structure unless the relevant local authority is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>Policy 14.5 Positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change the use of Protected Structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to suitable design, siting, materials and construction methods and subject to consultation with suitably qualified Conservation Architect(s).</p> <p>Policy 14.6 Promote and encourage heritage-led regeneration in Portarlington, and tackle dereliction and vacancy so as to improve the quality of life and the interesting and attractive uniqueness of the town.</p> <p>Policy 14.7 Resist and discourage the demolition of vernacular architecture in Portarlington, and where appropriate promote the sympathetic renewal, maintenance, adaptation, and re-use of historic building stock, and encourage the retention and repair of original fabric such as windows,</p>	<p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>AH 1 Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the integrity and character of archaeological heritage of the county which avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, settings, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest and secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.</p> <p>AH 2 Support the preservation or conservation of historically significant street patterns, building lines and plot widths in its towns and villages as well as the preservation of features such as town walls, historic revetments, and public realm features such as granite kerbing, historic drinking fountains, cobbles, vent pipes whether or not they benefit from protection in their own right.</p> <p>AH 3 Protect the intrinsic value, character, integrity and settings of monuments and places in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and any forthcoming statutory register and protect Zones of Archaeological Potential against inappropriate development.</p> <p>AH 4 In areas of archaeological potential, where groundworks are proposed, ensure that all works are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas. The Council favours the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains, where areas of archaeological potential are located in town centres or villages, preservation of archaeological remains by record will be considered.</p> <p>AH 5 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access and signage to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State.</p> <p>AH 6 Work closely with the relevant State bodies to deliver the conservation objectives of the Rock of Dunamase and redevelopment of Fort Protector to secure funding for the preservation and development of these culturally important sites.</p> <p>AH 7 Require visual impact statements for developments within the area around the Rock of Dunamase in order to assess the potential impacts of development in the area.</p> <p>AH 8 Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities, Bord Failte and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Laois .</p> <p>AH 9 Maximise the potential of Dunrally Viking Fort, as a heritage/cultural and tourism site.</p> <p>AH 10 Protect where appropriate industrial heritage structures or elements of significance identified in the Laois Industrial Archaeology Survey by adding them to the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of the Development Plan.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Protected Structures</p> <p>PS 1 Consult with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in considering planning applications that may affect Protected Structures or Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). The Council will have regard to comments made by the Department and relevant guidelines such as the Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and other pertinent guidelines regarding energy ratings for Protected Structures.</p> <p>PS 2 Protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2004 and ensure the effective promotion of the Architectural Heritage provisions of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and therefore the protection of Laois's built heritage, including Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Protected Structures.</p> <p>PS 3 Any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure must be prepared by suitably qualified persons and Accompanied by appropriate documentation as outlined in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DAHG, 2011] to enable a proper assessment of the proposed works and their impact on the structure or area and be carried out to best practice conservation standards. Its setting will be considered against the following criteria, and whether it is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitively sited and designed; Compatible with the special character; Views of principal elevations of the protected structures are not obscured or negatively impacted; Of a premium quality of design and appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout, and materials <p>so that the integrity of the structure and its curtilage is preserved and enhanced. Where appropriate, the Protected Structure status is used as a stimulus to the imaginative and considered design of new elements.</p> <p>PS 4 Where the restoration or refurbishment of a Protected Structure or a key Architectural Conservation Area building that is in poor or fair condition is proposed and is for a purpose compatible with the character of the building, the relaxation of development management standards on unit sizes, amenity space or parking will be considered by the Council.</p> <p>PS 5 Refuse planning permission for the demolition of any protected structure unless the Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>PS 6 Favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on its intrinsic character. In certain cases, the Planning Authority may relax site zoning restrictions / development standards in order to secure the preservation and restoration of the structure.</p> <p>PS 7 Review and update the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis and to make additions and deletions as appropriate</p> <p>PS 8 Integrate climate-change adaptation measures into all heritage works and maintenance plans by demonstrating green ways of working in historic buildings, ensuring that the carbon footprint of adaptation measures is considered</p> <p>PS 9 Promote the repair and reuse of existing building stock, including heritage buildings, as a means of avoiding unnecessary carbon outlays with new</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>doors, wall renders, roof coverings, shopfronts, and other significant features, whether protected or not.</p> <p>Policy 14.8 Secure the preservation (either in situ or by record) of all archaeological monuments in Portarlington included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and their settings, and of all sites and features of significant archaeological or historical interest, including potential and previously unknown sites or features, in consultation with the National Monuments Service in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p> <p>Policy 14.9 Safeguard the archaeological heritage located within Portarlington and avoid negative impacts on sites, monuments, features, or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest.</p> <p>Policy 14.10 Ensure the setting and character of Lea Castle is safeguarded and enhanced in the assessment of new development proposals and enhance connectivity and access as opportunities arise.</p> <p>Objective 14.1 Support and facilitate heritage-led regeneration in Portarlington in line with the objectives of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'.</p> <p>Objective 14.2 Designate an Architectural Conservation Area in Portarlington to ensure the protection of all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects which form an essential part of the traditional core of the town.</p> <p>Objective 14.3 Conserve, protect and enhance the built and archaeological heritage of Portarlington, including all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Recorded Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.</p>	<p>build</p> <p>PS 10 Support proposals to improve the thermal performance of historic buildings with renewable energy technologies. Such proposals shall be sensitive to traditional methods of construction to ensure that the proposed works are appropriate and do not cause damage to the structure, require the removal of historic fabric such as original windows, doors and floors, or have a detrimental visual impact.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for ACA</p> <p>ACA 1 Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions within an ACA are sited and designed appropriately, and are not detrimental to the character of the structure or to its setting or the general character of the ACA and are in keeping with any Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character Guidance Documents prepared for the relevant ACA.</p> <p>ACA 2 Demolition of buildings or substantial parts of structures in cases where those structures make a positive contribution to the special character of the ACA will not be acceptable in principle. Only in exceptional circumstances, where the redevelopment or replacement structures would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition, would demolition of this nature be considered.</p> <p>ACA 3 Investigate the designation of further ACAs at appropriate locations throughout and prepare a character statement appraisal and area specific policy for each ACA to include Stradbally, Mountmellick Mountrath and Portarlington, (the latter in collaboration within Offaly County Council).</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Vernacular Structures</p> <p>VS 1 Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture which may not be protected to the promote where feasible the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and use of the vernacular built heritage, including structures that contribute to landscape and streetscape character and discourage the demolition of these structures;</p> <p>VS 2 Resist the demolition of vernacular architecture, in particular thatched cottages and farmhouses and to encourage their sensitive reuse having regard to the intrinsic character of the structure.</p> <p>VS 3 Ensure that both new build, and extensions to vernacular buildings are of an appropriate design and do not detract from the buildings character.</p> <p>VS 4 Seek the repair and retention of traditional timber and/or rendered shop fronts and pub fronts, including those that may not be protected structures.</p> <p>VS 5 Develop and publish guidelines on the conservation and appropriate reuse of Local Authority Cottages and similar vernacular structures.</p> <p>VS 6 Have regard, where appropriate, to guidance in the DAHG Guidelines and conservation best practice in assessing proposed interventions and planning applications relating to vernacular structures, traditional farmhouses, their curtilage, out buildings and settings.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Historic Gardens, Country Houses and Demesnes</p> <p>CH 1 Ensure that new development will not adversely affect the site, setting or views to and from historic gardens and designed landscapes.</p> <p>CH 2 Require that any proposals for new development in an historic garden or demesne include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, and an assessment of significant trees or groups of trees, as appropriate.</p> <p>CH 3 Build on the information compiled as part of the National Survey of Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes, and to carry out a survey to assess the intactness of these assets, including developing a strategy for their conservation, restoration and development.</p> <p>CH 4 Assess the demesnes and historic designed landscapes within Laois and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural, while allowing for appropriate re-use</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>AH 1 Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the integrity and character of archaeological heritage of the county which avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, settings, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest and secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.</p> <p>AH 2 Support the preservation or conservation of historically significant street patterns, building lines and plot widths in its towns and villages as well as the preservation of features such as town walls, historic revetments, and public realm features such as granite kerbing, historic drinking fountains, cobbles, vent pipes whether or not they benefit from protection in their own right.</p> <p>AH 3 Protect the intrinsic value, character, integrity and settings of monuments and places in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and any forthcoming statutory register and protect Zones of Archaeological Potential against inappropriate development.</p> <p>AH 4 In areas of archaeological potential, where groundworks are proposed, ensure that all works are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas. The Council favours the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains, where areas of archaeological potential are located in town centres or villages, preservation of archaeological remains by record will be considered.</p> <p>AH 5 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access and signage to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State.</p> <p>AH 6 Work closely with the relevant State bodies to deliver the conservation objectives of the Rock of Dunamase and redevelopment of Fort Protector to secure funding for the preservation and development of these culturally important sites.</p> <p>AH 7 Require visual impact statements for developments within the area around the Rock of Dunamase in order to assess the potential impacts of development in the area.</p> <p>AH 8 Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities, Bord Failte and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Laois .</p> <p>AH 9 Maximise the potential of Dunrally Viking Fort, as a heritage/cultural and tourism site.</p> <p>AH 10 Protect where appropriate industrial heritage structures or elements of significance identified in the Laois Industrial Archaeology Survey by adding</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>them to the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of the Development Plan.</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Protected Structures</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the protection, sympathetic and sensitive modification, alteration, extension or reuse of protected structures or parts of protected structures, and the immediate surrounds included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the protection of the curtilage of protected structures or proposed protected structures and to prohibit inappropriate development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure which would adversely impact on the special character of the protected structure including cause loss of or damage to the special character of the protected structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of architectural heritage value within the curtilage of the protected structure.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote best practice and the use of skilled specialist practitioners in the conservation of, and any works to, protected structures. Method statements should make reference to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Advice Series on how best to repair and maintain historic buildings.</p> <p>It is Council policy to favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on its intrinsic character and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p> <p>It is Council policy to actively encourage uses that are compatible with the character of protected structures.</p> <p>It is Council policy to retain where practicable a protected structure which has been damaged by fire, and to retain those elements of that structure that have survived (either in whole or in part) and that contribute to its special interest.</p> <p>It is Council policy to prohibit the demolition of any protected structure unless the Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require an Architectural Heritage Assessment Report, as described in Appendix B of the Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2013), to accompany all applications involving a protected structure.</p> <p>It is Council policy to advise owners of protected structures in preparation of funding applications under Built Heritage Scheme of the Historic Structures Fund.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that in the event of a planning application being granted for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, the proposed works to the protected structure should occur, where appropriate, in the first phase of the development to prevent endangerment, abandonment and dereliction of the structure.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of Protected Structures and historic buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and do not have a detrimental physical, aesthetic or visual impact on the structure. They should follow the principles and direction given in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's publication Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to review the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis and make additions, deletions and corrections as appropriate over the period of this Plan.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to prepare a Buildings at Risk Register to prevent the endangerment of Protected Structures.</p> <p>Architectural Conservation Areas</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the retention of original windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, street furniture and other significant features of historic buildings and landscape features within Architectural Conservation Areas.</p> <p>It is Council policy to proactively promote conservation through the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and other schemes available to the Council.</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve the character of Geashill Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and any future ACA's in County Offaly by ensuring that any new development within or contiguous to the ACA is sympathetic to the character of the area and that the design is appropriate in terms of scale, height, plot density, layout, materials and finishes having regard to the advice given in the Statements of Character for each area.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to investigate the designation of further Architectural Conservation Areas at appropriate locations throughout the county.</p> <p>Vernacular Buildings</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the protection, retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular heritage of Offaly.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consider the guidance in "The Thatched Houses of Kildare" and "Reusing Farm Buildings, A Kildare Perspective" published by Kildare County Council in assessing planning applications in County Offaly relating to thatched cottages and traditional farm buildings.</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve the character and setting (for example, gates, gate piers and courtyards) of vernacular buildings where deemed appropriate by the planning authority.</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek the repair and retention of traditional timber and/or rendered shop fronts and pub fronts, including those that may not be protected structures.</p> <p>It is Council policy to communicate and work with owners of thatch buildings regarding the availability of conservation grants and funding.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage where appropriate the covering of thatch with metal, as a measure for the protection of buildings which are unoccupied and showing signs of considerable distress.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support proposals to refurbish vernacular structures that are in a run down or derelict condition, provided that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate traditional building materials and methods are used to carry out repairs to the historic fabric; and • Proposals for extensions to vernacular structures are reflective and proportionate to the existing building and do not erode the setting and design qualities of the original structure which make it attractive.

