

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

FOR THE

OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

for:

Offaly County Council

Áras an Chontae
Charleville Road
Tullamore
County Offaly



by:

CAAS Ltd.

1st Floor
24-26 Ormond Quay Upper
Dublin 7



OCTOBER 2021

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	v
Glossary.....	vi
Section 1 SEA: Introduction and Benefits	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Implications for the Planning Authority.....	1
1.3 Why SEA? The Benefits.....	1
Section 2 The Plan	4
2.1 Introduction.....	4
2.2 Content of the Plan	4
2.3 Strategic Vision	4
2.4 Strategic Objectives.....	4
2.5 Principles for Growth	5
2.6 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development	5
2.7 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes	6
Section 3 SEA Methodology	7
3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach	7
3.2 Appropriate Assessment and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment.....	8
3.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	8
3.4 Scoping.....	8
3.5 Alternatives	9
3.6 Environmental Report	9
3.7 Instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan.....	9
3.8 SEA Statement.....	11
Section 4 Environmental Baseline	13
4.1 Introduction.....	13
4.2 National Reporting on the Environment	13
4.3 Sustainable Development Goals.....	14
4.4 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of a new Plan	14
4.5 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services.....	16
4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	17
4.7 Population and Human Health	28
4.8 Soil	28
4.9 Water.....	32
4.10 Air and Climatic Factors	39
4.11 Material Assets.....	41
4.12 Cultural Heritage	47
4.13 Landscape	52
4.14 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivity Mapping	56
Section 5 Strategic Environmental Objectives	58
Section 6 Description of Alternatives	63
6.1 Introduction.....	63
6.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives	63
6.3 Tier 1: Alternatives for Positioning under the Settlement Hierarchy.....	63

6.4	Tier 2: Alternatives for Population Allocations	63
6.5	Tier 3: Rural Areas	64
6.6	Tier 4: Alternatives for Densities	64
6.7	Tier 5: Alternatives for Land Use Zoning.....	64
Section 7	Evaluation of Alternatives.....	68
7.1	Introduction.....	68
7.2	Methodology.....	68
7.3	Detailed Assessment of Alternatives.....	70
7.4	Selected Alternatives for the Plan	86
Section 8	Evaluation of Plan Provisions.....	89
8.1	Introduction.....	89
8.2	Cumulative Effects.....	90
8.3	Overall Evaluation	92
8.4	Instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan.....	97
8.5	Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	98
8.6	Interactions with Climate Mitigation and Adaptation	99
8.7	Interrelationship between Environmental Components.....	100
8.8	Detailed Evaluation.....	102
Section 9	Mitigation Measures.....	149
9.1	Introduction.....	149
9.2	Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development	149
9.3	Consideration of Alternatives.....	150
9.4	Integration of environmental considerations into Zoning of the Plan	150
9.5	Integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA provisions into the text of the Plan.....	150
Section 10	Monitoring Measures	169
10.1	Introduction.....	169
10.2	Indicators and Targets.....	169
10.3	Sources	169
10.4	Reporting	170
Appendix I	Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans and Programmes.....	175
Appendix II	Indicative Mapping of Land Use Zoning Alternatives.....	197
Appendix III	Non-Technical Summary.....	Separately bound

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Environmental Sensitivities that the County Development Plan directs incompatible development away from	3
Figure 3.1 Overview of the SEA/AA/SFRA Plan-preparation Processes	7
Figure 4.1 European Sites within and within 15 km of the County.....	21
Figure 4.2 European Sites connected to the County but beyond 15 km of the County	22
Figure 4.3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas	23
Figure 4.4 CORINE Land Cover 2018	24
Figure 4.5 Other Ecological Designations within and adjacent to the County.....	25
Figure 4.6 WFD Register of Protected Areas	26
Figure 4.7 Other Sites of Biodiversity Value	27
Figure 4.8 Soil Type	30
Figure 4.9 Source Protection Areas and County Geological Sites.....	31
Figure 4.10 WFD Surface Water Status (2013-2018)	35
Figure 4.11 WFD Groundwater Status (2013-2018)	36
Figure 4.12 Groundwater Vulnerability	37
Figure 4.13 Groundwater Productivity	38
Figure 4.14 Archaeological Heritage.....	50
Figure 4.15 Architectural Heritage	51
Figure 4.16 Landscape Sensitivity.....	54
Figure 4.17 Landscape Designations	55
Figure 4.18 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivities in County Offaly	57

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Checklist of Information included in this Environmental Report	12
Table 4.1 European Sites within the County	18
Table 4.2 WFD River Status	33
Table 4.3 Waste Water Treatment Plant Performance	45
Table 4.4 Waste Water Treatment Capacity Register (Irish Water 29/04/20)	46
Table 5.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs), Indicators and Targets	59
Table 6.1 Screening for Available Reasonable Alternatives	65
Table 6.2 Description of Assessable Alternatives Available	65
Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives	68
Table 7.2 Effects Common to All Alternatives	70
Table 7.3 Assessment of Tier 2 Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives	73
Table 7.4 Assessment of Tier 3(i) Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives	74
Table 7.5 Assessment of Tier 3(ii) Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives	75
Table 7.6 Assessment of Tier 5 Alternatives	76
Table 7.7 Selected Alternatives for the Plan	86
Table 8.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives	89
Table 8.2 Overall Evaluation – Effects arising from the Plan	93
Table 8.3 How Climate Action has been integrated into the Plan	99
Table 8.4 Presence of Interrelationships between Environmental Components	101
Table 9.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan	151
Table 10.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action	171

List of Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
CAFE	Cleaner Air for Europe
CFRAM	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management
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
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
EU	European Union
GFC	Gross Final Consumption
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NTA	National Transport Authority
OPW	Office of Public Works
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
PAS	Priority Action Substance
RAL	Remedial Action List
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
TPOs	Tree Preservation Orders
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFD	Water Framework Directive

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 of the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all of 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 Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. It has been undertaken by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Offaly County Council. 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 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 authority has 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 County.

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

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.

An overlay of environmental sensitivities in County Offaly are shown on Figure 1.1.

The most sensitive areas in the County include:

- Upland areas, including the Slieve Bloom Mountains and Croghan Hill - on account of ecological and land cover sensitivities, areas of high amenity designation and/or nutrient sensitivity in surface waters;
- The Callows of the River Shannon and Little Brosna - on account of ecological and land cover sensitivities, areas of high amenity designation, nutrient sensitivity in surface waters and surface waters that supply drinking water;
- Individual rivers throughout the County;
- Raised bogs across lowlands and blanket bogs in the Slieve Blooms; and
- Areas of elevated groundwater vulnerability throughout the County, including areas of extreme vulnerability in the uplands in the south-east of the County.

The Plan directs incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and focuses on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation.

Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services.

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

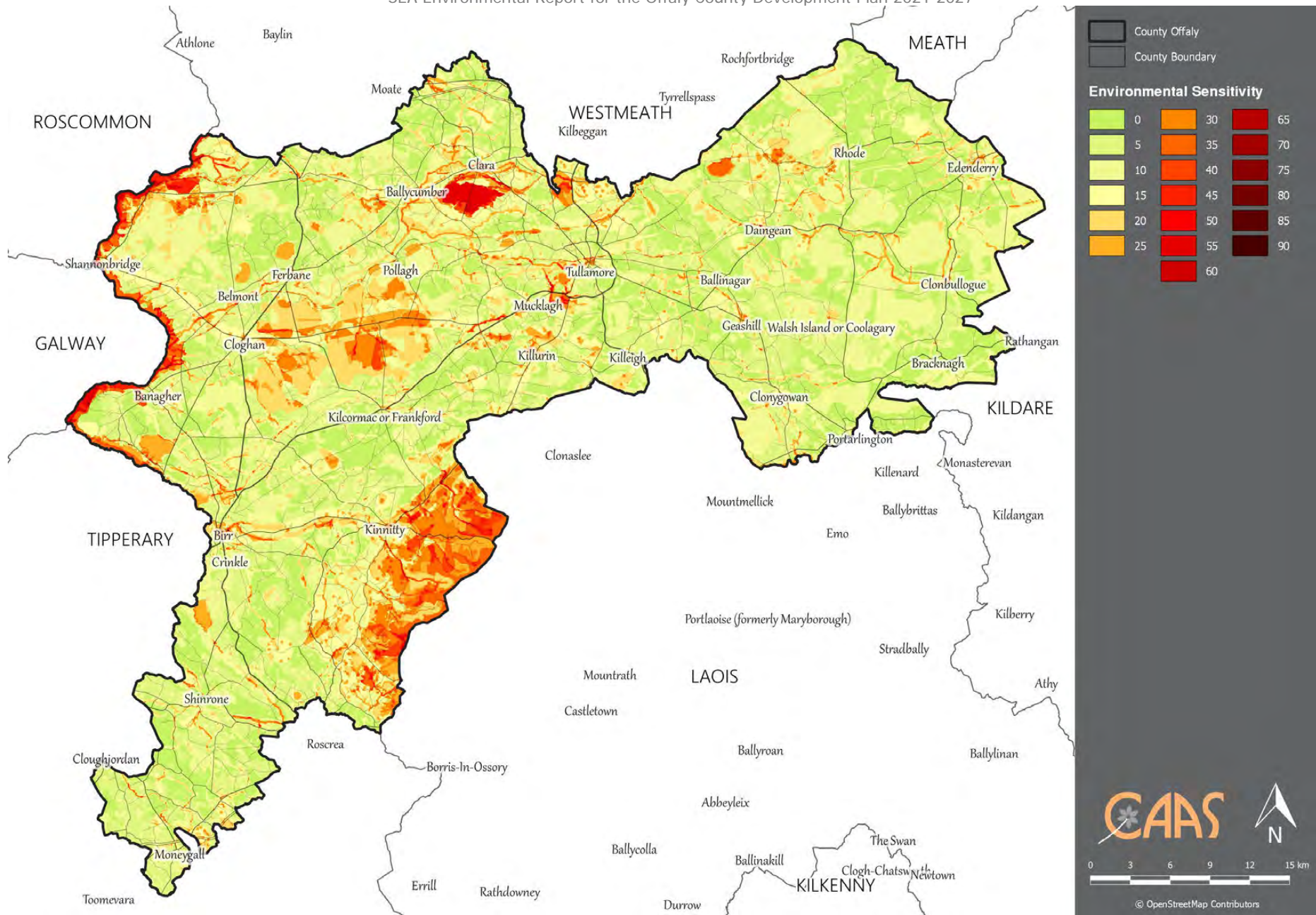


Figure 1.1 Environmental Sensitivities that the County Development Plan directs incompatible development away from

Section 2 The Plan

2.1 Introduction

The Offaly County Development Plan is a land use plan and overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of County Offaly over the six-year period 2021-2027. Not later than four years after the adoption of the Plan, the Council is required to review it and commence the preparation of a new Plan.

2.2 Content of the Plan

The Plan includes a Written Statement, that provides the development policies, Core Strategy and mandatory and discretionary objectives for different policy areas addressed by the Development Plan, and Settlement Plans for the county's towns, villages and Sráids.

The Written Statement is divided into 13 separate chapters setting out various policies and objectives under the headings of:

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy, Housing Strategy
- Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy
- Chapter 4 Biodiversity and Landscape
- Chapter 5 Economic Development Strategy
- Chapter 6 Tourism and Recreational Development
- Chapter 7 Retail and Town Centre Strategy and Regeneration
- Chapter 8 Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Chapter 9 Social Inclusion, Community and Cultural Development
- Chapter 10 Built Heritage
- Chapter 11 Water Services and Environment
- Chapter 12 Land Use Objectives
- Chapter 13 Development Management Standards

2.3 Strategic Vision

The Plan's Strategic Vision is:

To create a sustainable and competitive county that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to employment opportunities supported by high quality housing and physical, social and community infrastructure for all, in a climate resilient manner and with respect for our biodiversity.