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>It is an objective of the Council to identify and retain good examples of vernacular architecture and historic street furniture in situ, for example, cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings.</p> <p>Industrial Heritage</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect the industrial heritage of Offaly, including mills, historic industrial buildings, canals and historic bridges.</p> <p>It is Council policy to utilise the information provided within Mills of County Offaly: An Industrial Heritage Survey (2009) when assessing development proposals for surviving industrial heritage sites.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and enhance the built and natural heritage of the Grand Canal and ensure that development within its vicinity is sensitively designed and does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the canal, its built elements and its natural heritage values and that it adheres to the Waterways Ireland's Heritage Plan 2016-2020.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage appropriate change of use and reuse of industrial buildings, provided such a change does not seriously impact on the intrinsic character of the structure and that all works are carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek the retention and appropriate repair/maintenance of the historic bridges and harbours of the county whether they are protected structures or not.</p> <p>It is Council policy to restrict vehicular access onto public roads that were formerly towpaths and any development permitted with access off a towpath must be screened effectively with trees and hedging. In relation to planning applications for housing in the open countryside with access proposed off towpaths, applicants must demonstrate compliance with Policy SSP-27 as towpaths are located within Natural Heritage Areas and Areas of High Amenity.</p> <p>Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the protection, conservation, promotion and enhancement of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes in the county and support public awareness, enjoyment of and access to these sites where appropriate.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the conservation, preservation, restoration and protection in their original setting of mausoleums and monuments: follies, grottoes; garden buildings and other structures of particular beauty or historic, environmental, architectural or industrial significance.</p> <p>It is Council policy to discourage development that would lead to a loss of, or cause damage to, the character, the principle components of, or the setting of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes.</p> <p>Houses, Gardens and Demesnes.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consider the "Guidance Notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesnes, Estates and their Settings" published by Cork County Council 2006 in the appraisal and description of the impacts of proposed developments in County Offaly within or in close proximity to country houses and demesnes on historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens.</p> <p>Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>It is Council policy to support and promote the protection and appropriate management and sympathetic enhancement of the county's archaeological heritage within the Plan area, in particular by implementing the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek to promote awareness of and access to archaeological sites in the county where appropriate.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) in relation to archaeological sites within and/or adjoining a proposed development.</p> <p>It is Council policy to facilitate the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the county.</p> <p>It is Council policy that any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance) shall be subject to an archaeological assessment. When dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features, there will be presumption in favour of the 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings, in accordance with Government policy. Where permission for such proposals is granted, the Planning Authority will require the developer to have the site works supervised by a licenced archaeologist.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that archaeological excavation is carried out according to best practice as outlined by the National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the National Museum of Ireland and the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland and to protect previously unknown archaeological sites and features, where they are discovered during development works.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the protection and preservation of underwater and terrestrial archaeological sites, both known and potential in riverine or lacustrine locations including wrecks such as the remains of bridges.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require archaeological assessment, including underwater archaeological assessment where relevant, for such developments that due to their location, size or nature may have implications for archaeological heritage. Such developments include those that are located at or close to an archaeological monument or site, those that are extensive in terms of area (0.5 hectares or more) or length (1 kilometre or more and developments that require an Environmental Impact Statement.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect archaeological sites and monuments, and archaeological objects, which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and to seek their preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process.</p> <p>Monastic Sites</p> <p>It is Council policy to retain the nominated status of the area comprising the National Monument at Clonmacnoise, enclosing eskers, Mongans Bog, Clonmacnoise callows, Fin Lough and the limestone pavement at Clorhane as the "Clonmacnoise Heritage Zone" in accordance with the recommendations of the study of the area carried out by the Environmental Sciences Unit of Trinity College, Dublin as shown in Figure 10.7 of this Plan.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>It is Council policy to investigate the potential of Durrow Demesne as a public amenity and tourism asset.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support and promote the protection and appropriate management of all monastic sites in the county.</p> <p>Mass Rocks and Holy Wells</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve, protect and, where necessary, enhance mass rocks and holy wells in the County.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges the nomination by the Government of Ireland, of two Monastic sites, Clonmacnoise in its own right and Durrow, as a suite of potential sites, on the tentative list for inclusion to the UNESCO World Heritage sites list. It is an objective of the Council to explore the potential of further designating the Monastic Sites at Clonmacnoise and Durrow as prospective UNESCO World Heritage Sites.</p>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.</p> <p>Objective 15.8 Seek to preserve and protect trees that have a particular local amenity, conservation or landscape value and require the planting of new native tree species in all new developments.</p> <p>Objective 15.11 Protect and preserve landscape features which significantly contribute to green infrastructure in Portarlington, including trees, hedgerows, woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, and other habitats.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Laois County Development Plan</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Landscape Character Areas</p> <p>LCA 1 Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity, as indicated in Table 11.6 of the Plan, is an important factor in determining development uses In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations</p> <p>LCA 2 Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape and conserve valuable habitat including any European and National Designations</p> <p>LCA 3 Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development</p> <p>LCA 4 Seek to minimise the individual and cumulative adverse visual impacts that local concentrations of one-off housing, outside of settlements, may have on Hills and Upland, River Corridor and Lakes and Mountain landscape character areas or High Sensitivity areas. In this regard, in locations where the Council considers that there is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for housing developments where a need for the dwelling has been demonstrated in accordance with the criteria contained in the Rural Housing Policy contained in Chapter 4</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Hills and Uplands Areas and Mountain Areas</p> <p>LCA 5 Ensure that development will not have a disproportionate visual impact (due to excessive bulk, scale or inappropriate siting) and will not significantly interfere with or detract from scenic upland vistas, when viewed from areas nearby, scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements</p> <p>LCA 6 Ensure that developments on steep slopes (i.e. >10%) will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from relevant scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements</p> <p>LCA 7 Facilitate, where appropriate, developments that have a functional and locational requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoirs, telecommunication masts or wind energy structures) where residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated</p> <p>LCA 8 Maintain the visual integrity of areas which have retained a largely undisturbed upland character and Respect the remote character and existing low-density development in these areas.</p> <p>LCA 9 Have regard to the potential for screening vegetation when evaluating proposals for development within the uplands</p> <p>LCA 10 Actively propose the designation of the Slieve Blooms as a Special Amenity Area and seek an Order to that effect.</p> <p>LCA 11 Protect the positive contribution that views across adjacent lowland areas and landmarks within the landscape make to the overall landscape character.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Lowland Agricultural Areas</p> <p>LCA 12 Recognise that this lowland landscape character area includes areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection, particularly the 18th and 19th century estate landscapes and associated parkland & woodland to develop them as a tourism resource.</p> <p>LCA 13 Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation</p> <p>LCA 14 Recognise that the lowlands are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social wellbeing of the county</p> <p>LCA 15 Promote good agricultural practices to create a sustainable rural economy and support incentives for smaller rural/family farms to manage their land to avoid loss of hedgerows and field patterns.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for River Corridors and Lakes Areas</p> <p>LCA 16 Recognise the importance of river corridors for scenic value, ecology, history, culture and for recreational purposes such as walking, cycling and various on-water activities;</p> <p>LCA 17 Maintain the rivers throughout the county whilst ensuring that all works are carried out subject to appropriate environmental assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, site proposed to be designated and any additional sites that may be designated during the period of this Plan</p> <p>LCA 18 Preserve riverside historic features and their landscape settings and Conserve valuable habitats focused on and around river corridors and estuaries including European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 19 Recognise the potential constraints on development created by river flood plains and the value of these flood plains as increasingly rare habitats</p> <p>LCA 20 Avoid unsustainable exploitation of watercourses, e.g. for abstraction and dilution of effluent, to the point that these water courses lose their ecological and amenity value</p> <p>LCA 21 Collaborate with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate public access to waterway corridors and maintain and enhance the natural character of rivers, lakes and canals by reserving land to facilitate walking, cycling and other non-noise generating recreational activities</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>LCA 22 Explore the establishment of the Barrow/Nore Valley and the Grand Canal as Areas of Special Amenity, as per section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Peatland Areas</p> <p>LCA 23 Recognise the importance of peatlands for ecology, history, culture and for alternative energy production</p> <p>LCA 24 Conserve valuable habitats including any European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 25 Support the identification of projects that have the potential to achieve commercial value such as industrial developments, renewable energy, tourism developments etc. while at the same time promoting high environmental standards and supporting Biodiversity objectives</p> <p>LCA 26 Support the restoration of peatlands on suitable sites</p> <p>LCA 27 Recognise that intact boglands are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons and recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially robust to absorb a variety of appropriate developments</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Urban Fringe Areas</p> <p>LCA 28 Diversify the urban fringe by developing mixed-use amenity areas, which will create a landscape buffer creating a transition between urban and rural areas</p> <p>LCA 29 Define the urban fringe with planting of native species and mixed woodland to tie into existing rural landscape</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Rolling Hill Areas</p> <p>LCA 30 Maintain the visual integrity of rolling hill areas which have retained an upland character</p> <p>LCA 31 Continue to facilitate appropriate development, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognising the need for sustainable settlement patterns and economic activity within the county</p> <p>LCA 32 Continue to permit development that can utilise existing infrastructure, whilst taking account of local absorption opportunities provided by the landscape, landform and prevailing vegetation</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Views and Prospects</p> <p>SV 1 Protect views from designated scenic routes indicated in Table 11.7 and Map 11.8 (Scenic Views and Prospects in County Laois) of the Plan, by avoiding any development that could disrupt the vistas or disproportionately impact on the landscape character of the area, thereby affecting the scenic and amenity value of the views.</p> <p>SV 2 Review and update all Scenic Routes and Views in the county during the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>Offaly County Development Plan</p> <p>Wind Farms</p> <p>It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall:</p> <p>(a) have regard to the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change 2017 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 which are expected to be finalised in the near future;</p> <p>(b) have regard to 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' in the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy;</p> <p>(c) the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4;</p> <p>(d) have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and</p> <p>(e) have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation.</p> <p>Extractive Industry</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure those extractions (quarries / sand and gravel pits) which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of Areas of High Amenity, eskers, esker landscapes, protected views or damage to designated sites, habitat types or species shall not be permitted. It is Council policy that all such workings should be subjected to landscaping requirements and that worked out quarries should be rehabilitated to a use agreed with the Council which could include recreational, biodiversity, amenity or other end-of-life uses. Planning applications for extraction shall be assessed against section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. The use of these rehabilitated sites shall be limited to wastes such as soil, stone and subsoils and sites shall be authorised under the appropriate waste regulations. Where the Council considers and accepts that in cases where inert material (for example soil, stones and subsoil) cannot be recycled or otherwise sold, such materials may be considered for the phased restoration and landscaping of the site in line with planning conditions imposed.</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the county's existing landscape.</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerow, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals, located within or adjacent to sensitive landscapes. This assessment will provide details of proposed mitigation measures to address likely negative impacts.</p> <p>It is Council policy to control advertising structures and hoardings in the open countryside. The Council will use its enforcement powers under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to secure the removal of unauthorised advertising signs and hoardings including those that are affixed to trailers, wheeled vehicles etc.</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to prepare a County Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>following the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Areas in Tables 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 in the consideration of planning applications.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect skylines and ridgelines from development where such developments will create significant visual intrusion.</p> <p>Protection of Key Scenic Views, Key Prospects and Key Amenity Routes</p> <p>It is Council policy to require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals that are likely to significantly affect Key Scenic Views and Prospects as listed in Table 4.21 and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect Key Scenic Views and Key Prospects contained in Table 4.21, and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22 from inappropriate development.</p> <p>Areas of High Amenity</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and preserve the county's Areas of High Amenity namely the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Clonmacnoise Heritage Zone, Durrow High Cross, Abbey and surrounding area, the River Shannon, Lough Boora Discovery Park, Grand Canal, Croghan Hill, Raheenmore Bog, Pallas Lake, Clara Bog, Clara eskers, Eiscir Riada and other eskers. Notwithstanding the location of certain settlements, or parts of, for which there are settlement plans (Towns, Villages, Sráids), within the Areas of High Amenity, it is not the intention of this policy to hinder appropriate sustainable levels of development (as set out in the plans and subject to proper planning). Further, it is policy to facilitate the sustainable extension and expansion of existing visitor, tourist related or other rural enterprises within the Areas of High Amenity, where such development is appropriate and where it can be demonstrated that it gives 'added value' to the extending activity and to the immediate area which is the subject of the 'Area of High Amenity' designation.</p> <p>It is Council policy, to ensure that issues of scale, siting, design and overall compatibility (including particular regard to environmental sensitivities) with a site's location within an Area of High Amenity are of paramount importance when assessing any application for planning permission. The merits of each proposal will be examined on a case-by case basis.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the preparation of a masterplan that conserves and protects the Clonmacnoise monastic site and will co-operate with the Office of Public Works and other stakeholders in its preparation and implementation.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure that new development, whether individually or cumulatively, does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of or the scenic value of the Areas of High Amenity listed in Table 4.17. New development in Areas of High Amenity shall not be permitted if it;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes unacceptable visual harm; • Introduces incongruous landscape elements; and • Causes the disturbance or loss of (i) landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness; (ii) historic elements that contribute significantly to landscape character and quality such as field or road patterns; (iii) vegetation which is a characteristic of that landscape type and (iv) the visual condition of landscape elements.

Section 10 Monitoring Measures

10.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. This section details the measures which will be used in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan.

Monitoring can both demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Plan, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the Plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the Plan.

10.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. Given the position of the Joint Local Area Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans, the measures identified in the SEAs for those County Development Plans have been used as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 10.1 overleaf shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated.

Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

10.3 Sources

The Plan forms part of the wider land use planning framework comprising a hierarchy of policies, plans, programmes, etc. This wider framework, including the National Planning Framework, Eastern and Midland RSES, and Laois and Offaly County Development Plans is subject to its own SEA (and associated monitoring) requirements. Individual projects will be subject to their own monitoring requirements as relevant.

In implementing the Monitoring Programme, the Councils will take into account this hierarchy of planning and environmental monitoring.

Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Councils would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁶⁸ basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

⁶⁸ The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

10.4 Reporting

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. Monitoring frequencies of indicators tend to change although where they are consistent frequencies are identified. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 10.1.

The methodology for monitoring set out below will be undertaken by the Councils. Where monitoring beyond existing sources is to be undertaken, it is recommended that industry standard methods are used where they exist and where appropriate.

Reporting may be undertaken in conjunction with the monitoring reporting on other plans, such as the County Development Plans and other Local Area Plans.

The Councils are responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of remedial action.

Table 10.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity/Heritage Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)⁶⁹ DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)⁷⁰ Consultations with the NPWS (see Section 10.4)⁷¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity/Heritage Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of preparation of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water quality in water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Laois County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Laois County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems

⁶⁹ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

⁷⁰ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

⁷¹ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Population and Human Health	PHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Laois County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 5 "Economic Development Strategy" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Laois County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 5 "Economic Development Strategy" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives Consultations with DCEE (see Section 10.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DCEE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Councils will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH AA/Screening for AA for each application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Councils will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Water	W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance ⁷² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Councils will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Councils will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission Consultations with the Uisce Éireann (see Section 10.4) DHLGH in conjunction with Local Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Councils will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Councils will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.

⁷² Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available
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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Air	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Data from the National Travel Survey EPA Air Quality Monitoring Consultations with Department of Transport and Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (see Section 10.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above
Climatic Factors	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of Climate Action Plans 2024-2029 EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting Climate Action Regional Office Consultations with DCEE (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Councils will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure, in compliance with the provisions of the Plan 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050) 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Councils will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Cultural Heritage	CH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Councils will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with DHLGH (see Section 10.4). 	
Landscape	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Councils will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation

Appendix I Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans and Programmes

This appendix is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
European Level			
SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Provide for a high level of protection of the environment by carrying out an environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out and environmental assessment for plans or programmes referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the Directive. Prepare an environmental report which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives that consider the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme. Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission. Consult other Member States where the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have transboundary environmental effects. Inform relevant authorities and stakeholders on the decision to implement the plan or programme. Issue a statement to include requirements detailed in Article 9 of the Directive. Monitor and mitigate significant environmental effects identified by the assessment. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the assessment of the environmental effects of public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Aims to assess and implement avoidance or mitigation measures to eliminate environmental effects, before consent is given of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All projects listed in Annex I are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an EIA. For projects listed in Annex II, a "screening procedure" is required to determine the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. This should take into account Annex III. The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 12, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climate and the landscape, material assets and the cultural heritage, the interaction between each factor. Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission before a decision is made. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Maintain or restore to favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of community interest. Promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose and protect sites of importance to habitats, plant and animal species. Establish a network of European sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, to enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. Carry out comprehensive assessment of habitat types and species present. Establish a system of strict protection for the animal species and plant species listed in Annex IV. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state including their eggs, nests and habitats. Protect, manage and control these species and comply with regulations relating to their exploitation. The species included in Annex I shall be the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve, maintain or re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all the species of birds referred to in Annex 1. Preserve, maintain and establish biotopes and habitats to include the creation of protected areas (Special Protection Areas). Ensure the upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones, re-establish destroyed biotopes and creation of biotopes. Measures for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I is required as regards their breeding, moulting and wintering areas and staging posts along their migration routes. The protection of wetlands and particularly wetlands of international importance. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)	It aims to reduce water pollution from nitrates used for agricultural purposes and prevent any further pollution. It forms an integral part of the water framework directive (Directive 2000/60/EC) of the European Union and is closely linked to other EU policies that address air quality, climate change and agriculture.	<p>EU Member States must do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate as vulnerable zones all those draining into waters that are or could be affected by high nitrate levels and eutrophication. The designation is reviewed and possibly revised at least every 4 years to take account of any changes that have occurred. • Establish mandatory action programmes for these areas, taking into account available scientific and technical data and overall environmental conditions. • Monitor the effectiveness of the action programmes. • Test the nitrate concentration in fresh ground and surface water at sampling stations, at least monthly and more frequently during flooding. • Carry out a comprehensive monitoring programme and submit – every 4 years – a detailed report on the directive's implementation. The report includes information on nitrate-vulnerable zones, results of water monitoring and a summary of the relevant aspects of codes of good agricultural practices and action programmes. • Draw up a code of good agricultural practices, which farmers apply on a voluntary basis. It sets out various good practices, such as when fertiliser use is inappropriate. • Provide training and information for farmers, where appropriate. <p>The European Commission provides a report every 4 years on the basis of the national information it has received.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) (2008/105/EC)	It sets out environmental quality standards (EQSs) for the presence in surface water of certain substances or groups of substances identified as priority pollutants because of the significant risk they pose to or via the aquatic environment. These standards are in line with the strategy and objectives of the European Union (EU)'s water framework directive (Directive 2000/60/EC). It repeals Directives 82/176/EEC, 83/513/EEC, 84/156/EEC, 84/491/EEC and 86/280/EEC with effect from 22 December 2012.	<p>The directive sets EQSs for priority substances and eight other pollutants. These substances include: the metals cadmium, lead, mercury and nickel, and their compounds; benzene; polyaromatic hydrocarbons; and several pesticides. Several of these priority substances are classed as hazardous.</p> <p>The EQSs in Directive 2008/105/EC are limits on the concentration of the priority substances and eight other pollutants in water (or biota), i.e. thresholds which must not be exceeded if a good chemical status is to be met. There are two types of water standard.</p> <p>A threshold for the average concentration of the substance concerned calculated from measurements over a 1-year period. The purpose of this standard is to ensure protection against long-term exposure to pollutants in the aquatic environment. A maximum allowable concentration of the substance concerned, i.e. the maximum for any single measurement. The purpose of this standard is to ensure protection against short-term exposure, i.e. pollution peaks.</p> <p>The EQSs are different for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inland surface waters (rivers and lakes); • other surface waters (transitional, coastal and territorial waters). • EU Member States must ensure compliance with the EQSs. They must also take measures to ensure that the concentrations of substances that tend to accumulate in sediment and/or biota do not increase significantly. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
EU Industrial Emissions (Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control) –IED Directive (2010/75/EU)	<p>It is aimed at achieving significant benefits to the environment and human health by reducing harmful industrial emissions across the EU, in particular through better application of Best Available Techniques (BAT).</p> <p>The IED is based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an integrated approach (focusing on the installation being permitted rather than separately on different environmental media such as air, water or soil); • best available techniques; • flexibility; • inspections; • public participation. <p>The IED combines seven separate existing Directives related to industrial emissions: With effect from 7 January 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive 78/176/EEC of 20 February 1978 on waste from the titanium dioxide industry; • Directive 82/883/EEC on the surveillance and monitoring of titanium dioxide waste; • Directive 92/112/EEC on the reduction of titanium dioxide industrial waste; • Directive 1999/13/EC on reducing emissions of volatile organic compounds; • Directive 2000/76/EC on waste incineration (Waste Incineration Directive); • Directive 2008/1/EC concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC Directive); <p>With effect from 1st January 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive 2001/80/EC on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants from large combustion plants (LCP Directive). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IED aspires to reduce and, as far as possible, eliminate pollution arising from industrial activities. It seeks to achieve this by providing a general framework for the control of the industries with the highest pollution potential in order to prevent the shifting of pollution from one environmental medium (or industry) to another. The overall intention is to provide an integrated approach to the prevention and control of emissions into the various environmental media such as, air, water and soil while striking a commercial balance for businesses. • The IED aims to increase the effectiveness of the legislation by supporting Member States in implementing BAT-based permitting. The IED aims to improve and clarify the concept and use of BAT and increases transparency by requiring that the use of flexibility must be justified and documented leading to a more coherent and EU-wide application of BAT. • The IED also strengthens existing minimum requirements in certain sectors (such as large combustion plants, waste incineration, etc.) so as to ensure the achievement of objectives of the Commission's Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution. • The IED aims to further increase the effectiveness of the legislation by strengthening provisions on environmental improvement and enforcement, while stimulating innovation. The IED introduces minimum requirements as regards the environmental inspections of installations, the review and update of permits, and reporting on compliance. It also provides incentives for the development and promotion of environment-friendly technologies. • The IED aims to cut all identified unnecessary administrative burdens and simplify current legislation. The IED tackles the shortcomings of current EU legislation on industrial emissions by overhauling the seven existing pieces of legislation on industrial emissions. This has improved the clarity and coherence of the legislation and should reduce the administrative burden through combined requirements on granting permits and streamlined reporting. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Plant Protection (products) Directive 2009/127/EC	The Directive applies to pesticides which are plant protection products. Regarding pesticide application equipment already in professional use, the Framework Directive introduces requirements for the inspection and maintenance to be carried out on such equipment.	This Directive is limited to the essential requirements with which machinery for pesticide application must comply before being placed on the market and/or put into service, while the European standardisation organisations are responsible for drawing up harmonised standards providing detailed specifications for the various categories of such machinery in order to enable manufacturers to comply with those requirements.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED) 2023/2413 - amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652	The Renewable Energy Directive is the legal framework for the development of clean energy across all sectors of the EU economy, supporting cooperation between EU countries towards this goal. The revised Directive introduces stronger measures to ensure that all possibilities for the further development and uptake of renewables are fully utilised. This will be key to achieving the EU's objective of climate neutrality by 2050 and to strengthen Europe's security of energy supply. In addition to double the existing share of renewable energy sources, a strong policy framework will facilitate electrification in different sectors, with new increased sector-specific targets for renewables in heating and cooling, transport, industry, buildings and district heating/cooling, but also with a framework promoting electric vehicles and smart recharging.	The revised Directive sets an overall renewable energy target of at least 42.5% binding at EU level by 2030 - but aiming for 45%. The amended RED contains revised targets for renewable energy consumption in transport, of 29% energy share (known as the 'RES-T') or a 14.5% GHG reduction by 2030.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Indirect Land Use Change Directive (2012/0288 (COD))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3(4) of Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (3) requires Member States to ensure that the share of energy from renewable energy sources in all forms of transport in 2020 is at least 10 % of their final energy consumption. • The blending of biofuels is one of the methods available for Member States to meet this target, and is expected to be the main contributor. • Other methods available to meet the target are the reduction of energy consumption, which is imperative because a mandatory percentage target for energy from renewable sources is likely to become increasingly difficult to achieve sustainably if overall demand for energy for transport continues to rise, and the use of electricity from renewable energy sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the contribution that conventional biofuels (with a risk of ILUC emissions) make towards attainment of the targets in the Renewable Energy Directive; • Improve the greenhouse gas performance of biofuel production processes (reducing associated emissions) by raising the greenhouse gas saving threshold for new installations subject to protecting installations already in operation on 1st July 2014; • Encourage a greater market penetration of advanced (low-ILUC) biofuels by allowing such fuels to contribute more to the targets in the Renewable Energy Directive than conventional biofuels; • Improve the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions by obliging Member States and fuel suppliers to report the estimated indirect land-use change emissions of biofuels. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) - (Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, and repealing Directive 2014/94/EU)	<p>The regulation sets mandatory national targets for European Union Member States to deploy publicly accessible alternative fuels infrastructure (in particular for electricity and hydrogen) for road vehicles, vessels moored at the quayside and stationary aircraft, with a specific focus on the trans-European networks. The regulation also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common rules for user information, data provision and payment requirements; • a mandate for the Commission to adopt delegated acts to ensure interoperability of infrastructure by mandating technical specifications on the basis of European standards; and • planning and reporting requirements for Member States. 	<p>Recharging infrastructure for electric cars and vans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States must ensure that publicly accessible recharging stations are set up in proportion to the number of registered vehicles, as follows: • for each registered electric vehicle, a total power output of at least 1.3 kilowatts (kW); • for each registered plug-in hybrid vehicle, a total power output of at least 0.80 kW. • Member States must also ensure the deployment of publicly accessible recharging stations along the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) road network. <p>Recharging infrastructure for electric heavy-duty vehicles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States must ensure a minimum coverage of recharging points for heavy-duty electric vehicles. <p>Hydrogen infrastructure for road vehicles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 31 December 2030, Member States must ensure that publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations with a total capacity of at least 1 tonne per day are deployed at least every 200 km along the TEN-T core network. At least one refuelling station must be deployed in each urban node. <p>Liquefied methane for road transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until 31 December 2024, Member States must ensure that an appropriate number of publicly accessible refuelling points for liquefied methane are set up, at least along the TEN-T core network, where there is demand, unless the costs are disproportionate to the benefits, including environmental benefits. <p>Electricity supply in maritime ports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 31 December 2029, there must be sufficient shoreside electricity for ships moored at the quayside at TEN-T core and TEN-T comprehensive maritime ports to serve at least 90% of all container and passenger vessels above 5,000 gross tonnage. <p>Electricity for stationary aircraft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 31 December 2024, all airports of the TEN-T core and comprehensive network must provide electricity to stationary aircraft used for commercial air transport operations at aircraft contact stands, and by 31 December 2029 at all remote stands. <p>Railway infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States must assess the development of alternative fuel technologies and propulsion systems (including hydrogen and battery power) for rail infrastructure that cannot be fully electrified for technical or cost-efficiency reasons. <p>Payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of electric and hydrogen vehicles must be able to pay easily at recharging and hydrogen refuelling points (with payment cards and without subscriptions). Prices, including all of their components and specific to the recharging session, must be communicated clearly to end users before the start of a recharging session. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a set of binding measures to help the EU reach its 20% energy efficiency target by 2020. • Under the Directive, all EU countries are required to use energy more efficiently at all stages of the energy chain, from production to final consumption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy distributors or retail energy sales companies have to achieve 1.5% energy savings per year through the implementation of energy efficiency measures • EU countries can opt to achieve the same level of savings through other means, such as improving the efficiency of heating systems, installing double glazed windows or insulating roofs • The public sector in EU countries should purchase energy efficient buildings, products and services • Every year, governments in EU countries must carry out energy efficient renovations on at least 3% (by floor area) of the buildings they own and occupy • Energy consumers should be empowered to better manage consumption. This includes easy and free access to data on consumption through individual metering • National incentives for SMEs to undergo energy audits • Large companies will make audits of their energy consumption to help them identify ways to reduce it • Monitoring efficiency levels in new energy generation capacities. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Seveso Directive (2012/18/EU)	<p>This Directive lays down rules for the prevention of major accidents which involve dangerous substances, and the limitation of their consequences for human health and the environment, with a view to ensuring a high level of protection throughout the Union in a consistent and effective manner.</p>	<p>The Seveso Directive is well integrated with other EU policies, thus avoiding double regulation or other administrative burden. This includes the following related policy areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals; • The Union's Civil Protection Mechanism; • The Security Union Agenda including CBRN-E and Protection of critical infrastructure; • Policy on environmental liability and on the protection of the environment through criminal law; • Safety of offshore oil and gas operations. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
EU Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) 2018 (as amended in 2023)	The ESR establishes binding annual greenhouse gas emission targets for Member States from 2021 to 2030. It is part of a set of policies and measures to reduce the EU's emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This is a crucial milestone to deliver the European Green Deal and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The ESR is also part of the Energy Union strategy and the EU's implementation of the Paris Agreement.	The national targets concern emissions from the following sectors: domestic transport (excluding aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry, and waste. These sectors account for almost 60% of emissions in the EU. The ESR assigns each Member State with an emission reduction target for 2030, a set of annual emission allocations for each year from 2021 to 2030, and flexibilities to deal with annual fluctuations in greenhouse gas emissions due to weather or economic conditions. The amended legislation increases the emissions reduction target for the targeted sectors including transport, from 29% to 40% by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Energy Union Strategy (COM/2015/080) (2015) and the EU "Clean energy for all Europeans" package (2019)	<p>The Energy Union Strategy aims at building an energy union that gives EU consumers - households and businesses - secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy. Since its launch in 2015, the EC has published several packages of measures and regular progress reports, which monitor the implementation of this key priority, to ensure that the energy union strategy is achieved.</p> <p>The package aims to help to decarbonise EU's energy system in line with the European Green Deal objectives. The ESR transforms the targets of the Clean Energy Package into binding annual climate targets for each Member State for the period 2021–2030. The "Clean energy for all Europeans" package – marked a significant step towards implementing the Energy Union Strategy.</p>	<p>The Energy Union Strategy builds five closely related and mutually reinforcing dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security, solidarity and trust - diversifying Europe's sources of energy and ensuring energy security through solidarity and cooperation between EU countries. • A fully integrated internal energy market - enabling the free flow of energy through the EU through adequate infrastructure and without technical or regulatory barriers. • Energy efficiency - improved energy efficiency will reduce dependence on energy imports, lower emissions, and drive jobs and growth. • Climate action, decarbonising the economy - the EU is committed to a quick ratification of the Paris Agreement and to retaining its leadership in the area of renewable energy. • Research, innovation and competitiveness - supporting breakthroughs in low-carbon and clean energy technologies by prioritising research and innovation to drive the energy transition and improve competitiveness. <p>Based on Commission proposals published in 2016, the Clean Energy package consists of 8 new laws. Following political agreement by the EU Council and the European Parliament (finalised in May 2019) and the entry into force of the different EU rules, EU countries have 1-2 years to convert the new directives into national law.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe 2024/EC recast: Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe Directive 2008/50/EC and Fourth Daughter Directive 2004/107/EC	<p>This new directive simplifies EU rules on ambient air quality by merging the two existing EU directives into one. Its goal is to bring quality standards in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations.</p> <p>The new directive introduces stricter limits on key air pollutants, aligning EU standards more closely with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.</p>	<p>Air quality is assessed using common methods and criteria across the EU, and the revised directive brings further improvements to air quality monitoring and modelling.</p> <p>The revised directive will also ensure early action, with air quality roadmaps that need to be prepared ahead of 2030 if there is a risk that the new standards will not be attained by that date. The air quality standards will be reviewed regularly in line with latest scientific evidence to assess whether they continue to be appropriate.</p> <p>The revised directive prioritises the health of EU citizens: it sets new air quality standards for pollutants to be reached by 2030 which are more closely aligned with the WHO air quality guidelines. Those pollutants include, among others, particulate matter PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, all known to cause respiratory problems. Member states may request that the 2030 deadline be postponed if specific conditions are met.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU (2018) Clean Air Policy Package	Aims to substantially reduce air pollution across the EU.	The proposed strategy sets out objectives for reducing the health and environmental impacts of air pollution by 2030, and contains legislative proposals to implement stricter standards for emissions and air pollution.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Emissions Ceilings (NEC) Directive 2016/2284/EU on the reduction of certain atmospheric pollutants	It aims to reduce the health risks and environmental impact of air pollution by establishing national emission reduction commitments. The Directive also aligns emission reduction commitments under EU law with international commitments (following the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol in 2012). The legislation was proposed as part of the EU's 2013 Clean Air Policy Package, which included a Clean Air Programme for Europe.	