2.4 Strategic Objectives

The Development Plan presents an opportunity to shape the future growth of Offaly to plan for and support the sustainable long-term development of the county. The Plan aims to build on our previous successes and to strengthen our strategic advantages as a County, to ensure that we utilise the strengths of our citizens, communities, built and natural heritage, infrastructure and tourism to their full potential. The Strategic Objectives of the County are to:

- i. Plan for a population increase in County Offaly during the plan period of 9,239 persons.
- ii. Consolidate settlements to avoid undesirable and inefficient sprawl. This will be achieved through targeting a significant proportion of future development on infill/ brownfield/ underutilised sites within the existing built-up footprint of all settlements in accordance with the principle of Compact Growth set out in the National Planning Framework.
- iii. Ensure better alignment between the location of population growth and employment growth. This will allow settlements to become more self-sustaining, sustainable and balanced rather than based on long distance commuter driven activity.
- iv. Reduce car dependency, and increase the use of sustainable mobility such as walking, cycling and public transport through planning for and encouraging integrated transportation and landuse.
- v. Direct a significant proportion of the county's development and population growth into Tullamore a Key Town as designated in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy in order to build up its critical mass and fulfil its role as a key growth driver of the county and midland region.
- vi. Reverse the decline / stagnation of towns and villages through renewal and regeneration, and create healthy place-making by improving the attractiveness, quality, design, viability, vibrancy and liveability of the county's settlements. Also to manage urban generated growth in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas.
- vii. Protect and enhance Offaly's natural assets of clean water, biodiversity, landscape, green infrastructure, heritage and agricultural land.
- viii. Provide high quality housing of a sufficient scale, mix, tenure, sequence and density, located in optimum locations and aligned with adequate infrastructure, services and amenities.
- ix. Make more efficient use of key resources such as land, water, energy, waste and transportation infrastructure.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> x. Create a competitive business environment supporting economic development, job creation, tourism and prosperity for all. xi. Achieve transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. This should be facilitated through reducing the need to travel, by integrating land use and sustainable modes of transport, and by reducing the use of non-renewable resources. In line with this, promote active and healthy lifestyles through increased opportunities for walking, cycling and active sport recreation. xii. Encourage inclusive and active sustainable communities based around a strong network of community facilities and amenities. xiii. Contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as outlined in Figure 1.2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> xiii. Developing serviced zoned land and serviceable zoned land within the life of this County Development Plan; xiv. Compliance with government policy and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines including specific planning policy requirements; xv. Reducing car dependency, promoting sustainable mobility and regional accessibility, and integrating transportation and landuse; xvi. Towns and villages to become more attractive, well-designed, of high quality design and 'liveable' through healthy place-making; xvii. Promoting economic development and enterprise activity; xviii. Protecting assets by preserving the quality of the landscape, open space, recreational resources, biodiversity, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage and material assets in the county; xix. Promoting social inclusion; and xx. Collaboration between key stakeholders in land amalgamation and coordination. |
|--|--|

2.5 Principles for Growth

The Development Plan identifies the following list as *principles for growth* upon which to encourage the focus of new development:

- i. Compact growth, by targeting at least 30% of all new homes that are proposed in settlements within their existing built-up footprints, with a focus on infill / brownfield lands, rather than continually sprawling outwards;
- ii. Making better use of under-utilised land and buildings including vacant, derelict and under-occupied buildings;
- iii. Supporting, facilitating and promoting a transition to a low carbon society;
- iv. Strengthening town and village centres to meet their full potential;
- v. Aligning population, employment, community and housing growth in a balanced fashion;
- vi. Renewal and rejuvenation of all settlements by identifying significant regeneration areas in the existing built-up areas of our towns and villages as well as rural regeneration opportunities;
- vii. Moving towards self-sustaining rather than long distance commuter driven activity;
- viii. In order to achieve more balanced and sustainable development, some settlements need to attract increased population, whereas others need more jobs, amenities or better transport links;
- ix. Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities, jobs and services catch-up, together with a slower rate of population growth in recently expanded commuter settlements;
- x. Sequential provision of housing and infrastructure;
- xi. Managing urban generated growth in rural areas under strong urban influence and stronger rural areas and reverse the decline or stagnation of many rural villages;
- xii. Developing the designated Key Town of Tullamore of sufficient scale and quality to be a driver of regional growth, investment and prosperity, followed by Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns to grow to a sustainable level. Other towns need to be promoted for regeneration, local employment and managed levels of growth, and the rural area which includes villages, Sráids and the

These principles stem from the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and are significant guiding principles for the County Development Plan.

2.6 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development

Far in advance of both the submission of the pre-Draft Plan to the Elected Members for approval and the placing of the Draft Plan on public display, Offaly County Council undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

The findings of this strategic work have been integrated into the Plan and will contribute towards both environmental protection and management and sustainable development within the County.

Strategic work undertaken by the Council includes background work in relation to Plan Strategies and other provisions for a variety of sectors including:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- Appropriate Assessment;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;

- Record of Protected Structures;
- Core Strategy;
- Housing Strategy including a Housing Need Demand Assessment;
- Economic Development;
- Wind Energy Strategy;
- Climate Action; and
- Transport.

The undertaking of this SEA process and associated Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment processes were 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.

2.7 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

It is acknowledged that many of the major issues affecting the County'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 National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction up to 2040. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSE for the Eastern & Midlands 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 be implemented through the County Development Plan.

As required by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the County Development Plan is consistent with and conforms with national and regional policies, plans and programmes, including the NPF and the RSEs for the Eastern & Midlands Region. The County Development Plan may, in turn, guide lower level strategic actions, such as the Tullamore, Birr, Edenderry and Portarlington Local Area Plans that will be subject to their own lower-tier environmental assessments.

In order to be realised, projects included in the County Development 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.

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.

Section 3 SEA Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the integrated Plan preparation, SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk

Assessment (SFRA) processes. The preparation of the Plan, SEA, AA and SFRA have taken place concurrently and the findings of the SEA, AA and SFRA have informed the Plan.

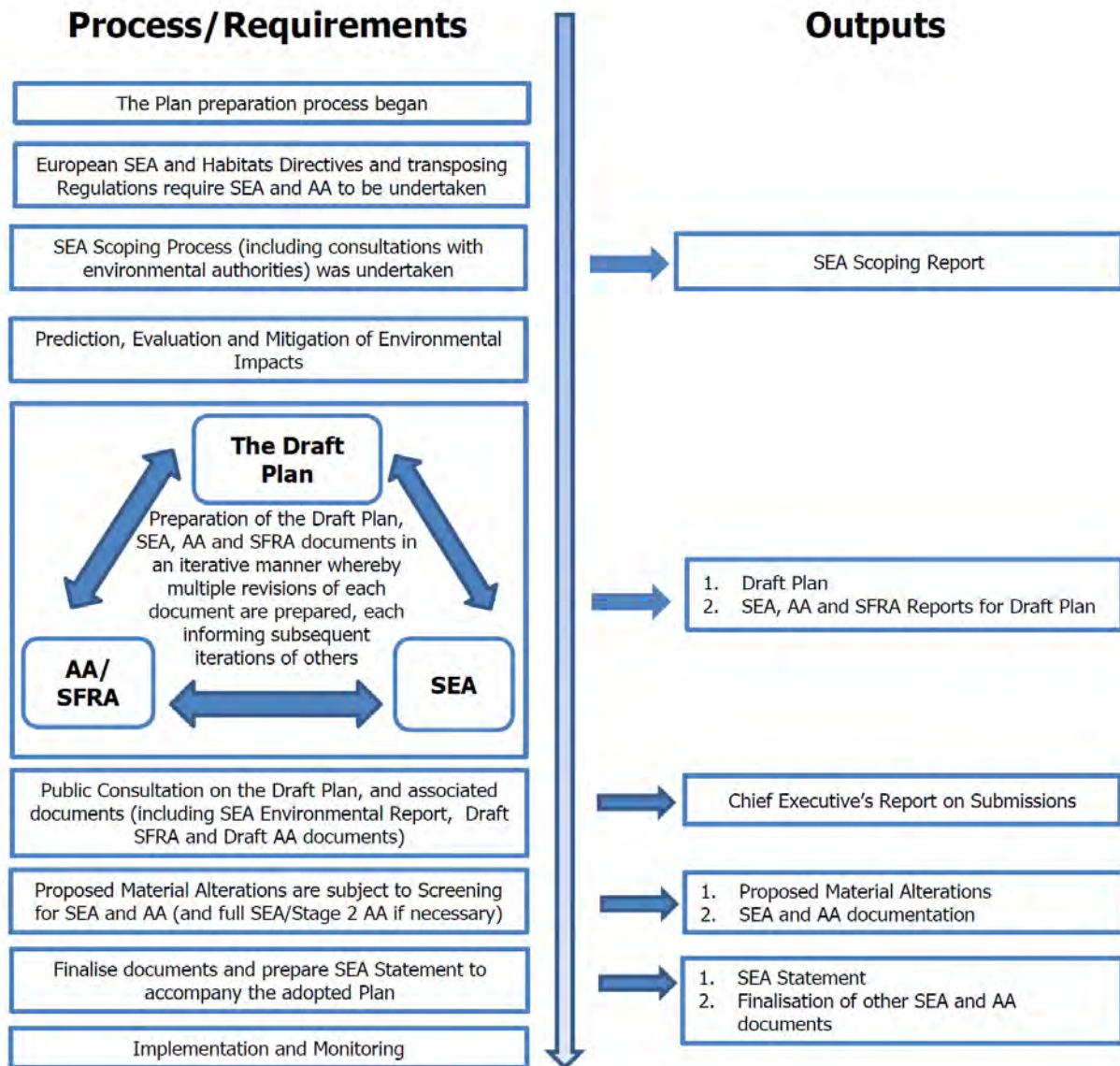


Figure 3.1 Overview of the SEA/AA/SFRA Plan-preparation Processes

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

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for SFRA is 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 recommendations from the SFRA have been integrated into the Plan.

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

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.

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 Council 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 Council⁵.

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.

Submissions made by the environmental authorities influenced the scope of the assessment undertaken, the findings of which are included in this report.

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.

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 Council, 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 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 original, Draft Plan that was placed on public display.

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. There was limited water services information available for some settlements within the County however objectives requiring the provision of appropriate levels of water services alongside new development have been integrated into the Draft Plan.

3.7 Instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan

The Plan, considered as a whole, contributes towards environmental protection and management and sustainable development and complies with various legislative requirements. This is identified throughout the SEA documentation.

Various Plan provisions that would contribute towards the sustainable development of the County would, at the same time, have the potential to conflict with the environment, were mitigation measures not taken into account. This is normal and mitigation measures have been integrated into the Plan to deal with these potential effects.

However, a small number of provisions have been adopted by the Elected Members as part of the Plan that are particularly internally inconsistent with the overall approach provided for by the Plan. These provisions relate are detailed below.

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: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht; Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment; Environmental Protection Agency; Meath County Council; Westmeath County Council; Roscommon County Council; Galway County Council; Tipperary County Council; Laois County Council; and Kildare County Council.

Rahan

As identified in the Chief Executive's Report with regard to Rahan's change in typology from a Sráid to a Village:

"For the purpose of the county development plan settlement hierarchy, the distinction made between Villages and Sráids is that Villages are serviced by mains wastewater treatment, whereas Sráids are not. Without mains wastewater treatment, a settlement is dependent on individual on-site effluent treatment systems and therefore cannot develop at a sustainable rate. Rahan has no mains wastewater treatment plant. College View housing estate is served by a shared septic tank system and the remainder of the properties in the Sráid have individual effluent treatment systems.

The policy approach for Sráids is the promotion of balanced sustainable development, in an incremental and consolidated manner with the emphasis on small scale development over a medium to long term period, in keeping with the character of the settlement. The Rahan Sráid Plan includes a variety of objectives to support local facilities and amenities, including the development of facilities to improve tourism potential (see also response to Submissions Ref. CDP/D/28).

It is recommended that Rahan is designated as a Sráid under the county settlement hierarchy, thus no change to the draft Plan."

Taking the above into account, there is potential for significant adverse environmental effects, including on water resources, ecology and human health, to occur as a result of lack of water services infrastructure – which could result in increased pressure for development in surrounding less well serviced and connected rural areas. These effects would be mitigated by measures providing for environmental protection and management that have been integrated into the Plan.

Various Land Use Zonings

Material Alterations (such as MA262, MA263, MA265, MA274, MA276, MA277, MA299, MA330, MA349, MA352, MA368, MA395, MA401, MA408 and MA409) that have been adopted as part of the Plan were advised against, with SEA documentation identifying at the time that:

"There is no planning justification for these Proposed Alterations, they would not align with objectives relating to sustainable development, relate to greenfield lands in many cases and would present additional, unnecessary and potentially significant adverse effects on various environmental components. Potentially significant adverse effects, alone and/or in-combination with other similar changes alterations to zoning, would be likely to include:

- Effects on ecology and ecological connectivity
- Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces
- Increased loadings on water bodies
- Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth and sustainable mobility
- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts

Where such alterations are beyond the established settlement envelope, potentially significant adverse effects would be likely to include:

- Difficulty in providing adequate and appropriate waste water treatment as a result of zoning outside of established built development envelopes of settlements
- Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure
- Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives
- Conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality
- Conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors
- Potential effects on human health as a result of potential interactions with environmental vectors

MA330 could potentially impact upon the protection of a European site and has been subject to Stage 2 AA. The AA recommended that the following text is integrated into the Plan at further modification stage: "Any proposal for development at these lands must demonstrate that it will not affect the nearby Ferbane Bog SAC, including as a result of changes to drainage patterns".

BLO-07 "Any proposal for development at the lands to the north west of the town as shown in the Ferbane Town Objectives Map must demonstrate that it will not affect the nearby Ferbane Bog SAC, including as a result of changes to drainage patterns." was integrated into the Plan to mitigate the concerns relating to MA330.

Similarly, in advance of the Draft Plan being placed out on public display a number of Members' motions were included that were advised against and identified by the SEA documentation at the time as having potential for likely significant environmental effects. These included: Enterprise and Employment zoning, Moneygall (has no established planning justification, would facilitate the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and would fail to consolidate zoning); New Residential Zoning, Rhode (not consistent with the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas); and a Boundary change at Dunkerrin Sráid (no established planning justification and would provide for a less compact form of development, facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the Sráid).