<p>The Directive covers 5 air pollutants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sulphur dioxide; • nitrogen oxides; • non-methane volatile organic compounds; • ammonia; and • fine particulate matter. <p>The Directive sets emission reduction commitments per pollutant for each EU country to be attained by 2020 and 2030. The emission reduction commitments for each pollutant that will apply each year from 2020 to 2029 are the same as those which the EU countries are already committed to under the revised Gothenburg protocol. New stricter reductions have been agreed from 2030 onwards.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979)	The first international treaty to deal with air pollution on a broad regional basis. The Convention entered into force in 1983, laying down the general principles of international cooperation for air pollution abatement and setting up an institutional framework which has since brought together research and policy.	The Convention has substantially contributed to the development of international environmental law and has created the essential framework for controlling and reducing the damage to human health and the environment caused by transboundary air pollution.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Directive on arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and PAH in ambient air (2004/107/EC), as amended	Directive 2004/107/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air.	The objective of this Directive is to establish a target value for the concentration of arsenic, cadmium, nickel and benzo(a)pyrene in ambient air so as to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects of arsenic, cadmium, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons on human health and the environment as a whole. It determines common methods and criteria for the assessment of concentrations of arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air as well as of the deposition of such substances.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Medium Combustion Plants (MCP) Directive (2015/2193)	Directive (EU) 2015/2193 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants.	This Directive lays down rules to control emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO ₂), nitrogen oxides (NO _x) and dust into the air from medium combustion plants, as well as to monitor emissions of carbon monoxide (CO). The aim is to reduce emissions to air and the potential risks to human health and the environment from such emissions. As regards the scope, Article 2 identifies the types of combustion plants to which these rules apply. Emission limits values are set out in Annex II.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2023/1791 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast)	The revised Energy Efficiency Directive significantly raises the EU's ambition on energy efficiency. It establishes 'energy efficiency first' as a fundamental principle of EU energy policy, giving it legal-standing for the first time. The Commission has published a series of recommendations, including guidelines for EU countries related to the revised directive, to help countries transpose its different elements into national law.	The revised Directive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raises the EU energy efficiency target, making it binding for EU countries to collectively ensure an additional 11.7% reduction in energy consumption by 2030, compared to the projections of the EU reference scenario 2020; more than doubles the annual energy savings obligation (Article 8) by 2028, this is one of the key policy instruments of the directive to meet the headline target and to drive energy savings in end-use sectors, such as buildings, industry and transport; puts a stronger focus on alleviating energy poverty, it aims at empowering consumers through stronger requirements for EU countries to raise awareness and provide information on energy efficiency; it includes improved regulations to identify and remove barriers related to split incentives for energy efficiency renovations between tenants and owners or among multiple owners; introduces an obligation for the monitoring and reporting of the energy performance of data centres; expands the scope of energy audit obligations to include all those companies, regardless of their size, which are consuming energy above a certain threshold; mandates EU countries to report on energy efficiency investments, including energy performance contracts, as part of the Governance Regulation, ensuring transparency and accountability; establishes project development assistance mechanisms at national, regional, and local levels to support energy efficiency investments and facilitate the attainment of the EU's ambitious energy efficiency targets. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)	The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source.	The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise. The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks Reduce adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods in the Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess all water courses and coast lines at risk from flooding through Flood Risk Assessment Prepare flood hazard maps and flood risk maps outlining the extent or potential of flooding and assets and humans at risk in these areas at River Basin District level (Article 3(2) (b)) and areas covered by Article 5(1) and Article 13(1) (b) in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3. Implement flood risk management plans and take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce flood risk for the areas covered by the Articles listed above. Inform the public and allow the public to participate in planning process. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a framework for the protection of water bodies to include inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater and their dependent wildlife and habitats. Preserve and prevent the deterioration of water status and where necessary improve and maintain “good status” of water bodies. Promote sustainable water usage. The Water Framework Directive repealed the following Directives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Drinking Water Abstraction Directive Sampling Drinking Water Directive Exchange of Information on Quality of Surface Freshwater Directive Shellfish Directive Freshwater Fish Directive Groundwater (Dangerous Substances) Directive Dangerous Substances Directive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, enhance and restore all water bodies and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Directive. Achieve “good status” for all waters. Manage water bodies based on identifying and establishing river basins districts. Involve the public and streamline legislation. Prepare and implement a River Basin Management Plan for each river basin districts identified and a Register of Protected Areas. Establish a programme of monitoring for surface water status, groundwater status and protected areas. Recover costs for water services. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, control and conserve groundwater. Prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater. Implements measures to prevent and control groundwater pollution, including criteria for assessing good groundwater chemical status and criteria for the identification of significant and sustained upward trends and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet minimum groundwater standards listed in Annex 1 of Directive. Meet threshold values adopted by national legislation for the pollutants, groups of pollutants and indicators of pollution which have been identified as contributing to the characterisation of bodies or groups of bodies of groundwater as being at risk, also taking into account Part B of Annex II. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve and maintain the quality of water intended for human consumption. Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set values applicable to water intended for human consumption for the parameters set out in Annex I. Set values for additional parameters not included in Annex I, where the protection of human health within national territory or part of it so requires. The values set should, as a minimum, satisfy the requirements of Article 4(1) (a). Implement all measures necessary to ensure that regular monitoring of the quality of water intended for human consumption is carried out, in order to check that the water available to consumers meets the requirements of this Directive and in particular the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5. Ensure that any failure to meet the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5 is immediately investigated in order to identify the cause. Ensure that the necessary remedial action is taken as soon as possible to restore its quality and shall give priority to their enforcement action. Undertake remedial action to restore the quality of the water where necessary to protect human health. Notify consumers when remedial action is being undertaken except where the competent authorities consider the non-compliance with the parametric value to be trivial. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Directive concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water and the treatment and discharge of waste water from certain industrial sectors. The objective of the Directive is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of waste water discharges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban waste water entering collecting systems shall before discharge, be subject to secondary treatment. Annex II requires the designation of areas sensitive to eutrophication which receive water discharges. Establishes minimum requirements for urban waste water collection and treatment systems in specified agglomerations to include special requirements for sensitive areas and certain industrial sectors. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Water Reuse Regulation (2020/741)	The purpose of this Regulation is to facilitate the uptake of water reuse whenever it is appropriate and cost-efficient, thereby creating an enabling framework for those Member States who wish or need to practise water reuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse. This Regulation lays down minimum requirements for water quality and monitoring and provisions on risk management, for the safe use of reclaimed water in the context of integrated water management. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC, Directive 2009/31/EC and Directive 2013/30/EU	The overall aim of the ELD is to prevent and fully remedy damaged natural resources and their services to the condition that would have existed if no damage had occurred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relates to environmental damage caused by any of the occupational activities listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities; damage to protected species and natural habitats caused by any occupational activities other than those listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities, whenever the operator has been at fault or negligent. Where environmental damage has not yet occurred but there is an imminent threat of such damage occurring, the operator shall, without delay, take the necessary preventive measures. Where environmental damage has occurred the operator shall, without delay, inform the competent authority of all relevant aspects of the situation and take all practicable steps to immediately control, contain, remove or otherwise manage the relevant contaminants and/or any other damage factors in order to limit or to prevent further environmental damage and adverse effects on human health or further impairment of services and the necessary remedial measures, in accordance with Article 7. The operator shall bear the costs for the preventive and remedial actions taken pursuant to this Directive. The competent authority shall be entitled to initiate cost recovery proceedings against the operator. The operator may be required to provide financial security guarantees to ensure their responsibilities under the directive are met. The Environmental Liability Directive has been amended through a number of Directives. Implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive is contributed towards by a Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) 'Making the Environmental Liability Directive more fit for purpose' that is updated annually to changing developments, growing knowledge and new needs. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Sewage Sludge Directive (Council Directive 86/278/EEC of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture)	<p>The purpose of this Directive is to regulate the use of sewage sludge in agriculture in such a way as to prevent harmful effects on soil, vegetation, animals and man, thereby encouraging the correct use of such sewage sludge. Member States shall prohibit the use of sludge where the concentration of one or more heavy metals in the soil exceeds the limit values which they lay down in accordance with Annex I A and shall take the necessary steps to ensure that those limit values are not exceeded as a result of the use of sludge.</p> <p>The aims of the Sewage Sludge Directive are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect humans, animals, plants and the environment by ensuring that heavy metals in soil and sludge do not exceed set limits to increase the amount of sewage sludge used in agriculture 	<p>The Directive also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sets limits for the concentration of seven heavy metals in sewage sludge intended for agricultural use and in sludge-treated soils (cadmium, copper, nickel, lead, zinc, mercury, chromium) bans the use of sewage sludge that results in concentrations of these heavy metals in soil exceeding these limit values 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Bathing Waters Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC)	<p>With a view to preserving, protecting and improving human health and the environment, within the legal framework of Directive 2000/60/EC, the present Directive establishes provisions for: (a) the monitoring and classification of bathing water quality; (b) the management of bathing water quality; and (c) the provision of information to the public on bathing water quality. Member States are required to annually identify all bathing waters and define the length of the bathing season.</p> <p>The EU aims to protect the environment and the health of Europeans by attaining good bathing water quality throughout the EU. More specifically, it aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide better and earlier information to citizens about the quality of their bathing waters, including logos move from simple sampling and monitoring of bathing waters to bathing quality management integrate into other EU measures protecting the quality of all our waters (rivers, lakes, ground waters and coastal waters) through the Water Framework Directive 	<p>The Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to monitor and assess bathing water. It ensures timely information is given to the public during the bathing season and requires Member States to disseminate information on bathing water quality actively and promptly. In particular, notices banning or advising against bathing should be rapidly and easily identifiable. The Directive applies to all surface waters that can be used for bathing, except for swimming pools and spa pools, confined waters subject to treatment or used for therapeutic purposes and confined waters artificially separated from surface water and groundwater. Decision establishing a symbol for information to the public on bathing water classification and any bathing prohibition. View the symbols for informing the public on bathing water prohibition, advice against bathing and bathing water classification.</p> <p>The implementation of the Bathing Water Directive is supported by a broad EU framework of water legislation, including the Water Framework Directive, the Environmental Quality Standards Directive, the Groundwater Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (2009/128/EC) Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115	<p>The Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) establishes a framework for European Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides by setting minimum rules to reduce the risks to human health and the environment that are associated with pesticide use.</p> <p>The Directive aims to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides in the EU by reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment and promoting the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and of alternative approaches or techniques, such as non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. EU countries have drawn up National Action Plans to implement the range of actions set out in the Directive.</p>	<p>The main actions relate to training of users, advisors and distributors of pesticides, inspection of pesticide application equipment, the prohibition of aerial spraying, limitation of pesticide use in sensitive areas, and information and awareness raising about pesticide risks. EU countries must also promote Integrated Pest Management, for which, general principles are laid down in Annex III to the Directive.</p> <p>The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a new Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products, including EU wide targets to reduce by 50% the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 2030, in line with the EU's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. The proposal, adopted on 22 June 2022, is part of a package of measures to reduce the environmental footprint of the EU's food system and help mitigate the economic losses that we are already suffering due to climate change and biodiversity loss.</p> <p>The proposal transforms the existing Directive into a Regulation which will be directly binding and uniformly applicable to all Member States. It overhauls the existing rules on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (see Directive 2009/128/EC) to bring them in line with the ambitions set in the EU Green Deal, Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies. The proposals must be approved by Member States in the Council and the European Parliament, under the normal legislative procedure.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (1962) CAP 2023-2027	<p>The CAP is a partnership between society and agriculture that ensures a stable supply of food, safeguards farmers' income, protects the environment and keeps rural areas vibrant. It aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support farmers and improve agricultural productivity, ensuring a stable supply of affordable food; • safeguard European Union farmers to make a reasonable living; • help tackle climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources; • maintain rural areas and landscapes across the EU; • keep the rural economy alive by promoting jobs in farming, agri-food industries and associated sectors. 	<p>The CAP 2023-2027 entered into force on 1 January 2023. Support for farmers and rural stakeholders across the 27 EU countries is based on the CAP 2023-2027 legal framework and the choices detailed in the CAP Strategic Plans, approved by the Commission. The approved Plans are designed to make a significant contribution to the ambitions of the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006), as amended	<p>The purpose of this Regulation is to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment, including the promotion of alternative methods for assessment of hazards of substances, as well as the free circulation of substances on the internal market while enhancing competitiveness and innovation.</p>	<p>This Regulation lays down provisions on hazardous substances and mixtures and specification of hazard classes; general obligations of manufacturers, importers and downstream users to classify, label and package the substances and mixtures; identification and examination of available information on substances and mixtures; evaluation of hazard information and decision on classification; establishment of a classification and labelling inventory in the form of a database; and the manufacture, placing on the market and use of chemical substances and preparations, pursuant to the precautionary principle.</p> <p>The Regulation sets forth the framework concerning the registration of such substances and preparations as well as the granting of authorizations. Furthermore, it sets up the European Chemicals Agency for the purposes of managing and carrying out the technical, scientific and administrative aspects of this Regulation. This Regulation sets out eight annexes attached. Annex I sets out the criteria for classification and labelling requirements for hazardous substances and mixtures. Annex II lays down special rules for labelling and packaging of certain classified substances and mixtures.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
UN Sustainable Development Goals	<p>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which reflect the need for all countries to urgently act as a global partnership.</p>	<p>Sustainable transport is mainstreamed across several SDGs and targets, especially those related to food security, health, energy, economic growth, infrastructure, and cities and human settlements.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
European Commission's "Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change" (2021)	<p>The Strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050.</p>	<p>The Strategy has four principal objectives: to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic, and to step up international action on adaptation to climate change.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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European Environment Agency's European Climate Risk Assessment (2024)	This assessment identifies 36 climate risks with potentially severe consequences across Europe.	The risks are evaluated in the contexts of risk severity, policy horizon (lead time and decision horizon), policy readiness and risk ownership. It further identifies priorities for EU policy action, based on a structured risk assessment united with qualitative aspects, such as considering social justice.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
UN Kyoto Protocol (2nd Kyoto Period), the Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II), Paris climate conference (COP21) 2015 (Paris Agreement)	The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) aims to identify and develop all the necessary elements of an EU strategy to implement the Kyoto Protocol. At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal. The agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and in line with recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) take steps “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kyoto Protocol is implemented through the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II). EU member states implement measures to improve on or complement the specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP. <p>Under COP21, governments agreed to come together every 5 years to set more ambitious targets as required by science; report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement their targets; track progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Green Deal (2019) and “Fit for 55” legislation (2021)	The European Green Deal provides a roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all. The “Fit for 55” legislative package is a central part of the European Green Deal.	<p>The European Green Deal covers all sectors of the economy, notably transport, energy, agriculture, buildings, and industries such as steel, cement, ICT, textiles and chemicals. It outlines investments needed and financing tools available, and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition.</p> <p>The 'Fit for 55' package responds to the requirements in the EU Climate Law to reduce Europe's net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. It was updated when the Commission proposed increased ambition on renewable energy and energy efficiency in the REPowerEU plan to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and boost Europe's energy security. The final legislative package is expected to reduce EU net greenhouse gas emissions by 57% by 2030. For transport, the package is primarily focused on reducing fossil fuel dependency and increasing the availability of, and infrastructure for, renewable alternatives.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Leaders Pledge for Nature 2020	Political leaders (including Taoiseach Michael Martin) participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, representing 75 countries from all regions and the European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.	<p>As part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve sustainable development, the leaders commit to achieve the vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050 by undertaking ten actions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting biodiversity, climate, and the environment at the heart of COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments as well as national and international development and cooperation; Developing and implementing an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kunming, China, as a key instrument to reach the SDGs; Raising ambition and aligning domestic climate policies with the Paris Agreement on climate change, with enhanced nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies consistent with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement, and the objective of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by mid-century, and strengthen climate resilience of economies and ecosystems; and Mainstream biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies at all levels, including in food production, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, energy, tourism, infrastructure and extractive industries, and trade and supply chains, as well as into key international agreements and processes. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Europe 2020: European 2020 Strategy for Growth and Employment	The Europe 2020 Strategy aims to ensure that the economic revival of the European Union following the economic and financial crisis is supported by a series of reforms in order to build solid foundations for growth and job creation by 2020. While addressing the structural weaknesses of the EU's economy and economic and social issues, the strategy also takes account of the longer-term challenges of globalisation, pressure on resources and ageing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Europe 2020 Strategy should enable the EU to achieve growth that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> smart, through the development of knowledge and innovation; sustainable, based on a greener, more resource efficient and more competitive economy; inclusive, aimed at strengthening employment and social and territorial cohesion. The EU has set itself five major targets for this ambition to be achieved by 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to at least 75 %; investing 3 % of gross domestic product in research and development; reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 %, increasing the share of renewable energies to 20 % and increasing energy efficiency by 20 %; reducing the school drop-out rate to less than 10 % and increasing the proportion of tertiary degrees to at least 40 %; reducing the number of people threatened by poverty or social exclusion by 20 million. The Europe 2020 Strategy targets are also supported by 7 flagship initiatives at European level and in EU countries: the Innovation Union; Youth on the move; the Digital Agenda for Europe; a Resource-efficient Europe; an industrial policy for the globalisation era; the agenda for new skills and jobs; and the European Platform against Poverty. At European level, the single market, the EU budget and the European external policy are additional levers in achieving the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives (European Commission, 2020)	<p>The EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments.</p> <p>Aims to build resilience to future threats such as the impacts of climate change, forest fires, food insecurity, disease outbreaks and protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade.</p>	<p>The Strategy contains specific commitments and actions to be delivered by 2030, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a larger EU-wide network of protected areas on land and at sea; Launching an EU nature restoration plan; Introducing measures to enable the necessary transformative stage; and Introducing measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013)	Aims to create a robust enabling framework in order to promote and facilitate Green Infrastructure (GI) projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting GI in the main EU policy areas. Supporting EU-level GI projects. Improving access to finance for GI projects. Improving information and promoting innovation. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992)	The aim of this (revised) Convention is to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study.	The Valletta Convention makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies. The Convention sets guidelines for the funding of excavation and research work and publication of research findings. It also deals with public access, in particular to archaeological sites, and educational actions to be undertaken to develop public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage. It also constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European co-operation on the archaeological heritage, entailing a systematic exchange of experience and experts among the various States.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
ICOMOS (2011) Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes ('Dublin Principles')	It is aimed to assist in the documentation, protection, conservation and appreciation of industrial heritage as part of the heritage of human societies around the World.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (I) Document and understand industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes and their values; (II) Ensure effective protection and conservation of the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; (III) Conserve and maintain the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; and (IV) Present and communicate the heritage dimensions and values of industrial structures, sites, areas and landscapes to raise public and corporate awareness, and support training and research. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Convention of the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1995)	The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reinforcement and promotion of policies for protecting and enhancing the heritage within the territories of the parties. The affirmation of European solidarity with regard to the protection of the heritage and the fostering of practical co-operation between states and regions. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recognise individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage. Emphasise that the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal. Take the necessary steps to apply the provisions of this Convention concerning the role of cultural heritage in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society. Greater synergy of competencies among all the public, institutional and private actors concerned. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000)	The European Landscape Convention introduced a Europe-wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and covering the entire territory, not just outstanding landscapes. Through its ground-breaking approach and its broader scope, it complements the Council of Europe's and UNESCO's heritage conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote protection, management and planning of landscapes. Organise European co-operation on landscape issues. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community (2013-2020)	It identifies three key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing 	<p>Four so called "enablers" will help Europe deliver on these objectives (goals):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better implementation of legislation. Better information by improving the knowledge base. More and wiser investment for environment and climate policy. Full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies. <p>Two additional horizontal priority objectives complete the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make the Union's cities more sustainable. To help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) (1979)	The convention has three main aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to promote cooperation between states to give particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species including endangered and vulnerable migratory species 	The Parties under the convention recognise the intrinsic value of nature, which needs to be preserved and passed to future generations, they also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to ensure the conservation of nature in their countries, paying particular attention to planning and development policies and pollution control. Look at implementing the Bern Convention in central Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Take account of the potential impact on natural heritage by other policies. Promote education and information of the public, ensuring the need to conserve species is understood and acted upon. Develop an extensive number of species action plans, codes of conducts, and guidelines, at their own initiative or in co-operation with other organisations. Created the Emerald Network, an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Bali Road Map (2007)	The Bali Road Map includes the Bali Action Plan, which charts the course for a new negotiating process designed to tackle climate change. The Bali Action Plan is a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision.	The Bali Action Plan is divided into five main categories: shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing. The shared vision refers to a long-term vision for action on climate change, including a long-term goal for emission reductions.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Cancun Agreements (2010)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 16 Conference in Cancun in 2010, which addresses a series of key issues in the fight against climate change. Cancun Agreements' main objectives cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation • Transparency of actions • Technology • Finance • Adaptation • Forests • Capacity building 	Among the most prominent agreements is the establishment of a Green Climate Fund to transfer money from the developed to developing world to tackle the impacts of climate change.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Doha Climate Gateway (2012)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 18 meeting in Doha in 2012 which pave the way for a new agreement in Paris in 2015.	Among the many decisions taken, governments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened their resolve and set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015, which will come into effect in 2020. • Streamlined the negotiations, completing the work under the Bali Action Plan to concentrate on the new work towards a 2015 agreement under a single negotiating stream in the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. • Emphasized the need to increase their ambition to cut greenhouse gases and to help vulnerable countries to adapt. • Launched a new commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, thereby ensuring that this treaty's important legal and accounting models remain in place and underlining the principle that developed countries lead mandated action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. • Made further progress towards establishing the financial and technology support and new institutions to enable clean energy investments and sustainable growth in developing countries. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (2001)	The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment. The objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex A to the Convention • Restrict the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex B to the Convention • Reduce or eliminate releases from unintentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex C to the Convention • Ensure that stockpiles and wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally sound manner • Other provisions of the Convention relate to the development of implementation plans, information exchange, public information, awareness and education, research, development and monitoring, technical assistance, financial resources and mechanisms, reporting, effectiveness evaluation and non-compliance 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Ramsar Convention (1971)	The Convention's mission is <i>"the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world"</i> .	Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands; • Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management; • Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
OSPAR Convention (1992)	The mission of OSPAR is to conserve marine ecosystems and safeguard human health in the North-East Atlantic by preventing and eliminating pollution; by protecting the marine environment from the adverse effects of human activities; and by contributing to the sustainable use of the seas.	OSPAR's work is organised under six strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and Ecosystem Strategy • Eutrophication Strategy • Hazardous Substances Strategy • Offshore Industry Strategy • Radioactive Substances Strategy • Strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme These six strategies fit together to underpin the ecosystem approach. For each strategy a programme of work is designed and implemented annually.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Level			
The National Planning Framework (first revision 2025) and the National Development Plan (2018)	<p>The National Planning Framework is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of to the year 2040.</p> <p>The new 2025 Framework is revised and updated to take account of changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and to build on the framework that is in place. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for the people, and to protect and enhance the environment.</p> <p>The National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan published together in 2018 will continue to align and form a single vision for Ireland under Project Ireland 2040. The implementation of the National Planning Framework will continue to be fully supported by the Government's investment strategy for public capital investment and investment by the State sector in general, with the National Development Plan detailing key projects that will make our plans a reality.</p>	<p>The ambition is to create a single vision, a shared set of goals for every community across the country. These goals are expressed in the Framework as National Strategic Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. High-Quality International Connectivity 5. Sustainable Mobility 6. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills 7. Enhanced Amenities and Heritage 8. Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate-Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)	An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development; to provide for proper planning and sustainable development in the interests of the common good; to provide for the licensing of events and control of funfairs; for those purposes to repeal and replace the Planning and Development Act 2000; to amend certain other enactments; and to provide for matters connected therewith.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, with certain exceptions, is subject to development control under the Planning Acts and the local authorities grant or refuse planning permission for development, including ones within protected areas. • There are, however, a range of exemptions from the planning system. Use of land for agriculture, peat extraction and afforestation, subject to certain thresholds, is generally exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission. • Additionally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a range of classes and large-scale projects. • Under planning legislation, Development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed. There are also discretionary powers to set objectives for the conservation of a variety of other elements of the natural heritage. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Planning and Development Act 2024	An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development; to provide for proper planning and sustainable development in the interests of the common good; to provide for the licensing of events and control of funfairs; for those purposes to repeal and replace the Planning and Development Act 2000 and amend certain other enactments; for purposes unrelated to the foregoing, to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019, the Land Development Agency Act 2021 and the National Asset Management Agency Act 2009; and to provide for matters connected therewith.	<p>Key reforms included in the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction of statutory timelines for all consenting processes, to give confidence and certainty to applicants; A significant reorganisation of An Bord Pleanála, to be known as An Coimisiún Pleanála; Greater mandatory alignment of all tiers of planning, improving consistency; Improvements to the planning judicial review processes; Clearer, more consistent policies and guidance; Longer term, more strategic, ten-year plans for Local Authorities; More agile local implementation, through the introduction of Urban and Priority Area Plans, including new bespoke plans for Gaeltacht and Island communities; Creation of Urban Development Zones, which will facilitate a more plan-led approach to development, increasing certainty at the master-planning stage; Provisions to deter abuse of planning processes through spurious planning submissions and appeals, as well as a ban on requesting payment for not opposing development and; Ability to suspend the duration of a permission while subject to judicial review proceedings, so as not to lose any time available for completing the development. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011	The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 (O.J. No. L 197, 21 July 2001) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment — commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regulations cover plans and programmes in all of the sectors listed in article 3(2) of the Directive except land-use planning. These Regulations also amend certain provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide the statutory basis for the transposition of the Directive in respect of land-use planning. Transposition in respect of the land-use planning sector is contained in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004). 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011), as amended	These Regulations provide a new for the implementation in Ireland of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats and protection of wild fauna and flora (as amended) and for the implementation of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of wild birds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provide, among other things, for: the appointment and functions of authorized officers; identification, classification and other procedures relative to the designation of Community sites. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the CJEU against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities Environmental Objectives (FPM) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 296 of 2009)	The purpose of these Regulations is to support the achievement of favourable conservation status for freshwater pearl mussels,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set environmental quality objectives for the habitats of the freshwater pearl mussel populations named in the First Schedule to these Regulations that are within the boundaries of a site notified in a candidate list of European sites, or designated as a Special Area of Conservation, under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997). Require the production of sub-basin management plans with programmes of measures to achieve these objectives. Set out the duties of public authorities in respect of the sub-basin management plans and programmes of measure. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 9 of 2010), as amended	To amend the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) to make further provision to implement Commission Directive 2014/80/EU of 20 June 2014 amending Annex II to Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.	<p>The substances and threshold values set out in Schedule 5 to S.I. No. 9 of 2010 have been reviewed and amended where necessary, based on existing monitoring information and international guidelines on appropriate threshold values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A of Schedule 6 has been amended to include changes to the rules governing the determination of background levels for the purposes of establishing threshold values for groundwater pollutants and indicators of pollution. Part B of Schedule 6 has been amended to include nitrites and phosphorus (total) / phosphates among the minimum list of pollutants and their indicators which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must consider when establishing threshold values. Part C of Schedule 6 amends the information to be provided to the Minister by the EPA with regard to the pollutants and their indicators for which threshold values have been established. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
<p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003)</p> <p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (S.I. 350 of 2014)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface waters) Regulations of 2009 (S.I. 272 of 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transpose the Water Framework Directive into legislation. • Outlines the general duty of public authorities in relation to water. • Identifies the competent authorities in charge of water policy (amended to Irish Water in 2013) and gives EPA and the CER the authority to regulate and supervise their actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements River basin districts and characterisation of RBDs and River Basin Management Plans. • Requires the public to be informed and consulted on the Plan and for progress reports to be published on RBDs. • Implements a Register of protected areas, Classification systems and Monitoring programmes for water bodies. • Allows the competent authority to recover the cost of damage/destruction of status of water body. • Outlines environmental objectives and programme of measures and environmental quality standards for priority substances. • Outlines criteria for assessment of groundwater. • Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for surface water bodies. • Outlines surface water quality standards. • Establishes threshold values for the classification and protection of surface waters against pollution and deterioration in quality. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990	The Water Pollution Acts allow Local Authorities the authority regulate and supervise actions relating to water in their division.	<p>The Water Pollution Acts enable local authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecute for water pollution offences. • Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters. • Issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution. • issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices; • Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects. • Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Water Services Act 2007 (No. 30 of 2007)</p> <p>Water Services Act 2013 (No. 6 of 2013)</p> <p>Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (No. 50 of 2013)</p> <p>Water Services Act 2017 (No. 29 of 2017)</p> <p>Water Services (Amendment) Act 2022 (No. 39 of 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the water services infrastructure. • Outlines the responsibilities involved in delivering and managing water services. • Identifies the authority in charge of provision of water and waste water supply. <p>Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of water and waste water services in the amendment act during 2013, therefore these services are no longer the responsibility of the 34 Local Authorities in Ireland.</p>	<p>Key strategic objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Uisce Éireann delivers infrastructural projects that meet key public health, environmental and economic objectives in the water services sector. • Ensuring the provision of adequate water and sewerage services in the gateways and hubs listed in the National Spatial Strategy, and in other locations where services need to be enhanced. • Ensuring good quality drinking water is available to all consumers of public and group water supplies, in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards • Ensuring the provision of the remaining infrastructure needed to provide secondary waste water treatment, for compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Waste water Treatment Directive. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan 2015 and Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024	<p>This Water Services Strategic Plan sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over the next 25 years up to 2040. It details current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term.</p> <p>The Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 is Uisce Éireann investment plan for water and wastewater assets and infrastructure for the next 5 years. The Capital Investment Plan sets out where to prioritise investment to deliver the most urgently needed improvements in drinking water quality, leakage reduction, water availability, wastewater compliance, efficiencies and customer service.</p>	<p>The Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 is made up of investment in individual projects such as building new or upgrading existing water and wastewater treatment plants and upgrading existing networks, and national programmes where activities are being delivered in a consistent and efficient manner across the country. Some examples of these programmes are the Leakage Reduction Programme, the National Disinfection Programme, the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme, and the National Certification Authorisation Programme.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Ireland's Forest Strategy 2023-2030 and associated Implementation Plan including the National Forestry Programme 2023-2027	The Implementation Plan will facilitate the initial steps in the implementation of the Strategy on the road to achieving the Shared Vision for 2050. The Implementation Plan includes the new Forestry Programme (2023 – 2027), which will be the primary implementation mechanism for the Forest Strategy. The Plan also includes a list of actions that will be funded and enabled by mechanisms outside of the Forestry Programme.	The Forestry Programme 2023-2027 was created in alignment with Ireland's Forest Strategy and is designed to provide lasting benefits for many key areas including climate change, biodiversity, wood production, and employment alongside enhancing societal benefits. The Forestry Programme will provide incentives for farmers and other landowners and will provide farm families with the opportunity to increase and diversify their income streams.	