Architectural Heritage

Certain Material Alterations (MA422, MA423, MA424, MA425 and MA426) that were adopted as part of the Plan were advised against, with SEA documentation identifying at the time that these alterations:

"...would reduce the protection of architectural heritage by removing a structure that merits inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures from this list."

Wind Energy

Certain Material Alterations (MA440 and MA444) that were adopted as part of the Plan were advised against, with SEA documentation identifying at the time that these alterations:

"...would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to:

- Undermine and negate practical measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions climate change in compliance with high-level climate action policy; and
- Restrict the potential for wind energy development in the County, which is contrary to national energy policy that supports reductions in the reliance on fossil fuels and the development of renewable energy resources including wind energy infrastructure."

3.8 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
(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 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, 8 and Appendix II
(I) A description of proposed monitoring measures	Section 10
(J) A non-technical summary of the above information	Appendix III 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.

Given the potential for impacts beyond the County boundary, the spatial scope of the SEA takes into account the zone of influence (15km or greater where relevant) of the Plan area.

4.2 National Reporting on the Environment

The EPA's "*Ireland's Environment – An Assessment 2020*" 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 key environmental challenges or messages identified by the report are:

Environmental Policy Position

A national policy position for Ireland's Environment.

Full implementation

Full implementation of existing environmental legislation and a review of the governance around the coordination on environmental protection across public bodies.

Health and Wellbeing

Protecting the Environment is an Investment in Our Health and Wellbeing.

Climate

Systemic change is required for Ireland to become the climate-neutral and climate resilient society and economy that it aspires to be.

Air Quality

Adoption of measures to meet the World Health Organization air quality guideline values should be the target to aim for in the Clean Air Strategy.

Nature

Safeguard nature and wild places as a national priority and to leave a legacy for future generations.

Water Quality

Improve the water environment and tackle water pollution locally at a water catchment level.

Marine

Reduce the human-induced pressures on the marine environment.

Clean Energy

Ireland needs to move rapidly away from the extensive use of fossil fuels to the use of clean energy systems.

Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture

An agriculture and food sector that demonstrates validated performance around producing food with a low environmental footprint.

Water Services

Drinking water and wastewater infrastructure must meet the needs of our society.

Circular Economy

Move to a less wasteful and circular economy where the priority is waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling.

Land Use

Promote integrated land-mapping approaches to support decision-making on sustainable land use.

The report highlights that high-quality green and blue spaces are not just for nature but are for peoples' health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of an increasingly urban society and increasing settlement densities.

⁶ Note that 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.

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 Plan it is uncertain how permission for new development would be applied for and considered.

The 2014-2020 Plan has contributed towards environmental protection within County Offaly. If the 2014-2020 Plan was to expire and not be replaced by the 2021-2027 Plan, this would result in a deterioration of the County's planning and environmental protection framework. Although higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the deterioration of this framework would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled.

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

frequency of positive effects 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County and beyond
- Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County and beyond.
- Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination the highest standards of remediation, and where appropriate to consultations with the EPA and other relevant bodies, will be required to resolve any instances of environmental pollution created by contaminated land.
 - Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the County's settlements) 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 County 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 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart buildings, cities and grids.
 - Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the County's settlements) 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 County 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, residential heating and infrastructure;
 - Sustainable infrastructure design solutions including energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure).
 - Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere in the County by facilitating development within existing settlements.
 - Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within existing settlements by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration.
 - Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within existing settlements.
- As a result, there would be an increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on all environmental components 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 and bats.
 - Potential adverse effects arising from flood events.
 - 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 Services⁷

County Offaly's **natural capital** comprises its 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 give us 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.

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.

Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being

⁷ This section includes content taken from the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly, 2019)

(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 values⁸.

In preparing the Plan and developing policy objectives, the Council have followed these ecosystem services approach principles:

- a) Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function (including at Plan Chapters 2 "Climate Action and Energy", 4 "Biodiversity and Landscape", 6 "Tourism and Recreational Development" and 11 "Water Services and Environment")
- b) Taking into account of the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation (including at Plan Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy"), resources for food, fibre or fuel (including at Chapter "5 Economic Development"), or for recreation, culture and quality of life (including at Plan Chapters 4 "Biodiversity and Landscape", 6 "Tourism and Recreational Development" and 10 "Built Heritage")
- 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 Draft Plan which was further refined before adoption, taking into account submissions/observations made on the Draft Plan during public display).

The following natural capital and ecosystem services issues are relevant to this SEA and have been taken into account in the provisions of the Plan:

- Pollination;
- Air quality;
- Noise pollution;
- Light pollution;
- Water quality and integrated catchment management including interactions with soil;

⁸ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/topics/ecosystem-services>

- 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.

Ecologically sensitive areas in Offaly include: the Slieve Bloom Mountains and Croghan Hill; raised bogs across lowlands; Callows of the River Shannon and Little Brosna; the salmonid River Boyne; woodlands; grasslands; eskers; trees; and hedgerows. These habitats support a variety of species and ecosystems that contribute to the unique biodiversity of County Offaly.

Ecological designations in County Offaly include:

- Special Protection Areas⁹;
- Special Areas of Conservation¹⁰;
- Natural Heritage Areas¹¹ and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas¹²;
- Nature Reserves;
- Biogenetic Reserves¹³;

⁹ For more detail refer to Section 4.6.

¹⁰ For more detail refer to Section 4.6.

¹¹ 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 were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are of significance for wildlife and habitats.

¹² pNHAs were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are of significance for wildlife and habitats.

¹³ The Council of Europe launched the concept of a European Network of Biogenetic Reserves in 1973, the programme was started in 1976. Section I of the Annex to the Resolution (76) 17 (of the 1976 European Ministerial Conference on the Environment, Vienna) defines a Biogenetic Reserve as protected areas enjoying legal status and characterised by one or more typical, unique, endangered or rare habitats, biocenoses, or ecosystems. **Slieve Bloom Mountains, Mongan Bog, Clara Bog and**

- Certain entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas¹⁴;
- RAMSAR sites;
- Tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site¹⁵;
- Salmonid River Regs (S.I. 293 only)¹⁶;
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel Areas;
- Wildfowl Sanctuary¹⁷;
- Flora Protection Order¹⁸ sites;
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs);
- Ecological connectivity and networks;
- CORINE Landcover¹⁹;
- Peatlands, lakes, canals, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, eskers and hedgerows; and
- Other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance.

The zone of influence of the Plan beyond the County area with respect to impacts upon ecology via surface waters upon ecological resources – including designated ecology – can be estimated to be areas within 15km of the County boundary and all downstream areas of catchments which drain the County.

4.6.2 European Sites

European Sites in the County occur in the greatest concentrations along the in upland areas. European Sites comprise:

- Special Areas of Conservation²⁰ (SACs); and

Raheenmore Bog are a designated Council of Europe Biogenetic Reserve.

¹⁴ In response to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive a number of water bodies or parts of water bodies which must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). RPAs include those for Protected Habitats or Species, Shellfish, Salmonid, Nutrient Sensitive Areas, Recreational Waters and Drinking Water.

¹⁵ A Tentative List is an inventory of properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List. **One site in Offaly has been included on the Tentative List: The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape.**

¹⁶ Salmonid waters are designated and protected as under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1988 (SI No. 293 of 1988). Designated Salmonid Waters are capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*). **The River Boyne is designated as Salmonid River under these regulations.**

¹⁷ Areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. **There is one Wildfowl Sanctuary partially located within County Offaly: WFS-43 Little Brosna.**

¹⁸ The current list of plant species protected by Section 21 of the Wildlife Act, 1976 is set out in the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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

- Special Protection Areas²¹ (SPAs).

The SEA uses the same zone of influence cited in the AA; a 15 km buffer around the County (see sites within this zone listed on Table 4.1 and mapped on Figure 4.1). The AA review of all sites within this zone has allowed a determination to be made that in the absence of significant hydrological links the characteristics of the Plan will not impose effects beyond the 15 km buffer. European sites connected to the County but beyond the 15 km buffer are mapped on Figure 4.2.

There are 18 SACs and 6 SPAs designated within and adjacent to the County, including:

- River Shannon Callows SAC²²;
- Clara Bog SAC²³;
- Island Fen SAC²⁴;
- Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC²⁵;
- River Barrow and River Nore SAC²⁶;
- All Saints Bog SPA²⁷;
- Dovegrove Callows SPA²⁸;
- Middle Shannon Callows SPA²⁹;
- Mongan Bog SPA³⁰;
- River Little Brosna Callows SPA³¹; and
- Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA³².

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.

²¹ 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.

²²**Sensitive features include:** molinia meadows; lowland hay meadows; limestone pavement; alluvial forests; and Otter.

²³**Sensitive features include:** orchid-rich calcareous grassland; active raised bog; Rhynchosporion vegetation and bog woodland.

²⁴**Sensitive features include:** juniper scrub and alkaline fens.

²⁵**Sensitive features include:** wet heath; active blanket bogs; and alluvial forests.

²⁶**Sensitive features include:** estuaries; reefs; Atlantic salt meadows; Mediterranean salt meadows; dry heat; petrifying springs; Killarney fern; Freshwater pearl mussel; and Atlantic salmon.

²⁷**Sensitive features include:** Greenland white-fronted goose.

²⁸**Sensitive features include:** Greenland white-fronted goose.

²⁹**Sensitive features include:** whooper swan; wigeon; corncrake; Golden Plover; lapwing; black-tailed godwit; black-headed gull; and wetland and waterbirds.

³⁰**Sensitive features include:** Greenland white-fronted goose.

³¹**Sensitive features include:** whooper Swan; wigeon; teal; pintail; shoveler; golden plover; lapwing; black-tailed godwit; black-headed gull; Greenland white-fronted goose; and wetland and waterbirds.

³²**Sensitive features include:** Hen harrier.

Table 4.1 European Sites within the County

European Sites		
Designation	Site Code	Site Name
SAC (18 sites)	000566	All Saints Bog and Esker SAC
	000571	Charleville Wood SAC
	000572	Clara Bog SAC
	000859	Clonaslee Eskers and Derry Bog SAC
	000575	Ferbane Bog SAC
	000576	Fin Lough (Offaly) SAC
	002236	Island Fen SAC
	002147	Lisduff Fen SAC
	000580	Mongan Bog SAC
	000581	Moyclare Bog SAC
	001176	Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC
	000582	Raheenmore Bog SAC
	000919	Ridge Road, SW of Rapemills SAC
	021062	River Barrow and River Nore SAC
	000585	Sharavogue Bog SAC
	000412	Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC
	000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC
	000216	River Shannon Callows SAC
SPA (6 sites)	004103	All Saints Bog SPA
	004137	Dovegrove Callows SPA
	004096	Middle Shannon Callows SPA
	004017	Mongan Bog SPA
	004086	River Little Brosna Callows SPA
	004160	Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA

For more detail on European Sites please refer to the AA Natura Impact Report 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 7 NHAs³³ and 51 pNHAs³⁴ designated within or adjacent to the County. These sites are mapped on Figure 4.3.

4.6.4 Land Cover Mapping

CORINE³⁵ land cover mapping for the County is shown on Figure 4.4. The most dominant land cover types are pastures and peat bogs.

Categories from CORINE mapping that may indicate areas likely to contain Annex I habitats (see Figure 4.5), include:

- Peat bogs;
- Natural grassland;
- Water bodies;
- Mixed forests;
- Coniferous forest;
- Broad-leaved forests;
- Stream courses;
- Moors and heaths;
- Transitional woodland and scrub; and
- Land principally occupied by agriculture with areas of natural vegetation.

4.6.5 Other Designations

Other designations mapped on Figure 4.5 include Nature Reserves, Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchments.

³³ Black Castle Bog, Cangort Bog, Clonydonnig Bog, Daingean Bog, Hawkswood Bog, River Little Brosna Callows and Scraggan Bog

³⁴ Dovegrove Callows, River Shannon Callows, Slieve Bloom Mountains, Annaghmore Lough Fen (Offaly), All Saints Bog and Esker, Banagher, Birr (Domestic Dwelling No.2), Birr Domestic Dwelling No.1, Charleville Wood, Clara Bog, Clonad Wood, Ferbane Bog, Fin Lough (Offaly), Kinnitty, Mongan Bog, Moyclare Bog, Raheenmore Bog, Roscrea Bog, Sharavogue Bog, Woodfield Bog, Ballintemple Bog, Miltown (Shinrone), Ballyduff Esker, Camcor Wood, Clonfinlough Esker, Clonlough Glebe Bog, Clorhane Wood, Derrykeel Meadows, Drumakeenan, Eagle Hill and Perry's Mill, Golden Grove Woods, Kilcormac Esker, Lough Coura, Lough Nanag Esker, Mount St. Joseph Woods, Pallas Lough, Raheen Lough, Ridge Road (SW of Rapemills), Ross and Glenns Eskers, The Long Derries (Edenderry), Woodville Woods, Lough Nahinch (Tipperary), Lough Boora, Murphy's Bridge Esker, Pilgrim's Road Esker, Ballyduff Wood, Doon Esker Wood, Bracken's Dwelling (near Whiteford), Cloghanbeg, St. Joseph's (Mountheaton), Drumakeenan National School and Grand Canal.