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Water Action Plan 2024: River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 (3rd Cycle) (2024)	The Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of our water resources (as specified under SDG 6). This Water Action Plan enhances and builds upon the work of the first and second-cycle plans. Where necessary, this plan addresses the shortcomings experienced during the implementation of previous plans.	The responses to shortcomings addressed include, for example, strengthening the incorporation of the integrated catchment management approach, improving the environmental ambition, improving the evidence base for 'targeting the right measures in the right place' and securing dedicated resources to deliver these, increasing environmental enforcement and compliance, and strengthening the governance structures.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ireland's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2022-2027	The main purpose of Ireland's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2022-2027 is to provide a comprehensive national overview of the ecological and chemical status of surface waters and the quantitative and chemical status of groundwaters. The information is used to track progress towards the achievement of the environmental objectives required by the Water Framework Directive, and those set out in the River Basin Management Plan.	The programme is comprised of 2,899 surface and groundwater bodies representing 60% of the total number of national water bodies, covering 2,429 river water bodies, 224 lakes, 80 transitional water bodies, 45 coastal waters, 16 canals and 121 groundwater bodies. The programme is operated by the Environmental Protection Agency, Marine Institute, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Waterways Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Local Authorities.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) – Framework Plan (2021)	<p>The NWRP is a plan on how to provide a safe, secure and reliable water supply to customers for the next 25 years, without causing adverse impact on the environment. The objective of the NWRP is to set out how we intend to maintain the supply and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long term whilst minimising the impact on the environment.</p> <p>The preparation of the plan has been divided into two distinct phases, the combination of which will become the final NWRP. Phase 1 was carried out in 2021 and the NWRP Framework has been adopted. In Phase 2 of the NWRP, Uisce Éireann summarised the needs across the 539 individual water supplies and identified the solutions to address these needs. Due to the large number of supplies in Ireland, Phase 2 was delivered as four Regional Water Resources Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Water Resources Plan: North West (RWRP NW) Regional Water Resources Plan: South West (RWRP SW) Regional Water Resources Plan: South East (RWRP SE) Regional Water Resources Plan: Eastern and Midlands (RWRP EM) 	<p>The key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas where there are current and future potential water supply shortfalls, taking into account normal and extreme weather conditions Assess the current and future water demand from homes, businesses, farms, and industry Consider the impacts of climate change on Ireland's water resources Develop a drought plan advising measures to be taken before and during drought events Develop a plan detailing how we deal with the material that is produced as a result of treating drinking water Assess the water resources available at a national level including lakes, rivers and groundwater 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030	The national plans are intended to inform investment priorities for aquaculture under Member States' operational programmes under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. They are also intended to identify measures to reduce the administrative burden on operators, to secure sustainable development and growth of aquaculture through coordinated spatial planning, to enhance the competitiveness of the aquaculture sector and to promote a level playing field for EU operators by exploiting their competitive advantages. Ireland's National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was finalised following public consultation earlier in 2022. The Plan was adopted by the European Commission in 2022.	The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development proposes 58 actions to be implemented over the period up to 2030.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Aquaculture Acts 1997 to 2006 (Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006), s. 1(3)) Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1997 (23/1997) Fisheries and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 1998 (54/1998), ss. 2, 3 and 4 Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2001 (40/2001) Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006)	The Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division ensures the efficient and effective management of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities.	<p>The Strategic Objectives of the Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop and manage an efficient and effective regulatory framework in respect of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to secure a fair financial return from the State's foreshore estate in the context of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to progressively reduce arrears in the clearing of licence applications. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Foreshore Acts 1933 to 2011	The Foreshore Acts require that a lease or licence must be obtained from the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government for the carrying out of works or placing structures or material on, or for the occupation of or removal of material from, State-owned foreshore, which represents the greater part of the foreshore. Construction of permanent structures on privately owned foreshore also required the prior permission of the Minister under the Foreshore Act.	Developments on the foreshore require planning permission in addition to a Foreshore Lease/Licence/Permission. All Foreshore Leases, Licences Permissions are without prejudice to the powers of the local planning authority. Applicants should, therefore, consult initially with the local planning authority regarding their proposal. In the case of developments on foreshore for, by or on behalf of a Local Authority where an EIS is required, applications should be made to An Bord Pleanála under Part XV, Planning and Development Act 2000.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Marine Planning Development Management Bill (General Scheme), 2019	The Bill seeks to establish in law a completely new regime for the maritime area which will replace existing State and development consent regimes and streamline arrangements on the basis of a single consent principle.	One of the aims is to establish a legal basis for An Bord Pleanála and coastal local authorities to consent to development in the maritime area, while retaining existing foreshore and planning permission provisions for aquaculture and sea fisheries related development. It will also provide for a single environmental impact assessment (EIA) and a single appropriate assessment (AA), where applicable.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (2024)	The NMPF details how marine activities will interact with each other in an ocean space that is under increasing spatial pressure, ensuring the sustainable use of Ireland's marine resources to 2040. The NMPF has been prepared with an ecosystem-based approach and informed by best available knowledge.	The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) brings together all marine-based human activities for the first time, outlining the Government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. The NMPF is intended as the marine equivalent to the National Planning Framework. This approach will enable the Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set a clear direction for managing our seas • clarify objectives and priorities • direct decision makers, users and stakeholders towards strategic, plan-led, and efficient use of our marine resources 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027	Based on the challenges identified for the seafood sector and coastal communities and the policy context, Ireland's Programme requires an ambitious vision to: "To support a resilient, climate smart, environmentally sustainable and profitable Irish seafood sector in order to maximise its contribution to jobs and growth and maintain the economic and social activities of our most vibrant and sustainable coastal communities"	The Programme details the vision and key missions to be achieved by the implementation of the programme. It also demonstrates how the strategic objectives of the EMFAF fund (specified in Regulation (EU) 2021/1139) will be employed in fulfilling the Programme.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth is an Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), setting out a roadmap for the Government's vision, high-level goals and integrated actions across policy, governance and business to enable our marine potential to be realised. Implementation of this Plan will see Ireland evolve an integrated system of policy and programme planning for our marine affairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth of marine/ maritime sectors; • Increase the contribution to the national GDP; • Deliver a business friendly yet robust governance, policy and planning framework; • Protect and conserve our rich marine biodiversity and ecosystems; • Manage our living and non-living resources in harmony with the ecosystem; • Implement and comply with environmental legislation; • Building on our maritime heritage, strengthen our maritime identity; • Increase our awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits; and • Engagement and participation by all. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Flood Risk Management Plans arising from National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme	The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive.	CFRAM Studies have been undertaken for all River Basin Districts. The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. Flood Risk and Hazard mapping, including Flood Extent Mapping, was finalised in 2017. The final outputs from the studies are the CFRAM Plans, finalised in 2018. The Plans define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 – 2022 and a Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network	The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 - 2022 sets out a roadmap for the long-term management, restoration and conservation of protected raised bogs in Ireland.	The Plan is part of the measures being implemented in response to the on-going infringement action against Ireland in relation to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, with regard to the regulation of turf cutting on the Special Areas of Conservation and on foot of the recommendation of Mr. Justice Quirke that a National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan be drawn up, arising from the Peatlands Forum (2012).	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Peatlands Strategy (2015-2025)	This Strategy aims to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations.	Objectives of the Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give direction to Ireland's approach to peatland management. To apply to all peatlands, including peat soils. To ensure that the relevant State authorities and state-owned companies that influence such decisions contribute to meeting cross-cutting objectives and obligations in their policies and actions. To ensure that Ireland's peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsibly. To inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. To inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 113/2022)	The purpose of these Regulations is to give effect to Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme pursuant to Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural source.	Part 2 concerns farmyard management. The Part requires an occupier of a holding shall take all such steps, as far as is practicable for the purposes of minimising the amount of soiled water produced on the holding; livestock manure and other organic fertilisers, soiled water and effluents from dungsteeds, farmyard manure pits, silage pits or silage clamps arising or produced in a building or yard on a holding shall, prior to its application to land or other treatment, be collected and held in a manner that prevents the run-off or seepage, directly or indirectly, into groundwaters or surface waters of such substances. The Regulations provides for general obligations related to capacity of storage facilities and then distinguishes among requirements for storage facilities of: effluents and soiled water; pig manure; poultry manure; manure from deer, goats and sheep; manure from cattle. Part 3 concerns nutrient management. Part 4 is focused on the prevention of water pollution from fertilizers and certain activities; this includes the distances from a water body and other issues requirements as to manner of application of fertilizers, soiled water etc; periods when application of fertilizers is prohibited; limits on the amount of livestock manure to be applied. Part 5 regulates general duty of occupier, such as keeping of records, etc. Offences and related matters. Part 6 is functions of the public authorities: certificates, exemptions, etc.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-Fisheries) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 565 of 2014)	These Regulations the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-fisheries) Regulations 2013 so as to apply them to the regulation of sea-fishing activity in so far as the regulation of that activity is necessary to secure compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and the objectives of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 3 provides for the submission of a Fisheries Natura Plan in relation to planned fisheries; Regulation 4 provides for a screening of a Fisheries Natura Plan to determine whether or not an appropriate assessment is required; Regulation 5 provides for an appropriate assessment of a Fisheries Natura Plan and also provides for public and statutory consultation; Regulation 6 provides for the Minister to make a determination to adopt a Fisheries Natura Plan. The Minister may amend, withdraw or revoke a plan; Regulation 7 provides for publication of the adopted Fisheries Natura Plan; Regulation 8 provides for a Risk Assessment of unplanned fisheries and also provides for public and statutory consultation on the assessment; Regulation 9 provides for the issue of a Natura Declaration to prohibit, restrict including restricting by permit, control, etc. of sea fishing activities; Regulation 10 provides for Natura Permits to be issued where required by Natura Declarations; and Regulations 11 to 31 deal with functions of authorised officers and related matters, offences, etc. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Wildlife Act of 1976 Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2023	The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna. The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 introduced a new public sector duty on biodiversity. The legislation provides that every public body, as listed in the Act, is obliged to have regard to the objectives and targets in the National Biodiversity Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection for certain species, their habitats and important ecosystems Give statutory protection to NHAs Enhances wildlife species and their habitats Includes more species for protection 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	Ireland's 4 th National Biodiversity Action Plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.	This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. It will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives, while addressing new and emerging issues: Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is an island-wide attempt to reverse declines in pollinating insects to ensure the sustainability of our food, avoid additional economic impacts on agriculture, and protect the health of the environment. The main objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making farmland, public land and private land in Ireland pollinator friendly; • Raising awareness of pollinators and how to protect them; • Managed pollinators – supporting beekeepers and growers; • Expanding our knowledge of pollinators and pollination service; and • Collecting evidence to track change and measure success. 	This voluntary Plan identified 81 actions, shared out between over 100 governmental and non-governmental organisations. A large focus of the Plan is to identify actions to improve the quality and amount of flower-rich habitat. Actions range from creating pollinator highways along our transport routes, to supporting pollinators on farmland, in gardens, businesses, and on public land.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)	An Act to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.	When considering a plan or framework, for approval, the Government shall endeavour to achieve the national transition objective within the period to which the objective relates and shall, in endeavouring to achieve that objective, ensure that such objective is achieved by the implementation of measures that are cost effective and shall, for that purpose, have regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ultimate objective specified in Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change done at New York on 9 May 1992 and any mitigation commitment entered into by the European Union in response or otherwise in relation to that objective, • The policy of the Government on climate change, • Climate justice, • Any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any • international agreement referred to in section 2; and • The most recent national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projection of future greenhouse gas emissions, prepared by the Agency. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Climate Action Plans	The National Climate Action Plan 2023 provided a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021. The Climate Action Plan 2024 builds upon the 2023 Plan by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. The Climate Action Plan 2025 is the third statutory annual update to the Climate Action Plan.	The Climate Action Plans list the actions needed to deliver on Ireland's climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated periodically to ensure alignment with Ireland's legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings. Climate Action Plan 2025 lays out a roadmap of actions that are intended to lead to meeting the national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon the Climate Action Plan 2024 by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024. The Plan provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Adaptation Framework (NAF) 2024 and associated regional, local and sectoral adaptation plans	NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation under this Framework should seek to minimise costs and maximise the opportunities arising from climate change. • Adaptation actions range from building adaptive capacity (e.g. increasing awareness, sharing information and targeted training) through to policy and finance-based actions. • Adaptation actions must be risk based, informed by existing vulnerabilities of our society and systems and an understanding of projected climate change. • Adaptation actions taken to increase climate resilience must also consider impacts on other sectors and levels of governance 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Climate Adaptation Sectoral Adaptation Plans	The Climate Act sets out the requirements for the preparation of Sectoral Adaptation Plans. The 12 priority sectors identified in the 2018 NAF were grouped into 9 such Plans and clustered into four themes covering natural and cultural capital, critical infrastructure, water resource and flood risk management, and public health. This approach aims to provide a structured and systematic approach to sectoral developments.	To support key national sectors in planning for climate change adaptation and according to the requirements of the National Adaptation Framework (2018), sectoral planning guidelines were developed as part of the Irish Climate Information Platform, Climate Ireland project. The guidelines aim to ensure that a coherent and consistent approach to adaptation planning is adopted at national and local levels. Since the guidelines' publication in May 2018, they have been successfully implemented by relevant Departments to develop Sectoral Adaptation Plans.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) (2022)	It sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is framed around three key principles that will guide the delivery of sustainable mobility policy over the coming decade. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and green mobility; • People focussed mobility; and • Better integrated mobility. 	The SMP includes an Action Plan covering the period 2022-2025 with 91 actions, supporting behavioural change across a wide range of interventions including, among other things, public transport infrastructure and services, active travel promotion and supports, road safety initiatives, legislative measures, research, and public engagement. The Policy also supports the implementation of large-scale transport projects including MetroLink and DART+ in Dublin, BusConnects in the five cities, the Connecting Ireland scheme in rural areas, and an Active Travel Infrastructure Programme providing high-quality cycling infrastructure across the country.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and associated implementation plan	It sets out a pathway for the delivery of EV charge point infrastructure, including the rollout of EV infrastructure as required under the EU's Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), where a 300% increase in the amount of public recharging infrastructure is targeted for delivery.	The strategy takes a people-first approach, focusing on the different transport needs across the country and is being informed by the piloting of different technologies and charging options in Ireland. An Implementation Plan has also been developed in conjunction with the strategy to provide an initial set of actions and deliverables to support the strategy's delivery. This includes the development the National Road Network EV Charging Plan and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Renewable Transport Fuel Policy 2023-2025	The Renewable Transport Fuel Policy, 2023 – 2025 sets out a pathway to incentivise the supply of renewable transport fuel through annual increases in the renewable transport fuel obligation rate to 2030.	The policy will underpin the shift to the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP 23) biofuel targets of at least B20 (biodiesel equivalent) in diesel and E10 (Ethanol) in petrol by 2030 (with an interim B12/E10 by 2025 target).	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Energy Security Framework (2022)	National Energy Security Framework provides an overarching and comprehensive response to Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine. The Framework outlines the structures which are in place within Government to monitor and manage our energy supplies. It sets out the plans which are in place to deal with energy security emergencies should they arise, and outlines out how these plans will be tested in light of the war in Ukraine.	The Framework sets out the government's action in response to these issues across three key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - managing the impact on consumers and businesses, with a specific focus on financially vulnerable residential consumers in the short-term - ensuring security of energy supply in the near term, with a focus on the period up to and including winter 2022/23 - reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels, in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 (published in 2024)	<p>National Energy and Climate Plans are the framework within which EU Member States must notify their climate and energy objectives, targets, policies, and measures to the European Commission and were established under Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action. Member States are required to develop NECPs on a ten-year rolling basis. The aim of the plans is to outline our energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and provide projections and ambitions towards 2050. Under the Regulation, Member States are also required to update their initial plans after 5 years, this is the first update of the initial NECP which was published in 2019. The NECP covers five dimensions of the Energy Union:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decarbonisation - Energy Efficiency - Energy Security - Internal Energy Market - Research, Innovation and Competitiveness <p>The NECP brings together the policies, targets, tools and associated material relating to our climate and energy obligations under various EU Regulations and Directives from across government bodies and departments into one document. It reflects our ambitions and provides certainty to investors and policymakers that we are committed to EU-wide targets and ambitions to move towards becoming a carbon-neutral society.