³⁵ The CORINE (Coordinated 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.

Nature Reserves are areas of importance to wildlife, which is protected under Ministerial order. There are currently 78 Statutory Nature Reserves in Ireland. Most are owned by the State but some are owned by organisations or private landowners. There are four Nature Reserves in County Offaly: Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve; Clara Bog Nature Reserve; Mongan Bog Nature Reserve; and Raheenmore Bog Nature Reserve.

The Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Water Fowl Habitat, was established at Ramsar in 1971 and ratified by Ireland in 1984. The main aim of the Convention is to secure the designation by each contracting state of wetlands in its territory for inclusion in a list of wetlands of international importance for waterfowl. This entails the commitment of each contracting state to a policy of protection and management of the designated wetlands, and of formulating and implementing planning so as to promote the conservation of designated wetlands and, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in its territory. Ireland presently has 45 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance, with surface areas of 66,994 hectares. There are four Ramsar Sites designated in County Offaly: Mongan Bog; Slieve Bloom Mountains; Raheenmore Bog; and Clara Bog.

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. Categories of Fresh Pearl Mussel Catchments (Margaritifera Sensitive Areas) are identified within the County include:

- Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009 (Nore Upper catchment); and
- Catchments with previous records of Margaritifera, but current status unknown (Barrow catchment).

The River Boyne is designated as a Salmonid River (SI No. 293 of 1988).

4.6.6 Register of Protected Areas

In response to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive 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). These are mapped on Figure 4.6.

There are various water bodies within the County that are used for drinking water abstraction in accordance with European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (SI No. 278/2007). These water bodies are identified on the RPAs for Drinking Water Ground or Surface Water Bodies). Rivers listed include: Shannon (Lower); Shannon (Upper); Boor; Brosna; Gageborough; Figile; Camcor; Barrow; Castlejordan; and Glenfelly Stream. The groundwater underlying the County is also included.

Nutrient Sensitive Areas in the County include lakes and rivers, such as: the River Brosna, the River Tullamore; the River Barrow; the Little Brosna River; and the River Shannon³⁶.

The River Boyne is designated as a Salmonid River under SI No. 293 of 1988 and is therefore included on the Salmonid Waters RPA.

4.6.7 Other Sites of Biodiversity Value

Other sites of biodiversity value include those mapped on Figure 4.7 and include eskers, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), Trees and Groups of Trees of Special Amenity Value, waterways, wetlands and lakes.

An esker is a long narrow ridge comprising of sand, gravel and boulders, which were deposited by a stream flowing on, within, or beneath a glacier. There are twenty esker systems in Offaly.

TPOs are a planning mechanism whereby individual trees or groups of trees can be identified as important and protected by the Order. Trees and Groups of Trees that Contribute to Amenity are considered by the Council as groups of trees of significant value to environment that should be protected where necessary. There are seven TPOs and

twenty-four Trees and Groups of Trees of Special Amenity Value in County Offaly.

County Offaly contains a number of rivers, canals, lakes and wetlands that are of amenity and biodiversity value, including the following: River Shannon; River Barrow; Grand Canal; Natural Lake; Pallas Lake; Shannon Callows and Bord Na Mona Wetlands; Turraun Wetlands; Leabeg Wetlands; and Drinagh Wetlands.

4.6.8 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.

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.

³⁶ Nutrient sensitive areas are those waterbodies listed in accordance with the Urban Waste Water Treatment (UWWT) Directive 91/271/EEC on Urban Waste Water Treatment and transposing Regulations. The waterbody containing the sensitive area is used to represent the nutrient sensitive area.