</p>	<p>It outlines our department's energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP collates the policies, measures and actions related to energy and climate outlined in a range of government plans: such as the Climate Action Plan, the National Development Plan, and Project Ireland 2040, into one cohesive document. It also presents modelling that illustrates Ireland's current trajectories toward its three main European targets. The NECP reflects the ambitions set out in Climate Action Plan 2024. The NECP will act to identify gaps and areas that Ireland can improve on, which should be reflected in updated policies and measures in subsequent Climate Action Plans. The policies outlined in the NECP reflect the ambition of Climate Action Plan 2024.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024	<p>It is the second National Implementation Plan for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals reviews the progress made towards each of the 17 Goals.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out five strategic objectives and 51 actions, with 119 individual measures to increase Ireland's ambition and strengthen implementation structures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also incorporates 23 external actions from four other National Plans or Strategies which contribute to and are complementary to the objectives of this Plan and which have been included for coherence and reporting purposes.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 1: To embed the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development</p> <p>Strategic Objective 2: To integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs</p> <p>Strategic Objective 3: Greater partnerships for the Goals</p> <p>Strategic Objective 4: To further incorporate the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms</p> <p>Strategic Objective 5: Strong reporting mechanisms</p>	<p>Implementation of the Strategy needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Planning, Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040	<p>The PLUTO takes account of forecasted future economic and demographic scenarios, affordability considerations and relevant Government policies.</p>	<p>The PLUTO seeks to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quantify in broad terms the appropriate scale of financial investment in land transport over the long term; 2. Consider how fiscal, environmental and technological developments might impact on this investment; and, 3. Identify strategic priorities for future investment to ensure land transport infrastructure provision facilitates the objectives of Project Ireland 2040. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) (2021)	<p>The high-level strategic framework for prioritising future investment in the land transport network. This new framework is the Department of Transport's contribution to Project Ireland 2040, Government's long-term strategy for accommodating population growth in a sustainable manner and making Ireland a better country for all of its people. It has been developed to ensure that our transport sectoral strategy is underpinned by and supports the achievement of the spatial objectives and National Strategic Objectives set out in the National Planning Framework.</p>	<p>The framework establishes high-level investment priorities to efficiently and effectively address key transport challenges identified by the background analysis and to ensure that transport investment is aligned with and supports Government's overarching spatial and climate change objectives, as articulated in the National Planning Framework and Climate Action Plan.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Investing in our Future: A Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT) – Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	SFILT sets out a set of priorities to guide the allocation of the State's investment to best develop and manage Ireland's land transport network over the coming decades.	<p>The three priorities stated in SFILT are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1: Achieve steady state maintenance (meaning that the maintenance and renewal of the existing transport system is at a sufficient level to maintain the system in an adequate condition); • Priority 2: Address urban congestion; and • Priority 3: Maximise the value of the road network. <p>In delivering on the steady state maintenance objective set out in SFILT, the Plan includes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned replacement programme for the bus fleet operated under Public Service Obligation ("PSO") contracts; • Tram refurbishment and asset renewal in the case of light rail; and • To the extent within the Authority' remit, support for the operation of the existing rail network within the GDA. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan (2016-2021)	€27 billion multi-annual Exchequer Capital Investment Plan, which is supported by a programme of capital investment in the wider State sector, and which over the period 2016 to 2021 will help to lay the foundations for continued growth in Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Capital Plan reflects the Government's commitment to supporting strong and sustainable economic growth and raising welfare and living standards for all. • It includes allocations for new projects across a number of key areas and funding to ensure that the present stock of national infrastructure is refreshed and maintained. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 ("Energy Security Package")	It outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050.	<p>The Energy Security Package includes a range of measures to implement this approach in the short and medium term by prioritising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced and Responsive Demand • A Renewables-Led System • More Resilient Systems • Robust Risk Governance 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Our Sustainable Future: A framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012	<p>A medium to long term framework for advancing sustainable development and the green economy in Ireland. It identifies spatial planning as a key challenge for sustainable development and sets a series of measures to address these challenges. It aims at improving synergies and identifying and tackling policy gaps, policy conflicts and trade-offs as part of a coherent, joined-up approach to policy making on sustainable development.</p> <p>Ireland's Framework for Sustainable Development timeframe is to 2020 to tie in with other national and international frameworks, but a longer-term horizon to 2050 is also taken where appropriate, to provide a framework for guiding and reporting on long-term broad development trends such as on climate change.</p>	The objectives of the Framework are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritise policy areas and mechanisms where a sustainable development approach will add value and enable progress towards the strategy aims. • Highlight and promote existing sustainable practices that, with the correct support, can underpin sustainable development more generally. • Strengthen policy integration, coherence and co-ordination and bring a long term perspective to decision making. • Set out governance mechanisms which ensure effective participation within government and across all stakeholders. • Set out clear measures, responsibilities and timelines in an implementation plan. • Set out how progress is to be measured and reported on through the use of indicators. • Incorporate adequate and effective monitoring, learning and improvement into the Framework process. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020	<p>Outlines a policy for how a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. Sets out five key goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce overall travel demand. • To maximise the efficiency of the transport network. • To reduce reliance on fossil fuels. • To reduce transport emissions. • To improve accessibility to transport. 	<p>Others lower level aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment • ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking • improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies • strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Draft National Bioenergy Plan 2014 - 2020	The Draft Bioenergy Plan vision: Bioenergy resources contributing to economic development and sustainable growth, generating jobs for citizens, supported by coherent policy, planning and regulation, and managed in an integrated manner.	<p>Three high-level goals, of equal importance, based on the concept of sustainable development are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To harness the market opportunities presented by bioenergy in order to achieve economic development, growth and jobs. • To increase awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits of developing bioenergy. • To ensure that bioenergy developments do not adversely impact the environment and its living and non-living resources. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Draft Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework (DCCAE) 2016	Goal: To optimise the opportunities in Ireland for renewable electricity development on land at significant scale, to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, in accordance with European and Irish law, including Directive 2009/28/EC: On the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources.	Objective: To develop a Policy and Development Framework for renewable electricity generation on land to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, with particular focus on large scale projects for indigenous renewable electricity generation. This will, inter alia, provide guidance for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for the Transport Sector (DTTAS) 2017-2030	This Framework sets targets to achieve an appropriate level of alternative fuels infrastructure for transport, which is relative to national policy and Irish market needs. Non-infrastructure-based incentives to support the use of the infrastructure and the uptake of alternative fuels are also included within the scope of the Framework.	Targets for alternative fuel infrastructure include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFV forecasts • Electricity targets • Natural gas (CNG, LNG) targets • Hydrogen targets • Biofuels targets • LPG targets • Synthetic and paraffinic fuels targets 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010	Outlines objectives and actions aimed at developing a strong cycle network in Ireland. Sets out 19 specific objectives, and details the 109 actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed.	Sets a target where 10% of all journeys will be made by bike by 2020. Proposes the planning, infrastructure, communication, education and stakeholder participations measures required to implement the initiative.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 to 2030	This National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport represents the first step in communicating our longer-term national vision for decarbonising transport by 2050, the cornerstone of which is our ambition that by 2030 all new cars and vans sold in Ireland will be zero-emissions capable. By 2030 it is envisaged that the movement in Ireland to electrically-fuelled cars and commuter rail will be well underway, with natural gas and biofuels developing as major alternatives in the freight and bus sectors.	This policy set out to achieve five key goals in transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce overall travel demand • Maximise the efficiency of the transport network • Reduce reliance on fossil fuels • Reduce transport emissions • Improve accessibility to transport These goals remain the cornerstone of transport policy and are fully aligned to the objectives of this National Policy Framework.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007 – 2020 (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White paper setting out a framework for delivering a sustainable energy future in Ireland. • Outlines strategic Goals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Security of Supply ○ Sustainability of Energy ○ Competitiveness of Energy Supply 	The underpinning Strategic Goals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that electricity supply consistently meets demand • Ensuring the physical security and reliability of gas supplies to Ireland • Enhancing the diversity of fuels used for power generation • Delivering electricity and gas to homes and businesses over efficient, reliable and secure networks • Creating a stable attractive environment for hydrocarbon exploration and production • Being prepared for energy supply disruptions 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) (2010)	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan sets out the Government's strategic approach and concrete measures to deliver on Ireland's 16% target under Directive 2009/28/EC. National Renewable Energy Action Plan.	The areas of intervention identified by the NREAP are heat, transport and electricity. Section 4 provides an overview of all policies and measures to promote the use of energy from renewable resources, these are: Biofuels Mineral Oil Tax Relief (MOTR) Schemes to increase production and use of biofuel; Greener Homes Scheme, financial facilitates to wider deployment of renewable-energy heating technologies in the residential sector; Grant support for the planting of perennial biomass crops (willow and miscanthus) – contributes to biomass needs of renewable energy sector; a policy that facilitates renewables by providing for grid connections outside the gate process for certain small, renewable, low carbon generators; new local and central authorities; etc.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland (2017 – 2020)	Article 24 of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive requires Member States to submit a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) every three years. Ireland's 4th NEEAP was produced in early 2017.	It provides a comprehensive overview on the progress made towards the above targets the measures in place to ensure the targets are met the strategies and policies in place across the residential, commercial, transport and public sector.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Broadband Plan (2012)	The National Broadband Plan is the Government's initiative to deliver high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland. This will be delivered through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest.	The Plan sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear statement of Government policy on the delivery of High-Speed Broadband. Specific targets for the delivery and rollout of high-speed broadband and the speeds to be delivered. The strategy and interventions that will underpin the successful implementation of these targets. A series of specific complementary measures to promote implementation of Government policy in this area. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1	The main objective of the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap Version 1.1 is to outline how we can make the grid ready so that 80% of Ireland's and Northern Ireland's electricity can come from renewable sources, like the wind and sun, by 2030. These targets, and new limits to carbon emissions, are the product of updates to climate change policy across the island in 2022.	Key goals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the delivery of renewable electricity. Find problems, gaps, opportunities, potential collaborations, or areas of duplication in the deployment of renewable electricity projects. Help to find and resolve potential regulatory, administrative and/or legal barriers to the faster deployment of renewable electricity projects. Increase alignment across the energy sector to support the delivery of renewable electricity generation projects. Recommend appropriate investment conditions for electricity projects. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018)	The objective of this Strategy is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all greenways users. It also aims to increase the number and geographical spread of greenways of scale and quality around the country over the next 10 years with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure; Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity; Greenways that provide a substantially segregated off road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do; and Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies; and Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector	Construction 2020 sets out a package of measures agreed by the Government and is aimed at stimulating activity in the building industry. The Strategy aims both to increase the capacity of the sector to create and maintain jobs, and to deliver a sustainable sector, operating at an appropriate level. It seeks to learn the lessons of the past and to ensure that the right structures and mechanisms are in place so that they are not repeated.	This Strategy therefore addresses issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic approach to the provision of housing, based on real and measured needs, with mechanisms in place to detect and act when things are going wrong; Continuing improvement of the planning process, striking the right balance between current and future requirements; The availability of financing for viable and worthwhile projects; Access to mortgage finance on reasonable and sustainable terms; Ensuring we have the tools we need to monitor and regulate the sector in a way that underpins public confidence and worker safety; Ensuring a fit for purpose sector supported by a highly skilled workforce achieving high quality and standards; and Ensuring opportunities are provided to unemployed former construction workers to contribute to the recovery of the sector. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997)	The overall aim of this Strategy is to ensure that economy and society in Ireland can develop to their full potential within a well-protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community.	The Strategy addresses all areas of Government policy, and of economic and societal activity, which impact on the environment. It seeks to re-orientate policies as necessary to ensure that the strong growth Ireland enjoys and seeks to maintain will be environmentally sustainable.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc.	Relevance to the Plan
National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 and National Landscape Character Assessment (pending preparation)	The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions. Landscape Strategy Vision: <i>"Our landscape reflects and embodies our cultural values and our shared natural heritage and contributes to the well-being of our society, environment and economy. We have an obligation to ourselves and to future generations to promote its sustainable protection, management and planning."</i>	The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into the approach to sustainable development; Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape; Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of the landscape; Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended)	To make provision in relation to the prevention, management and control of waste; to give effect to provisions of certain acts adopted by institutions of the European communities in respect of those matters; to amend the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992, and to repeal certain enactments and to provide for related matters.	The Waste Management Act contains a number of key legal obligations, including requirements for waste management planning, waste collection and movement, the authorisation of waste facilities, measures to reduce the production of waste and/or promote its recovery.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2021-2027	The EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (NWHMP) covers a six-year period from 2021 to 2027. This is the fourth National Hazardous Waste Management Plan and is made under Section 26 of the Waste Management Act 1996. It sets out the priorities to be pursued over the next six years and beyond to improve the prevention and management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous revised plan, and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous revised plan was published. The purpose of this plan is to protect the environment and human health in Ireland through best-practice management of hazardous wastes.	The Plan's objectives are: 1. Support and drive priority prevention actions by industry and the public to reduce the generation of hazardous waste; 2. Support the identification of adequate and appropriate collection infrastructure for all hazardous wastes with a view to mitigating environmental and health impacts; 3. Endorse the proximity principle such that hazardous wastes are treated as close to the point of production as possible – including within Ireland, taking into account the need for specialised installations for certain types of waste. 4. Support effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous wastes in line with national policy priorities; 5. Promotion of safe reuse and recycling pathways in support of the circular economy.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (2024)	The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, under the auspices of the County and City Management Association National Oversight Group, have co-ordinated the preparation of this plan which is the first National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy. This Plan sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024 to 2030.	The Plan seeks to influence sustainable consumption and prevent the generation of waste, improve the capture of materials to optimise circularity and enable compliance with policy and legislation.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ministerial Guidelines such as Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Flood Risk Management Guidelines	The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public and cover a wide range of issues amongst others, architectural heritage, child care facilities, landscape, quarries and residential density.	The Minister issues statutory guidelines under Section 28 of the Act which planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are obliged to have regard to in the performance of their planning functions.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025	The Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025 is a roadmap for building a healthier Ireland.	It is based around four key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life to reduce health inequalities to protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing to create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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S.I. 232/2018 - European Union (National Emission Ceilings) Regulations 2018	The Regulations require the Minister to ensure that emissions of the specified pollutants are limited in accordance with the ceilings set out in Schedule 2. Annex III part 2 includes a set of measures to reduce emissions from agriculture.	<p>The Regulations provide that the Environment Protection Agency shall prepare an annual inventory report of emissions of 5 specified pollutants (sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), ammonia (NH₃), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), and in certain years a report on projections of emissions.</p> <p>The Regulations also require the preparation of a national air pollution control programme Referring, among other things, to the 1979 UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution), and the establishment of a network to monitor the negative impacts of air pollution upon ecosystems based on a network of monitoring sites that is representative of Ireland's freshwater, natural and semi-natural habitats and forest ecosystem types. The Programme shall contain elements on the use of nitrogen fertilizer and soil protection. In fulfilling the requirements of subparagraph (b) the Minister shall ensure coordination with other monitoring programmes established pursuant to Union legislation including Directive 2008/50/EC, Directive 2000/60/EC and Council Directive 92/43/EEC and, if appropriate, the LRTAP Convention and, where appropriate, make use of data collected under those programmes.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Clean Air Strategy 2023	The Clean Air Strategy provides the strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote integrated measures across government policy that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air while delivering on wider national objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a National Strategy provides a policy framework by which Ireland can develop the necessary policies and measures to comply with new and emerging EU legislation. • The Strategy should also help tackle climate change. • The Strategy considers a wider range of national policies that are relevant to clean air policy such as transport, energy, home heating and agriculture. • In any discussion relating to clean air policy, the issue of people's health is paramount and this is a theme of the Strategy. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Agri-Food Strategy 2030	The Food Vision 2030 Strategy is a new ten year Strategy for the Irish agri-food sector (taken to include primary agriculture, food and drink processing and manufacturing, fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing, forestry and forestry processing and the equine sector).	