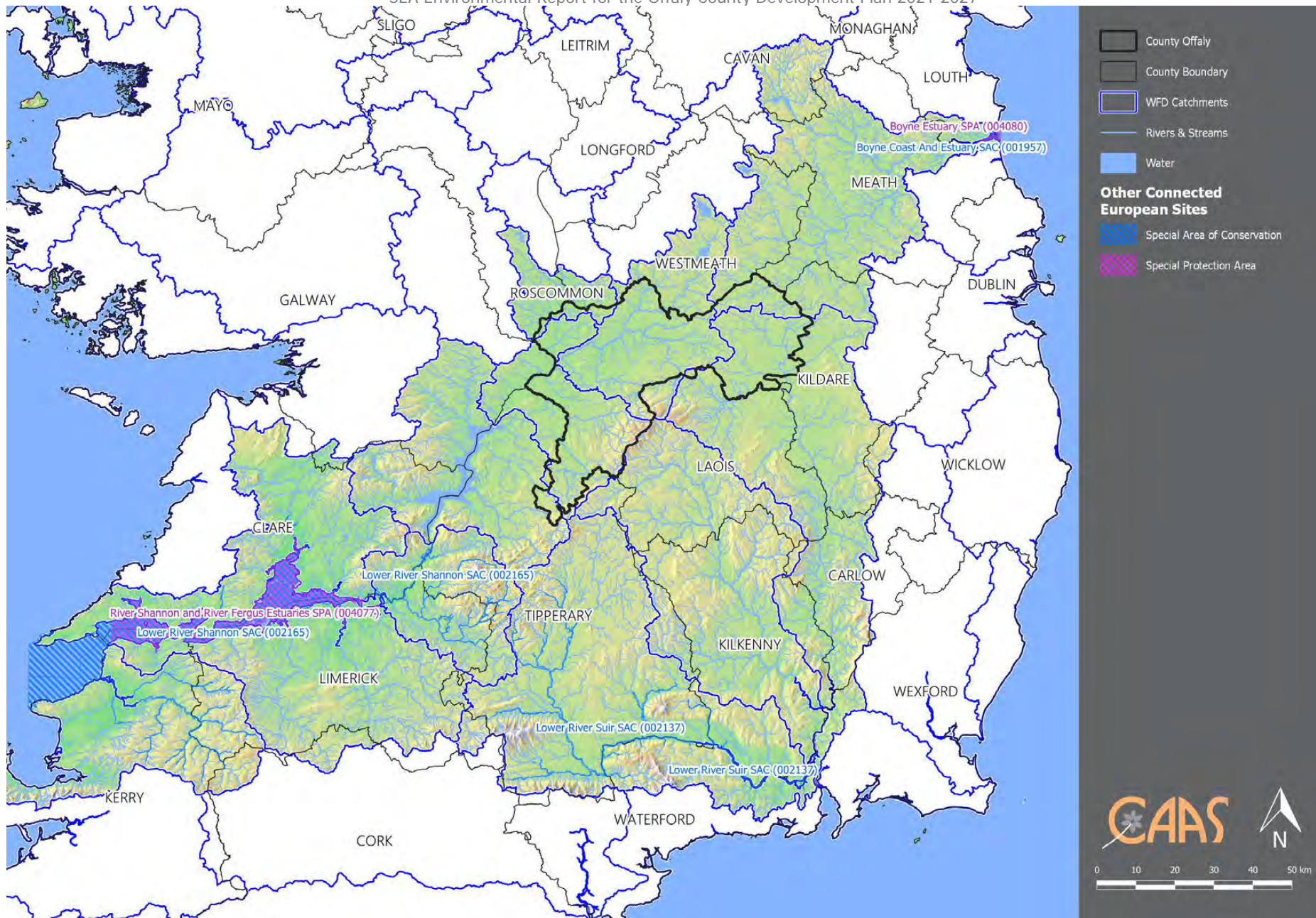


Figure 4.2 European Sites connected to the County but beyond 15 km of the County

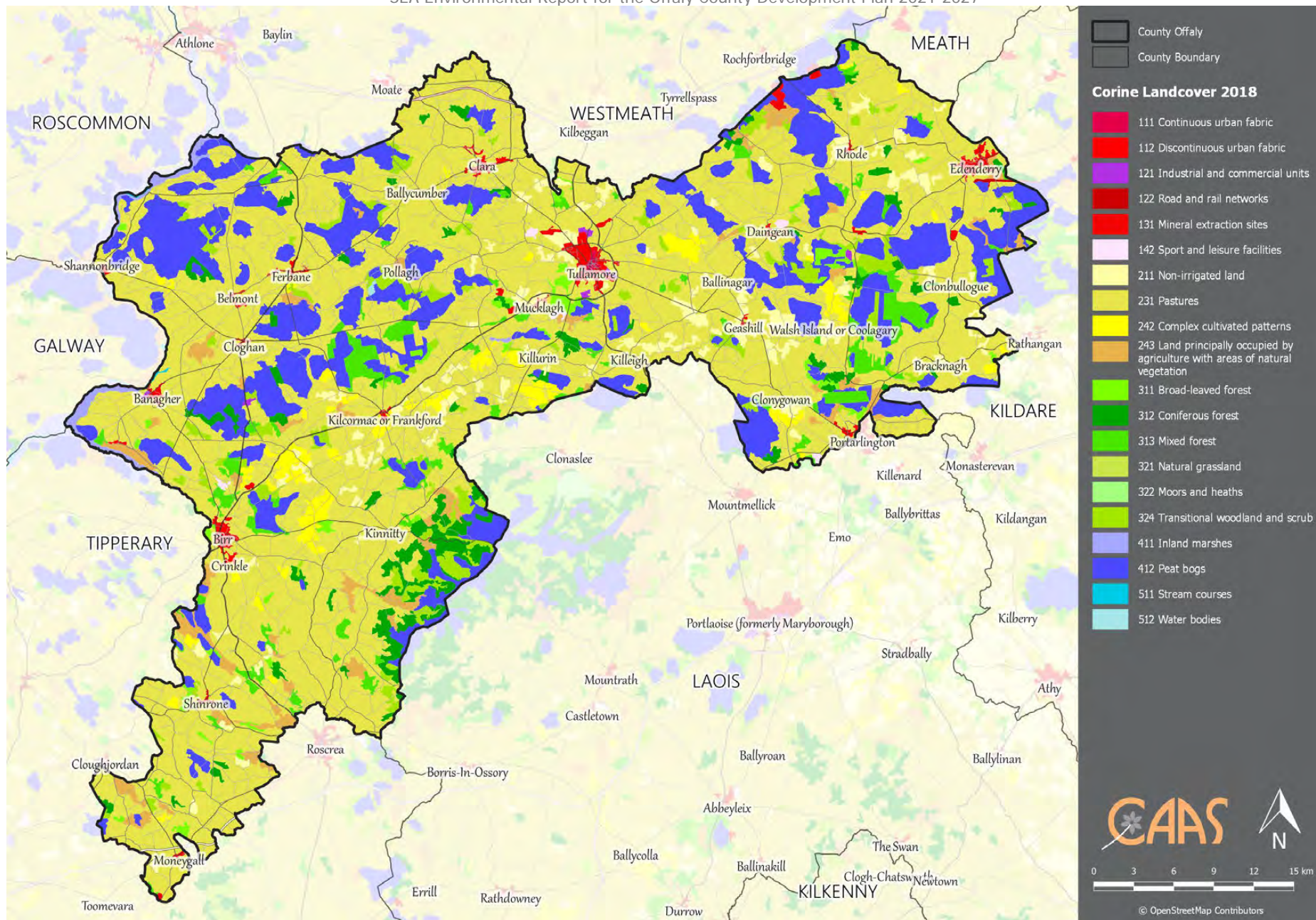


Figure 4.4 CORINE Land Cover 2018

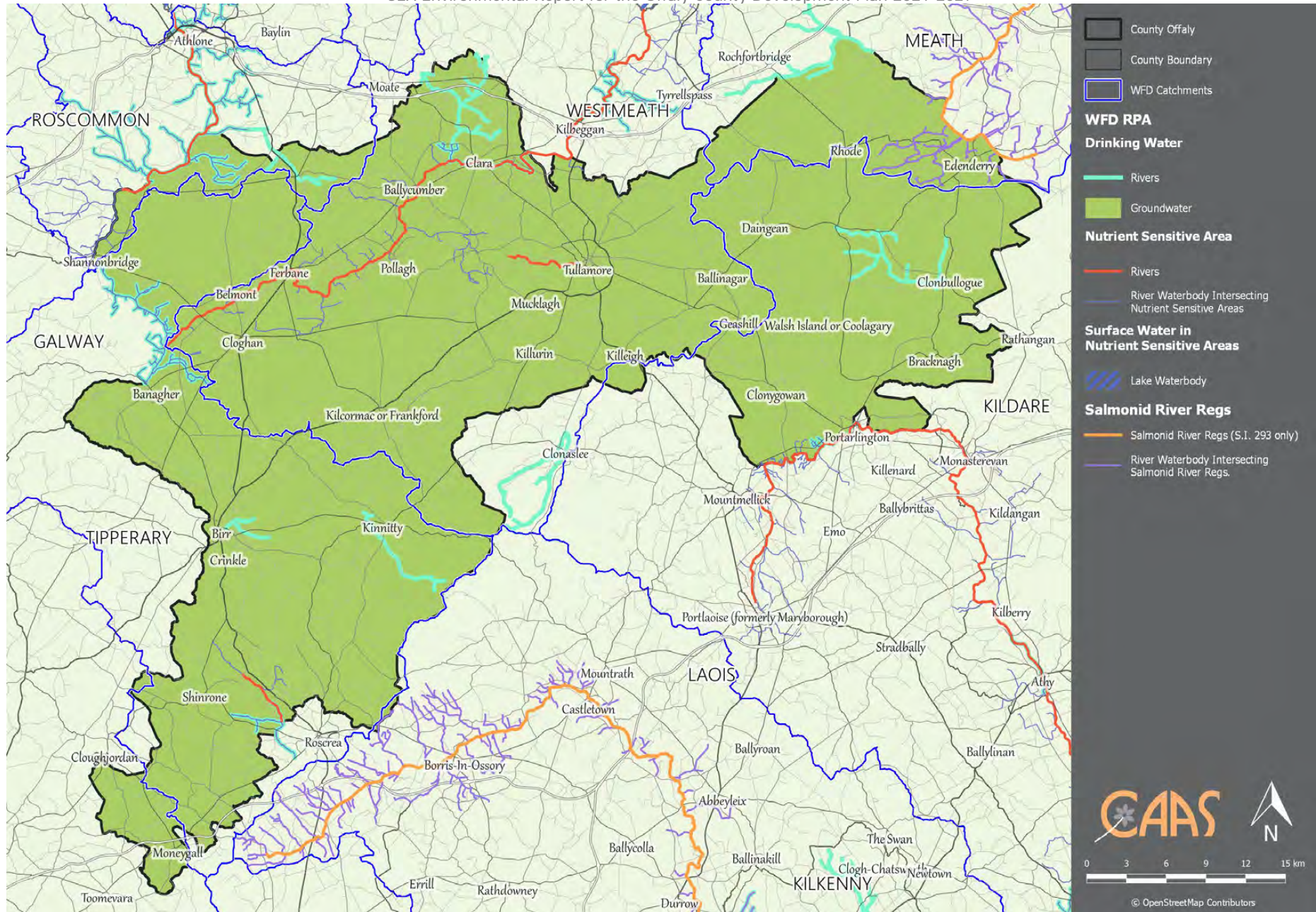


Figure 4.6 WFD Register of Protected Areas

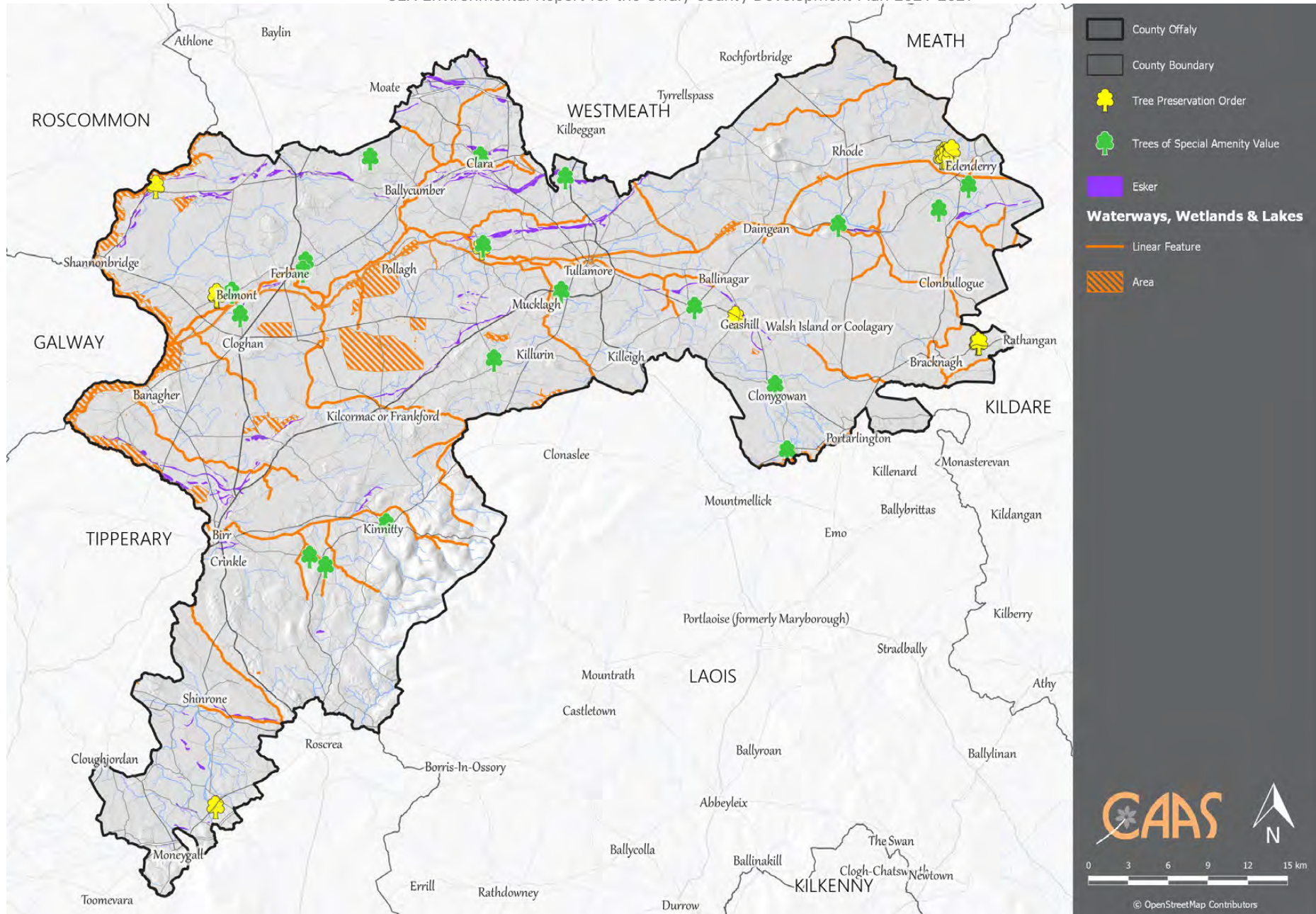


Figure 4.7 Other Sites of Biodiversity Value

significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

4.7 Population and Human Health

4.7.1 Population

The Census 2016 results show that Offaly's population has grown by 1,274 persons, or by 1.6%, since Census 2011, to 77,961 persons (Central Statistics Office, 2017). The provision of additional housing over the Plan period is dictated by the Core Strategy that guides where new development should be allocated in accordance with national and regional strategies and policies, including the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for Eastern and Midland Region.

County Offaly contains a hierarchy of settlements as set out in the Plan.

Tullamore is identified as a Key Town by the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 and it acts as a key population and employment centre for the surrounding hinterland.

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

- Increase in demand for waste water treatment at the municipal level;
- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes;
- Increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction from the rivers;
- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive areas; and
- Potential effects on water quality.

4.7.2 Human Health

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by 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 arising from incompatible adjacent land uses for example. 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

4.7.3 Existing Problems

There is historic and predictive evidence of flooding in various locations across the County (see information on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment at Section 4.9.8).

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. The number of homes within the County with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country³⁷.

Information on the status of groundwaters and surface waters is provided under Section 4.9 while compliance issues in relation to water services are detailed under Section 4.11.8.

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.

³⁷ Mapping available at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap>

To date, there is no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources. Although a proposal for a Soil Framework Directive was withdrawn in 2014, the importance of sustainable soil management was recognised in the Seventh Environment Action Programme, where sustainable land management is to be achieved by 2020.

Luvisols³⁸ and peat soils are the two most dominant soil types across the County (see Figure 4.8). Other soil types identified include:

- Alluvial soils³⁹ (in the flood plains of the rivers and streams);
- Groundwater and Surface Water Gleys⁴⁰ (in depressions in the upper reaches of river valleys in both uplands and lowlands); and
- Brown earths⁴¹ (in the south, south-west and north of the County).

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. Rain-fed (ombrotrophic) and groundwater-fed (minerotrophic) peat soils occurring in the County are often subject to ecological designations (see Section 4.6). Clara Bog is an internationally renowned raised bog, which is a designated Nature Reserve. Raheenmore Bog is considered to be the deepest remaining raised bog in Ireland. It has a well-developed hummock and hollow system and is an important habitat for many bird species. In addition to being significant net sinks of carbon, peatlands have the potential to be net sources of carbon if these soils are drained or extracted as part of land management activities.

Esker systems within the County provide for high habitat diversity and their thin, alkaline soils support rare plants species.

4.8.1 Geological Sites

Geological Survey of 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. The audit of County

Geological Sites in County Offaly was completed in 2016. There are 28 County Geological Sites in County Offaly, as mapped on Figure 4.9, with a concentration of these in the north-west parts of the County⁴². Many of these County Geological Sites include 'mushroom stones', an important geomorphological and archaeological feature.

4.8.2 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 and semi-urban areas across the country, there is potential for contamination at sites within County Offaly, especially where land uses occurred in the past in the absence of environmental protection legislation.

4.8.3 Source Protection Areas

Source Protection Area delineation provides an assessment of the land area that contributes groundwater to a borehole or spring. Source reports have been undertaken by the GSI on behalf of Local Authorities since the mid-1990s. Source Protection Areas in County Offaly are shown on Figure 4.9.

4.8.4 Existing Problems

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

³⁸ Luvisol soils are generally fertile, widely used for agriculture and associated with significant accumulation of clay.

³⁹ These are associated with alluvial (clay, silt or sand) river deposits.

⁴⁰ Surface Water Gleys are wetland soils with slowly permeable horizons resulting in seasonal waterlogging.

⁴¹ Brown earths are well drained mineral soils, associated with high levels of natural fertility.

⁴² Individual audited site reports for County Offaly are available from the GSI (www.gsi.ie).

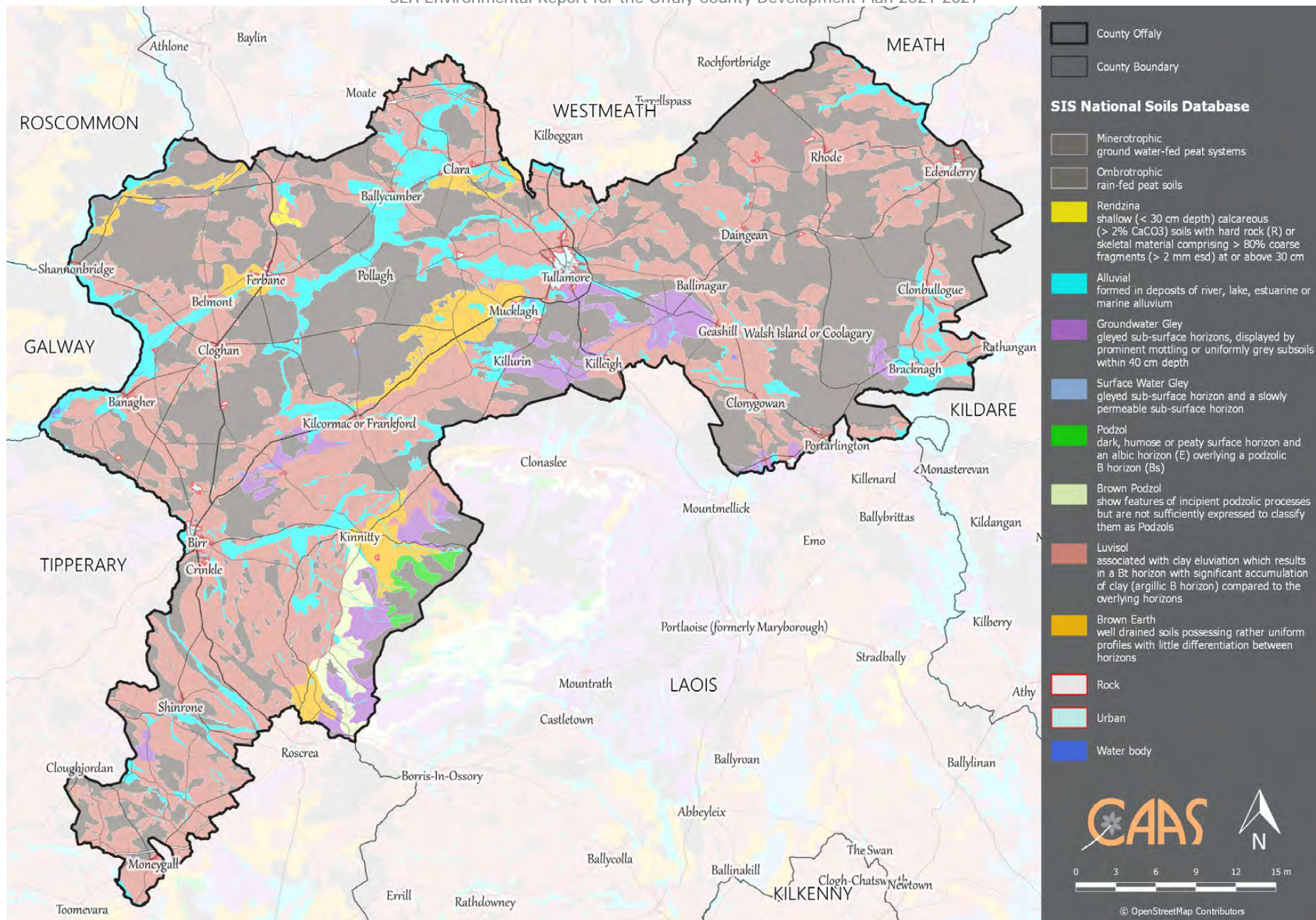


Figure 4.8 Soil Type

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 which 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 (RBMP).