<p>The Strategy consists of 22 Goals, grouped into four high-level "Missions" for the sector to work toward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector • Viable and Resilient Primary Producers with Enhanced Well-Being • Food Which is Safe, Nutritious And Appealing, Trusted And Valued at Home and Abroad • An Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology And Talent 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Agricultural Schemes, including: Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS), Agri-Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS), Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) and Results-based Environment-Agri Pilot Scheme (REAP)	Agri-environmental funding schemes aimed at rural development for the environmental enhancement and protection. The REPS evolved to AEOS 1, 2 and 3 and currently the Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment (GLAS) Scheme is in place. The recently introduced REAP scheme in Ireland is a two year scheme in place for 2021 and 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish best practice farming methods and production methods in order to protect landscapes and maximise conservation. • Protect biodiversity, endangered species of flora and fauna and wildlife habitats. • Ensure food is produced with the highest regard to the environment. • Implement nutrient management plans and grassland management plans. • Protect and maintain water bodies, wetlands and cultural heritage. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 (as amended)	The National Rural Development Programme, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a national programme based on the EU framework for rural development and prioritises improving the competitiveness of agriculture, improving the environment and improving the quality of life in rural areas.	<p>At a more detailed level, the programme also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports structural change at farm level including training young farmers and encouraging early retirement, support for restructuring, development and innovation; • Aims to improve the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and • Aims to improve quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity through the implementation of local development strategies such as non-agricultural activities 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025	The vision of this policy is for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. Our Rural Future represents the Irish Government's blueprint for a post-COVID-19 recovery and development of rural Ireland over the next 5 years. It provides the framework to achieve the vision of transforming the quality of life and opportunity for people living in rural areas.	A set of policy measures aim to deliver wellbeing for all, and to support an aligned policy approach to rural development. It seeks to promote enhanced community participation, to prepare rural areas for technological, demographic and environmental change, and to address the diversity of challenges and opportunities facing rural areas, informed by analysis, data, and consultation.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Food Wise 2025 (DAFM)	Food Wise 2025 sets out a ten-year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further.	Food Wise 2025 identifies ambitious and challenging growth projections for the industry over the next ten years including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% increase in exports to €19 billion. • 70% increase in value added to €13 billion. • 60% increase in primary production to €10 billion. • The creation of 23,000 additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high-end value-added product development. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021	The Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 sets out actions that the Tourism Leadership Group has identified as priorities to be progressed until 2021 in order to maintain sustainable growth in overseas tourism revenue and employment. Each action involves specific tourism stakeholders, both in the public and private sectors, all of whom we expect to proactively work towards the completion of actions within the specified timeframe.	The Plan contains 27 actions focusing on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Context • Marketing Ireland as a Visitor Destination • Enhancing the Visitor Experience • Research in the Irish Tourism Sector • Supporting Local Communities in Tourism • Wider Government Policy • International Context • Co-ordination Structures 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Policy Statement: People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025	Growing Tourism to 2025 is a policy framework for the development of tourism within the Country. The main goal of this policy statement is to have a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work.	The Tourism Policy Statement sets three headline targets to be achieved by 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas tourism revenue of €5 billion per year • net of inflation excluding carrier receipts; • 250,000 people employed in tourism; and • 10 million overseas visitors to Ireland per year. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan 2016-2020	The Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan provides a strategic framework for the integration of built, natural and cultural heritage into the future management of waterways. The overarching aim of the Plan is to: <i>"Identify and protect the unique waterways heritage and promote its sustainable use for the enjoyment of this and future generations"</i> .	Four objectives of the Plan include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Fostering partnerships to continue building waterway heritage knowledge through storing information, undertaking research and developing best practice. • Objective 2: Promoting awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of our waterway heritage with a focus on community engagement. • Objective 3: Promoting the integrated management, conservation, protection and sustainable use of the inland navigable waterway asset. • Objective 4: To develop Waterways Ireland as a heritage organisation committed to achieving the aim of this plan. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Waterways Ireland "Reimagining Our Waterways" 10-Year Plan 2023	10-Year Plan is a visionary roadmap for reimagining historical waterways, greenways and blueways. Waterways Ireland's Vision is to be recognised as having enabled the creation of inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences, through conservation and sustainable development for the benefit of all.	At the core of our 10-year plan is set of six strategic priorities. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation Development & Governance • Sustainable Funding Model • Asset Portfolio Management • Participation and Reputation • Sustainable Development • Climate Action, Environment and Heritage 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Development and Innovation – A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022, (Fáilte Ireland, 2016)	This strategy sets out the framework and mechanism for the delivery of investment to cities, towns, villages, communities and businesses across the country. It identifies priorities to support innovation in the sector to retain and grow the country's competitiveness in the marketplace. Its ultimate aim is to strengthen the appeal of Ireland for international visitors.	The objectives of the Tourism Development and Innovation Strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To successfully and consistently deliver a world class visitor experience; • To support a tourism sector that is profitable and achieves sustainable levels of growth and delivers jobs; • To facilitate communities to play an enhanced role in developing tourism in their locality, thereby strengthening and enriching local communities; and • To recognise, value and enhance Ireland's natural environment as the cornerstone of Irish tourism. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998	The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that each Housing Authority adopts a Traveller Accommodation Programme for its functional area.	This Act amended and extended the Housing Acts, 1966 to 1997, the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 1963 to 1998, the Local Government Act, 1991, to make provision for the accommodation needs of travellers, to provide for the appointment of a national traveller accommodation consultative committee and local traveller accommodation consultative committees and to provide for related matters.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024)	The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They are accompanied by a companion non-statutory Design Manual that illustrates best practice examples of how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied.	The Guidelines build on and update previous guidance to take account of current Government policy and economic, social and environmental considerations. There is a renewed focus in the Guidelines on the renewal of existing settlements and on the interaction between residential density, housing standards and quality urban design and placemaking to support sustainable and compact growth.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)	The Guidelines have five key policy objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that retail development is plan-led; • Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development; • Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations; • Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy; and • Delivering quality urban design outcomes. 	The aim of the Guidelines is to ensure that the planning system continues to play a key role in supporting competitiveness in the retail sector for the benefit of the consumer in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. In addition, the planning system must promote and support the vitality and viability of city and town centres thereby contributing to a high standard of urban design and encouraging a greater use of sustainable transport.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Architectural Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)	Part 1 of these guidelines includes the criteria to be applied when selecting proposed protected structures for inclusion in the RPS. It also offers guidance to planning authorities on issuing a declaration on a protected structure and on determining planning applications in relation to a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of a building within an ACA.	Part 2 contains supplementary detailed guidance to support planning authorities in their role to protect the architectural heritage when a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of a building within an ACA is the subject of development proposals and when a declaration is sought in relation to a protected structure.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027	The primary objective of the strategy which is to facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community.	This Strategy will build on the progress made under the previous strategy, The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011 – 2016 (extended to 2021). The Strategy promotes a whole of community approach to housing for disabled people when planning the provision of housing, including infrastructure, transport, education, and employment.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Derelict Sites Act (1990)	An Act to make provision with respect to land to prevent it being or becoming a derelict site, to enable Local Authorities to require the taking of measures on derelict sites by the owners or occupiers and, in certain circumstances, to acquire derelict sites compulsorily, to establish registers of derelict sites, to enable the minister to give directions in relation to derelict sites, to provide for a derelict sites levy and to provide for other matters connected with the aforesaid and to repeal the Derelict Sites Act 1961.	Under the Act, local authorities can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecute owners who do not comply with notices served • Make compulsory land purchases • Carry out necessary work themselves and charge the owners for the cost All local authorities must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain derelict sites register • Make the register available for public inspection - It can remove an entry from the Register when it is satisfied that improvement works have been carried out on the derelict site. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended)	An Act to make provision with respect to land in areas in which housing is required and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant, to establish a register of vacant sites in those areas, to provide for vacant sites levy, to amend the Derelict Sites Act 1990, to amend Parts II, III and V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, to amend the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and to provide for related matters.	This Revised Act is an administrative consolidation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. It is prepared by the Law Reform Commission in accordance with its function under the Law Reform Commission Act 1975 (3/1975) to keep the law under review and to undertake revision and consolidation of statute law.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland	The government's overall objective is that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to purchase or rent at an affordable price built to a high standard and in the right place offering a high quality of life 	The policy has four pathways to achieving housing for all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting home ownership and increasing affordability eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion increasing new housing supply addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Town Centre First Policy (2022)	The Town Centre First Policy is a major cross-government policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into town centres. It advocates for a holistic, place-based approach to sustainable rural development. The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the business, service, social and. cultural.	The Policy contains 33 actions which will give towns the tools and resources they need to become more viable and attractive places in which to live, work, socialise and run a business. This will focus on charting the future direction of their towns, address issues of vacancy and dereliction and add vibrancy to the town centre.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Regional/ County/Local Level			
Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031	The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Eastern and Midland Region in order to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework.	The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy includes provisions for its 12 constituent local authorities: Fingal County Council; Dublin City Council; South Dublin County Council; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council; Louth County Council; Kildare County Council; Meath County Council; Wicklow County Council; Longford County Council; Laois County Council; Offaly County Council; and Westmeath County Council.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024	The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035, which established an overall framework for transport investment over the next two decades and was subject to full SEA and Stage 2 AA, is a key policy shaping the six-year Integrated Infrastructure Plan. The priorities in the Integrated Infrastructure Plan align with the objectives and priorities set out in the Transport Strategy, focused on improving public and sustainable transport.	The Implementation Plan identifies investment proposals for a number of areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus; Light Rail; Heavy Rai; Integration Measures and Sustainable Transport Investment; Integrated Service Plan; and Integration and Accessibility. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs	Management planning for nature conservation sites has a number of aims. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and evaluate the features of interest for a site To set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest To describe the site and its management To identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site To set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve the objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites within the Natura 2000 network) have to be set for the habitats and species for which the sites are selected. These objectives are used when carrying out appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact on these sites. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Groundwater Protection Schemes	A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.	A Groundwater Protection Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater, and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment-based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), including Laois LECP 2023-2028 and Offaly LECP 2023-2028	The overarching vision for each LECP is: “to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities.”	The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Land Use Plans, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those in force in County Laois and County Offaly (including the overarching Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027); Emerging Land Use Plans in County Laois and County Offaly (including the Portlaoise Local Area Plan, the Draft Mountmellick Local Area Plan and the Edenderry and Birr Local Area Plans); and Those in force and emerging in other adjoining planning authorities (including development plans for Westmeath, Meath, Kildare, Carlow, Galway, Kilkenny, Roscommon and Tipperary). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline planning objectives for land use development. Strategic framework for planning and sustainable development including those set out in National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. Set out the policies and proposals to guide development in the specific Local Authority area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify future infrastructure, development and zoning required. Protect and enhances amenities and environment. Guide planning authority in assessing proposals. Aim to guide development in the area and the amount of nature of the planned development. Aim to promote sustainable development. Provide for economic development and protect natural environmental, heritage. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
County Laois Landscape Character Assessment, County Offaly Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Character Assessments in adjoining local authorities	Characterise the geographical dimension of the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the quality, value, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape area. Guide strategies and guidelines for the future development of the landscape. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The upcoming County Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030	Aims to protect, conserve, enhance and restore heritage, biodiversity and ecosystem services across all spectrums.	<p>Plan’s objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gathering information on the biodiversity resource managing the resource education and awareness cooperation to achieve objectives <p>actions in the Plan continue to be implemented beyond its five-year timescale as part of ongoing implementation of the County Offaly Biodiversity Plan.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026	<p>The Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021 – 2026 is the fourth such iteration to put in place clear aims and objectives for the heritage of county Laois. This strategy follows on from three preceding Heritage Plans for county Laois and builds on the work and experience gained from implementing those plans successfully.</p> <p>The aims of the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026 are to: a) Conserve and enhance the heritage and biodiversity of Laois; b) Commemorate the people and events of historical significance for Laois; c) Integrate our work across built, natural and cultural heritage, where possible; and d) Celebrate and promote the heritage and biodiversity of Laois.</p>	<p>ery of objectives is set out across eight key action areas: Research, Data Collection and Best Practice; Investment in Key Sites and Programmes; Investment in People and Community-led Heritage and Biodiversity; Engagement and Education; Policy and Advocacy; Place-making and Connecting Landscapes; Championing Laois; and Targeting Resources.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
County Offaly Heritage Plan 2023-2027	<p>The serious and urgent agenda of addressing the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate crises underpins this plan.</p>	<p>The Offaly Heritage Plan sets out the work of Offaly County Council working in partnership of groups and agencies to deliver heritage projects within the County.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Laois Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 Offaly Noise Action Plan 2024-2028	<p>The Noise Action Plans is required under the Environmental Noise Directive (“END”) (2002/49/EC) which was transported into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 549/2018) and the European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 663/2021). The Regulations require Strategic Noise Maps and Noise Action Plans to be made or revised every five years.</p>	<p>The actions detailed in the Plan have been drawn up to assess noise exposure in priority areas, as indicated by strategic noise mapping located on the identified routes within the respective functional areas of the local authority.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Laois County Council’s Climate Action Plan 2019-2024	<p>Vision: <i>“In our vision for Laois, we stand as a beacon of leadership, resilient in the face of Climate Change, steadfast in its position as a thriving place to live, work, invest, and visit—for both present and future generations. In Laois we embrace our responsibility to address the underlying causes of climate change, setting an example that inspires action and fosters sustainability.”</i></p> <p>Mission Statement: <i>“Laois County Council is committed to forging a path of influence with its actions, assuming a leadership role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and embracing climate change adaptation. This proactive approach will extend to households, communities, and businesses, to aid them in navigating the challenges posed by climate change impacts.”</i></p>	<p>The climate actions of the Plan are in a structured format, ensuring alignment between on-the-ground initiatives and the overarching vision the Plan aims to achieve. The intension of the Climate Action Plan is to promote, develop and implement climate actions through process improvements, community engagement, progressive development and integrated learning processes, which will be refined throughout the lifetime of the Plan.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Offaly County Council’s Climate Action Plan 2019-2024	<p>The vision for Offaly will be to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.</p>	<p>118 climate actions have been developed for Offaly County Councils Climate Action Plan under six main themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and Leadership • Built Environment • Transport • Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure • Community Resilience and Transition • Sustainability and Resource Management 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Town Centre First Plans	<p>Town Centre First aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.</p>	<p>Town Centre First (TCF) lays the foundation for each town to develop, at a local level, their own plan-led path forward. This will be expressed through a tailored TCF plan, which is underpinned by a clear diagnosis of local strengths and challenges.</p> <p>The TCF approach is centred on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and communication – a collaborative process involving all relevant local stakeholders, represented by a collaborative Town Team, with good communication in respect of issues raised and the agreed direction. • Understanding the place – analysis and appraisal underpinned by a town audit/ data gathering -process. • Defining the place – shaping the plan around high-level objectives that are subsequently expressed through a series of actions. • Enabling the place– identifying a clear path to delivery of the Plan, cognisant that this will require actions of varying scale to be delivered by different partners. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Fáilte Ireland Tourism plans and strategies, including those relating to the "Ireland's Ancient East" and "Ireland's Hidden Heartlands" including Destination Experience Development Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies	Fáilte Ireland's work includes preparing various plans and strategies for brands and initiatives. These plans are subject to their own environmental assessment processes and any project arising is required to be consistent with and conform with the provisions of all adopted/approved Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including provisions for the protection and management of the environment.	Some of Fáilte Ireland's plans and strategies include various projects relating to land use and infrastructural development, including those relating to development of land or on land and the carrying out of land use activities. Many of these projects exist already while some are not currently in existence. The Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes that provide for different projects undergo a variety of environmental assessments. These assessments ensure that environmental effects are considered, including: those arising from new and intensified uses and activities; and those arising from various sectors such as tourism.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Various existing, planned and emerging projects provided for by the above plans and programmes	These projects have been provided for by higher-level plans and programmes.	These projects will contribute towards the development of the area to which the Plan relates and/or wider area and will contribute towards environmental protection and management.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.