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 that 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 County boundary, with respect to impacts upon waters can be estimated to be all bodies of groundwater and all surface waters downstream areas of catchments which drain 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.

Most of the County is located within the Shannon catchment. Parts of the south-east of the County are located within the Nore catchment and parts of the north-east of the County are located within the Boyne catchment.

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'.

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 WFD surface water status (2013-2018), within and surrounding the County is shown on Figure 4.10. The status of the sections⁴³ of rivers are identified on Table 4.2.

⁴³ As per EPA classification system (gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps)

Table 4.2 WFD River Status

WFD Status (2013 -2018)	Waterbody Name
High	Roscomore Stream_010 Enaghan Stream_010 Camcor_10
Good	Castlejordan_020 Castlejordan_030 Esker Stream_020 Figile_050 Figile_060 Cushina_030 Clodiagh (Tullamore)_030 Clodiagh (Tullamore)_010 Silver (Tullamore)_020 Silver (Tullamore)_030 Silver (Kilcormac)_010 Camcor_030 Camcor_050 Glenfelly Stream_010 Breaghmore_030 Little Brosna_030 Keeloge Stream_010 Ollatrim_030
Moderate	Boyne_020 Figile_030 Figile_040 Yellow (Castlejordan)_010 Tullamore_10 Cushina_010 Brosna_100 Silver (Kilcormac)_020 Brosna_130 Brosna_140 Rapemills_010 Rock (Birr)_020 Clareen Stream/ Fuarawn_010 Golden Grove Stream_010 Golden Grove_020 Keeloge Stream_020 Ballyfinboy_010
Poor	Clodiagh (Tullamore)_050 Tullamore_040 Shannon (Upper)_120 Daingean_010 Daingean_020 Daingean_030

In addition, there are a number of *unassigned*⁴⁴ rivers across the County.

4.9.5 Ground Water

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 (2013-2018) of most of groundwater underlying the County is identified as being of *good status*, meeting the objectives of the WFD (as shown on Figure 4.11). The area including and around Clara Bog is identified as being of *poor* groundwater body status.

4.9.6 Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

The Geological Survey of Ireland (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 the County are generally classified as being of *high* or *moderate vulnerability*. *Areas of extreme* or *low vulnerability* are found across smaller areas (shown on Figure 4.12).

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The vulnerability of aquifers underlying the County are mapped on Figure 4.12 and generally classified as being of:

- *High and Moderate vulnerability*, in most of the County;
- *Extreme vulnerability* and *Extreme (Rock at or near surface or karst)*, in the south-east of the County at the Slieve Bloom Mountains; and
- *Low vulnerability*, in other areas throughout the County.

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. Productivity is generally classified as being:

- *Locally important bedrock aquifer, with moderately productive bedrock in local zones*, across much of the County;

⁴⁴ There is a data gap relating to WFD surface water status data. Overall status is currently not assigned and the term "unassigned status" applies in respect of these waterbodies.

- *Locally important aquifer bedrock which is generally moderately productive*, in the north-east of the County;
- *Regionally important aquifer karstified*, along a band stretching north to south-west in the centre of the County;
- *Regionally important aquifer fissured bedrock*, along a band in the south-east of the County;
- *Regionally important gravel aquifer* in the south-east of the County; and
- *Locally important gravel aquifer* in the north-west, south-west and west of the County.

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 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).

Entries to the RPAs within and adjacent to the County include:

- All groundwater and surface waters sustaining areas designated as SACs and SPAs (these European sites are mapped on Figure 4.1);
- A number of rivers are designated as Nutrient Sensitive Areas (as shown on Figure 4.6 Figure 4.7)
- Groundwater across the County is included on the RPA for Groundwater Drinking Water (see Figure 4.6);
- A number of rivers are included on the RPA for Drinking Water Rivers (see Figure 4.6); and
- The River Boyne is designated as Salmonid River Regs (SI No. 293 of 1988) as shown on Figure 4.6.

It is noted that Source Protection Areas are described in Section 4.8.3 and mapped on Figure 4.9.

4.9.8 Flooding

Certain areas across the County are at risk from groundwater, pluvial and fluvial flooding.

Historical flooding is documented at various locations across the County, including at settlements along the Rivers Shannon and Brosna.

Predictive flood risk mapping is available from the Office of Public Works (OPW) for rivers across the County.

Areas with the greatest level of flood risk in the County include:

- Tullamore;
- Birr;
- Clara;
- Ferbane;
- Banagher;
- Daingean;
- Ballycumber;
- Belmont;
- Bracknagh;
- Clonbullogue;
- Mucklagh;
- Pollagh / Lemanaghan;
- Riverstown;
- Shannon Harbour; and
- Shannonbridge.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), as required by 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG and OPW, 2009), has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the SEA and the preparation of the Plan. This assessment considers available and emerging information on flood risk indicators including the OPW's Flood Hazard and Risk Mapping.

4.9.9 Existing Problems

Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD, based on available water data, 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 historic and predictive evidence of elevated levels of flood risk from fluvial sources at various locations across the County.

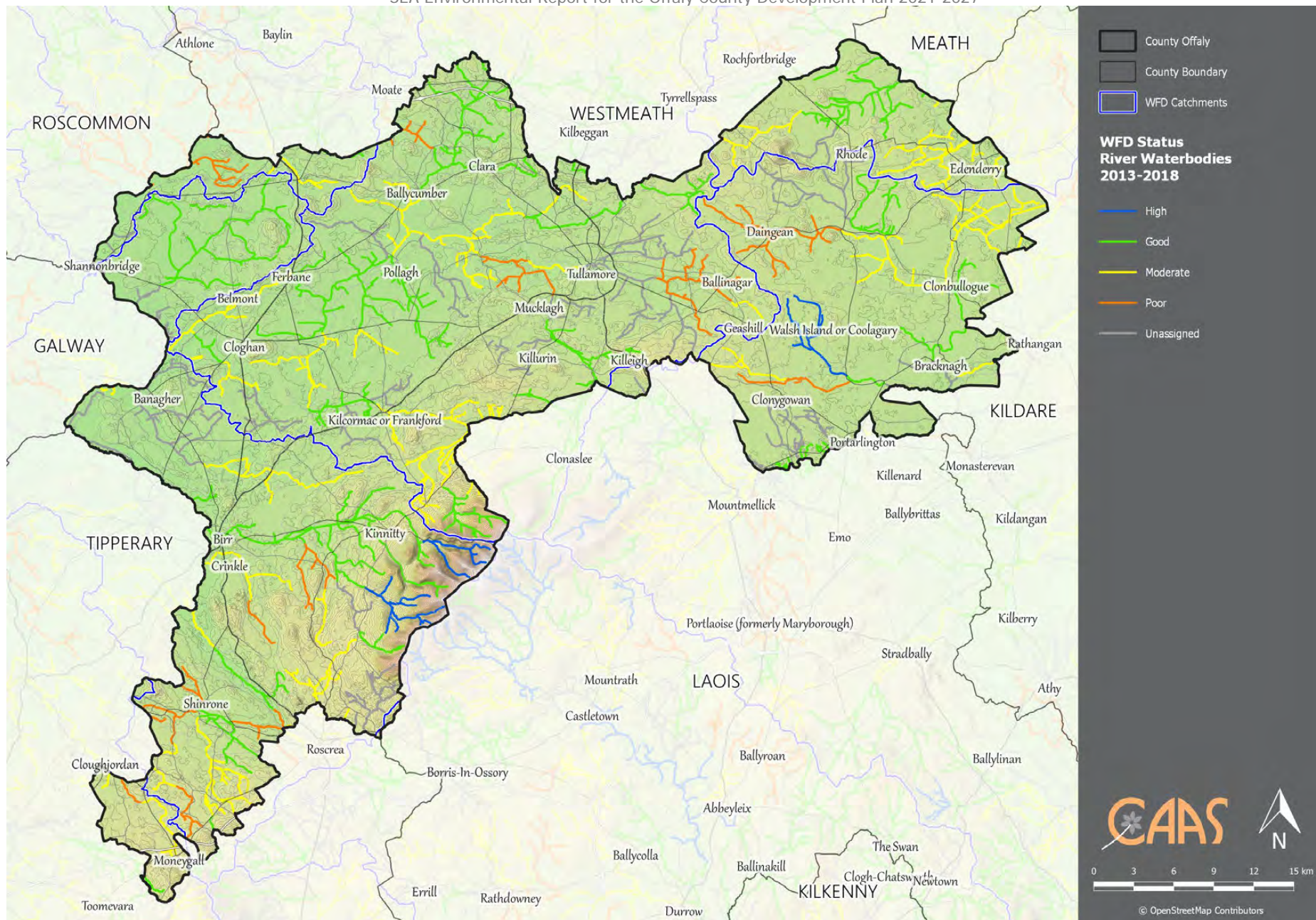


Figure 4.10 WFD Surface Water Status (2013-2018)

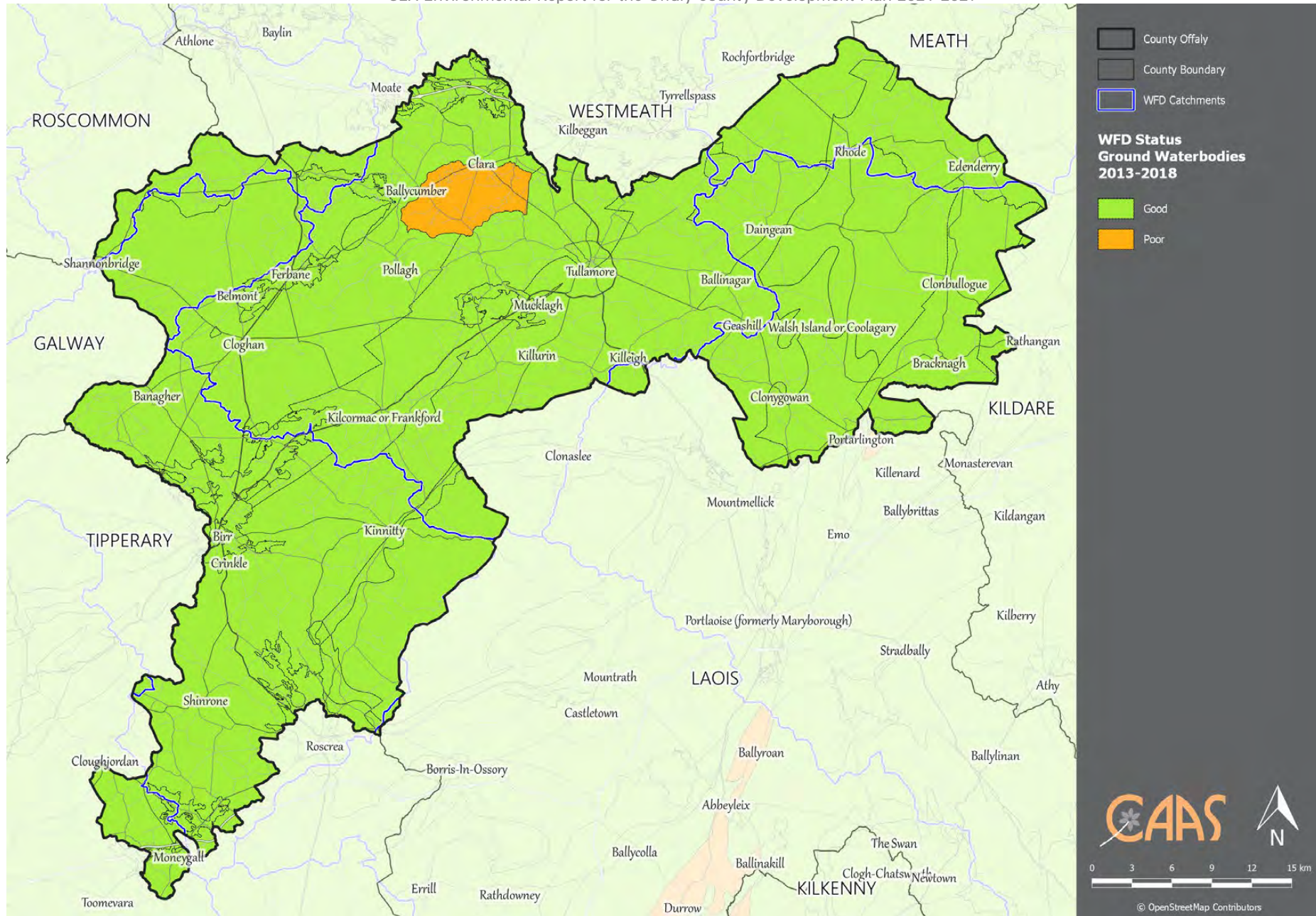


Figure 4.11 WFD Groundwater Status (2013-2018)

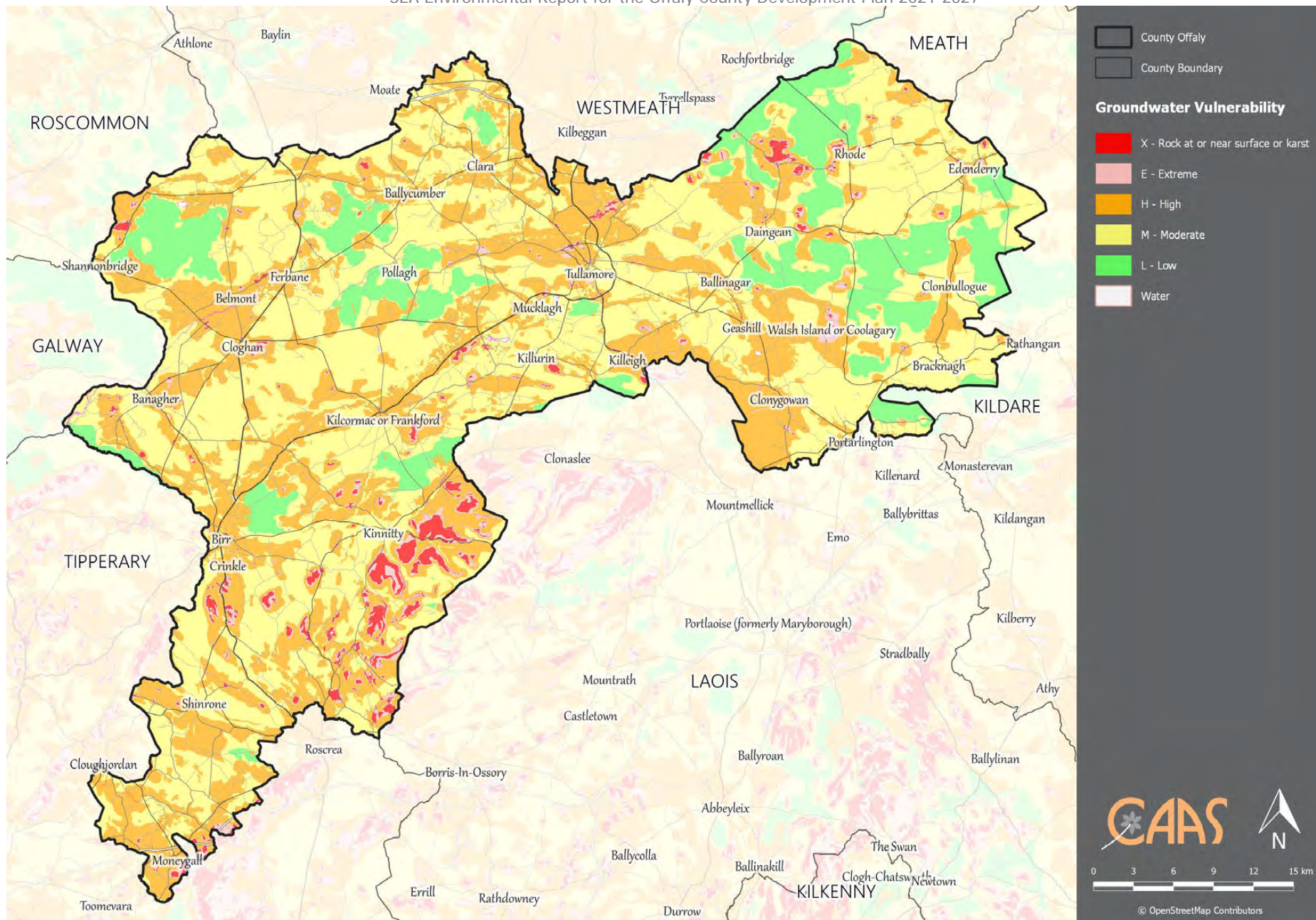


Figure 4.12 Groundwater Vulnerability

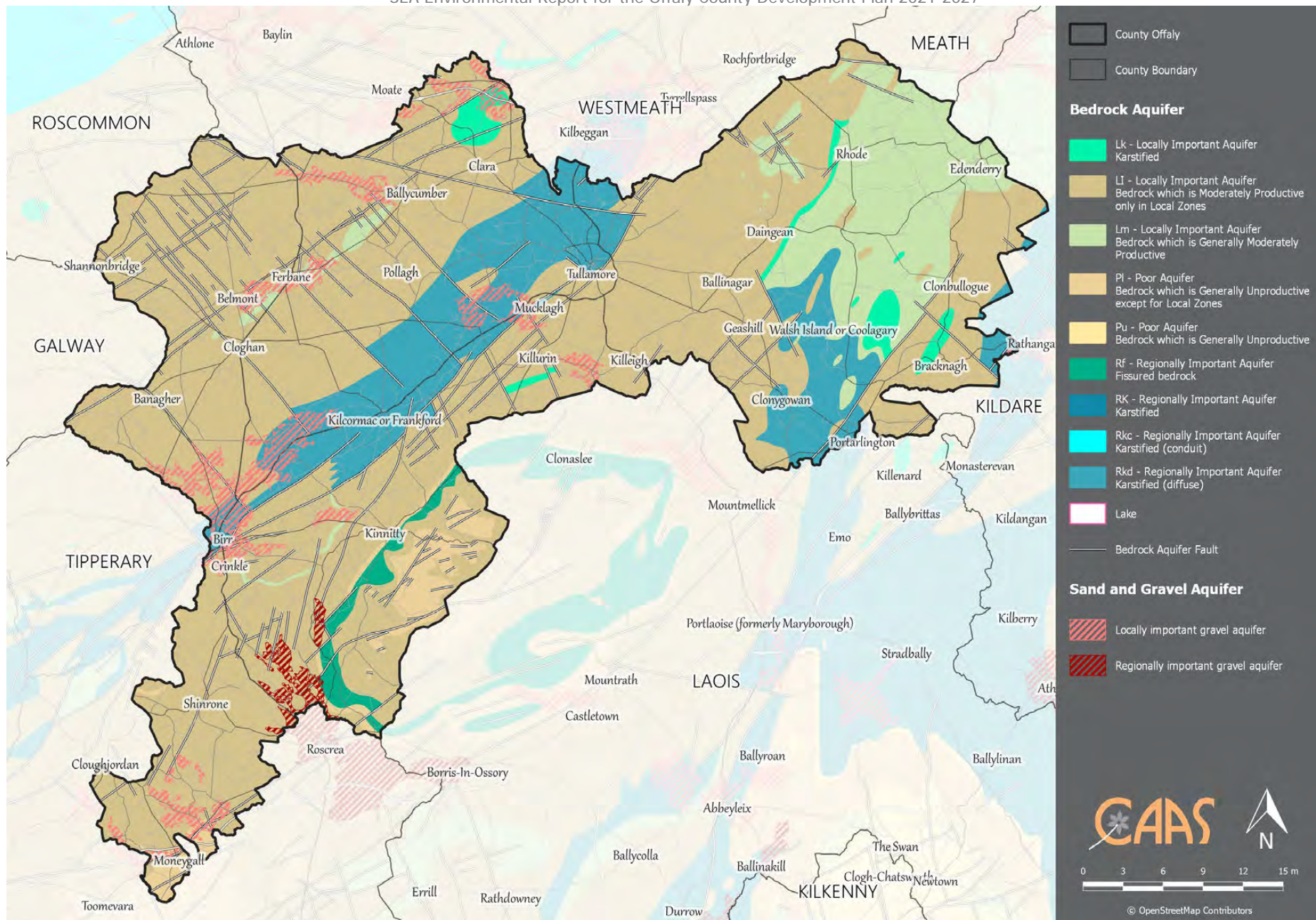


Figure 4.13 Groundwater Productivity

4.10 Air and Climatic Factors

4.10.1 Introduction

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).

Ireland's Provisional Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2017 (EPA, 2018) details provisional estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for the period 1990-2017. For 2017, total national greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 60.75 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂eq). This is 0.9% lower (0.53 Mt CO₂eq) than emissions in 2016.

The EPA's 2019 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2018-2040* provides an assessment of Ireland's progress towards achieving its emission reduction targets set down under the EU Effort Sharing Decision (Decision No 406/2009/EC) for the years 2013-2020 and a longer-term assessment based on current projections. Ireland's 2020 target is to achieve a 20% reduction of non-Emission Trading Scheme (non-ETS) sector emissions (i.e. agriculture, transport, the built environment, waste and non-energy intensive industry) on 2005 levels with annual limits set for each year over the period 2013-2020.

The report on *Ireland's Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2017* (EPA, 2019) identifies that:

- For 2017, the total national GHG emissions are estimated to be 60.74 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂eq), 0.9% lower than 2016.
- In the last 3 years, national total emissions have increased by 6.4%. In the same period, emissions in the ETS⁴⁵ sector have increased by 5.9%.

⁴⁵ The EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) was launched in 2005 as the world's first international company-level 'cap-and-trade' system for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases cost-effectively. The cap makes sure that CO₂ becomes a product and, thus, CO₂ is valued at a price, which is determined by the supply and demand at the (trading) market.

- Agriculture emissions increased by 2.9% in 2017 (driven by higher dairy cow numbers and increases in milk production).
- GHG emissions from the Transport sector decreased by 2.4% in 2017. This is the first year of decreased emissions after four successive years of increases in transport emissions.
- Agriculture and Transport accounted for 73.5% of total ESD emissions in 2017.
- Emissions in the Energy Industries sector show a decrease of 6.9% which is attributable to a 5.9% decrease in fossil fuel consumption and an increase of 21.1% and 1.6% in electricity generated from wind and hydro, respectively, in 2017. Renewables now account for 30.1% of electricity generated in 2017, an increase of 3.3% from 2016 figures. Ireland continued to be a net exporter of electricity in 2017. However, exported electricity saw a 4.7% reduction in 2017 to previous 2016 figures.
- Emissions from the Manufacturing Combustion⁴⁶ sector increased by 3.1% in 2017.
- The Industrial Processes sector emissions increased by 4.1%, mainly from increased cement production. Cement process emissions increased by 2.6% in 2017.
- GHG emissions from the Residential sector decreased by 5.0%. This can be attributed to a milder winter.
- Emissions from the Waste sector decreased by 2.5% in 2017.

The EPA 2019 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2018-2040* provides an assessment of Ireland's total projected greenhouse gas emissions out to 2040 which includes an assessment of progress towards achieving its emission reduction targets out to 2020 and 2030 set under the EU Effort Sharing Decision (Decision No 406/2009/EU) and Effort Sharing Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2018/842). Ireland's 2020 target is to achieve a 20% reduction of non-Emission Trading Scheme (non-ETS) sector emissions (i.e. agriculture, transport, the built environment, waste and non-energy intensive industry) on 2005 levels with annual limits set for each year over the period 2013-2020. Ireland's 2030 target under the Effort Sharing Regulation is a 30% reduction of emissions compared to 2005 levels by 2030. There will be binding annual limits over the 2021-2030 period to meet that target. Key Insights identified as part of the report's package of documents are that:

- There is a long-term projected decrease in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of inclusion of new climate mitigation policies and measures that formed part of the 2018-2027 National Development Plan, which was published in 2018. This is evident in the With Additional Measures scenario which assumes full

⁴⁶ Manufacturing Combustion; includes combustion of fuels in Industry and Construction, both in ETS and non-ETS

implementation of the programmes, policies and measures included in the National Development Plan.

- Fossil fuels such as coal, peat and gas continue to be key contributors to emissions from the power generation sector. However, a significant reduction in emissions over the longer term is projected as a result of the expansion of renewables (e.g. wind), assumed to reach 41-54% by 2030, with a move away from coal and peat.
- A growth in emissions from the transport sector continues to be projected which is largely attributed to fuel consumption from diesel cars and diesel freight. A decrease in emissions over the longer term, most notably in the With Additional Measures scenario, is largely attributed to assumed accelerated deployment of 500,000 electric vehicles and the impact of greater biofuel uptake.
- Agriculture emissions are projected to continue to grow steadily over the period which is mainly a result of an increase in animal numbers particularly for the dairy herd.
- The implementation of additional energy efficiency measures included in the National Development Plan will see a significant reduction in emissions in the residential, commercial/public services and manufacturing sectors over the projected period.

4.10.2 Climate Mitigation

The National Mitigation Plan (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2017), represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the level of decarbonisation required. It is a whole-of-Government Plan, reflecting in particular the central roles of the key Ministers responsible for the sectors covered by the Plan – Electricity Generation, the Built Environment, Transport and Agriculture, as well as drawing on the perspectives and responsibilities of a range of other Government Departments.

The National Adaptation Framework (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018), sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. The National Adaptation Framework outlines a whole of government and society approach to climate adaptation. Under the Framework, a number of Government Departments will be required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans in relation to a priority area that they are responsible for.

The National Climate Action Plan 2019 is an all of Government plan to tackle climate change and bring about a step change in Ireland's climate ambition over the coming years. The

plan sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address the diverse and wide-ranging impacts climate disruption is having on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. The Climate Action Plan sets out clear 2030 targets for each sector with the ultimate objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable society and economy by 2050.

The use of alternative fuels, including electricity, forms a significant part of government policy to reduce emissions, including from transport. Greater use of alternative fuels, including renewable energy, has the potential to further contribute towards energy security.

The 2019 emission projections do not consider the impact of new policies and measures that will be included in the forthcoming Government Climate Plan. It is anticipated that future emission projections will include the additional impact of the Government Climate Plan.

The Climate Change Advisory Council's Annual Review 2019 identifies that the most recent projections demonstrate that, under different assumptions, Ireland will not meet its emissions reduction targets, even with the additional policies and measures included in the National Development Plan. The projections also show that progress on reducing emissions is sensitive to the future path of fuel prices. A significant and sustained rate of emissions reduction of approximately -2.5% per year is required to meet our objectives for 2050. However, it must be noted that additional measures within the recent Climate Action Plan are not included in the analysis to date.

4.10.3 Ambient Air Quality

In order to protect human health, vegetation and ecosystems, EU Directives set down air quality standards in Ireland and the other 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 EU Directives include details regarding how ambient air quality should be monitored, assessed and managed.

The principles to this European approach are set out in the Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) (which replaces the earlier Air Quality Framework Directive 1996 and the first, second and third *Daughter Directives*; the fourth *Daughter Directive* will be included in CAFE at a later stage).

In order to comply with the directives 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 (SI No. 271 of 2002).

The EPA's (2020) *Air Quality in Ireland 2019* identifies that:

- Air quality in Ireland is generally good however there are localised issues;
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from transport emissions is polluting urban areas; and
- Ireland was above World Health Organization air quality guideline value levels at 33 monitoring sites – mostly due to the burning of solid fuel within settlements across the country.

With regards to solutions, the report identifies that:

- To tackle the problem of particulate matter, clean ways of heating homes and improve energy efficiency of homes can be progressed; and
- To reduce the impact of nitrogen dioxide, transport options in the Government's Climate Action Plan can be implemented and transport choices can be considered by individuals.

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 locations across the country. The current⁴⁷ air quality in the Leinster Air Quality Region is identified by the EPA as being *good*.

4.10.4 Noise

Offaly County Council has prepared a Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 in accordance with the

requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006. 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.

4.10.5 Existing Problems

Legislative objectives governing air and climatic factors in County Offaly were not identified as being conflicted with.

4.11 Material Assets⁴⁸

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; settlements; 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.); forestry; and natural resources that are covered under other topics such as water and soil.

4.11.2 Land

The Plan seeks 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 Agriculture

Much of the land throughout the County is used for agriculture, as indicated by the agricultural related land covers shown on

⁴⁷ 07/04/2020 (<http://www.epa.ie/air/quality/>)

⁴⁸ Much of the information contained in this section is taken from the Plan

Figure 4.4 on page 24. Agriculture is a strong employer and a significant source of economic activity in the County. It contributes to exports, provides the raw materials for the food processing industry and has potential for providing more added value in the artisan food sector.

4.11.4 Forestry

Various extents and types of forestry exist across the County, as indicated on Figure 4.4 on page 24. Much of the forested land is owned by Coillte. Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are also important as links in the county's green infrastructure network.

4.11.5 Peatlands

There are significant peatland areas throughout the County, as indicated on Figure 4.4 on page 24. These include Clara Bog, All Saints Bog, Sharavogue Bog, Slieve Bloom Blanket Bog and Raheenmore Bog. These provide a valuable natural and archaeological resource. Cutaway bogs have the potential to facilitate landuses such as employment, renewable energy generation, waste management, industrial and tourism/recreation.

4.11.6 Renewable Energy Potential

Under EU Directive 2001/77/EC Renewable Energy, renewable energy sources are defined as renewable non-fossil energy sources such as, but not limited to wind, solar, geothermal, wave, tidal, hydropower, biomass, landfill gas, sewage treatment plant gas, bio-gases and bio-char (i.e. the thermal treatment of natural organic materials in an oxygen-limited environment). There is potential for renewable energy development in the County and the Plan seeks to facilitate such development in a sustainable manner.

4.11.7 Transport

Transport infrastructure in the County has the potential to support reductions in energy demand from the transport sector, including through electrification of modes.

Due to its strategic location in the middle of the country, Offaly and its main urban centres are particularly well served by a hierarchy of roads including sections of motorways, national roads, regional roads and local roads. The M6 (Dublin to Galway) and M7 (Dublin to Limerick) motorways and the N52, N62 and N80 national primary routes traverse the County providing important linkages and networks within, into and out of the County. Offaly is where many routes interconnect making them fundamental in providing connections with other urban centres in the midlands. Both regional and local roads provide vital links between the towns and villages to retail, service and employment centres throughout the County and to adjoining counties.

County Offaly is centrally located along national interconnecting strategic rail corridors. Tullamore and Clara are both accessible by rail and are positioned on the Galway/Dublin /Westport rail lines. Irish Rail and Bus Éireann operate on number of routes several times daily.

4.11.8 Water Services

4.11.8.1 Waste Water

The EPA's 2019 report *'Urban Waste Water Treatment in 2018'* identified that:

- Waste water treatment at 21 large urban areas did not meet European standards;
- Raw sewage is released into the environment from 36 urban areas;
- Waste water from 57 areas is the sole threat to waters at risk of pollution;
- Waste water contributed to poor quality bathing waters at three beaches in 2018;
- Discharges from 13 areas must improve to protect freshwater pearl mussels;
- Disinfection systems must be installed at two villages to safeguard shellfish; and
- Eight waste water collection systems have been found non-compliant with European Union requirements.

Based on the EPA's assessment of monitoring information provided by Irish Water and the enforcement activities carried out by the EPA, this report identifies urban areas with the most important environmental issues with respect to waste water infrastructure that must be addressed.

From January 2014, Irish Water became responsible for all public water services, involving the supply of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of waste

water. Irish Water is also responsible for the treatment and disposal of the sludge that is generated from both its water and waste water treatment plants. The Council is an agent of Irish Water for operations and remains the designated Water Authority for the assessment and approval of on-site waste water treatment systems and is responsible for surface water drainage in the County.

The provision of well-maintained quality waste water treatment infrastructure is essential to facilitate sustainable development of the County in line with the Settlement and Core Strategy while also protecting the environment and public health. Irish Water is now responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of waste water where public waste water facilities exist in towns and villages. In unserved areas and outside the main towns and villages, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary waste water treatment systems.

Irish Water, working in partnership with Offaly County Council, is making investments to undertake essential upgrade works to waste water treatment plants in towns and villages across the County. 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.

Offaly County Council operates 27 public waste water treatment plants⁴⁹. In unserved areas and outside the main towns and villages, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary waste water treatment systems. Two of the 27 plants service urban areas that are listed as Priority Areas where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues with respect to waste water treatment (EPA, 2019):

- Tullamore (waste water discharges cause a significant pressure on the River Tullamore); and
- Kilcormac (where waste water discharges cause a significant pressure on the River Silver).

⁴⁹ Ballinagar, Banagher, Birr, Bracknagh, Clara, Cloghan, Clonbullogue, Cloneygowan, Coolderry, Edenderry, Fermbane, Geashill, Daingean, Kilcormac, Killeigh, Kinnitty, Leamanaghan, Moneygall, Mountbolus, Mucklagh, Shannonharbour, Rahan, Rhode, Shannonbridge, Shinrone, Walsh Island and Tullamore.

Table 4.3 provides information on waste water treatment plant performance sourced from the EPA's 2018 Annual Environmental Reports (published in February 2019) on waste water compliance for these two Priority Areas. Both of the settlements for which there is information failed on at least one parameter tested.

Irish Water has provided the Waste Water Treatment Capacity Register for County Offaly (see Table 4.4) to assist the planning authority in the preparation of the new County Development Plan by indicating where there may be waste water treatment capacity available to accommodate growth ("headroom") in terms of population equivalent⁵⁰ (PE) in each settlement serviced by a public waste water treatment plant. Spare treatment capacity is available now or is expected to be delivered by 2022 in most of these settlements, except for Rahan and Walsh Island. The highest levels of headroom (PE) is available at Tullamore (21,712 PE); Clara (4,667 PE); and Fermbane (1,665 PE).

Irish Water is responsible for the treatment and disposal of the sludge that is generated from both its water and waste water treatment plants. Irish Water has prepared a National Waste water Sludge Management Plan 2016-2021 that outlines Irish Water's strategy to ensure a nationwide standardised approach for managing waste water sludge over a 25-year period. A separate plan will be prepared in relation to sludge produced at drinking water plants.

The Sludge Management Plan proposes to develop a Sludge Hub Centre and Satellite Dewatering Site network for waste water sludge treatment, optimised on a regional rather than county basis. Tullamore waste water treatment plant is currently under consideration by Irish Water as a potential site for a Sludge Hub Centre on a regional basis.

⁵⁰ As identified in Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan, wastewater treatment plants are described in terms of their designed treatment capacity, which is generally expressed as population equivalent (PE). This is a measurement of total organic biodegradable load, including industrial, institutional, commercial and domestic organic load, on a wastewater treatment plant, converted to the equivalent number of PEs. One person is considered to generate 60g of five day Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) per day. 1 PE is defined as being equivalent to 60g of BOD per day.

4.11.8.2 Water Supply

Irish Water is responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public water supply infrastructure throughout the County. There are 24 Public Water Supply Schemes in County Offaly⁵¹, 14 Public Group Water Schemes⁵² and 15 Private Group Water Schemes⁵³. Private water supplies provide an alternative for areas that are not served by public water supply infrastructure and comprise mainly of wells and group water schemes.

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 in compliance with the Regulations mentioned above.

The Clara/Ferbane Regional Public Supply Scheme is listed on the most recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q4 of 2019) due to elevated levels of THMs above the standard in the Drinking Water Regulations. This Water Supply Scheme has a supply volume of 5,145 m³/day, serving a population of 7,467 people. The proposed plan of action to remedy this issue is an upgrade of coagulation process at Clara water treatment plant by December 2024.

4.11.8.3 Surface Water Drainage

The Council is responsible for surface water drainage in the County. 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 Council seeks to ensure the sustainable

management of surface water discharges in urban areas through the use of SuDS.

4.11.9 Waste Management

The Eastern-Midlands Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 provides the framework for solid waste management in the region and sets out a range of policies and actions to meet specified mandatory and performance-based targets.

The Eastern and Midland Waste Region comprises 12 local authority areas of Dublin City, Fingal, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Offaly, Meath, Wicklow, Westmeath and South Dublin.

4.11.10 Existing Problems

There are a number of challenges with respect to the provision of water services infrastructure that are described under Section 4.11 above.

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

⁵¹ Banagher, Birr, Clara/Ferbane, Clonbullogue, Coolderry, Daingean, Dungar, Dunkerrin, Edenderry, Geashill, Horseleap, Kilcormac, Kinnitty, Moneygall, Mountbolus, Moyclare, Portarlinton, Rahan–Agall /Holmshill, Rahan Tully, Rhode, Shinrone/Brosna, Tullamore South (Clonaslee), Tullamore North (Ardan) and Walsh Island.

⁵² Ballindarra, Mile Tree, Ballycommon / Kilclonfert, Bishopstown, Shandra Lane, Leamore Leabeg, Durrow, Endrim, Erryarmstrong, Rashina/Kilnagarnagh, Townspark, Bog Road, Cushina / Kilnacarragh and Kilnacarra.

⁵³ Clareen/Aghancon, Ballinagar, Ballyboy, Ballyfore / Ballykilleen, Bloomhill, Boher, Bracknagh, Cadamstown, Clondelara, Clonfinlough, Killeigh/Cloneygowan, Meelaghans, Mountlucas, Tober and Rath.

Table 4.3 Waste Water Treatment Plant Performance⁵⁴

Plant name and Reference	Treatment Provided	Overall Compliance (Pass/Fail)	Parameter Failed	Cause of Exceedances and Significance of Results (Water Quality)	Organic Capacities (PE)		
					As Constructed	Collected Load (peak week)	Remaining
Tullamore D0039-01	Preliminary Treatment (including screening and grit removal) Secondary Treatment (Conventional activated sludge) Nutrient Removal (Chemical dosing for phosphorus removal) Tertiary Treatment (Disk Filters)	Fail	Total Phosphorus (as P) mg/l	Cause: Inadequate Operational Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plant's discharge was not compliant with the Emission Limit Values set in the waste water discharge licence. The ambient monitoring results meet the required Environmental Quality Standards. Where the ambient monitoring results meet the required Environmental Quality Standards this relates to the Oxygenation and Nutrient Conditions set out in the Surface Water Regulations 2009. The discharge from the waste water treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the water quality. The discharge from the plant is considered not to be having an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status. The WFD status is Unassigned at the upstream monitoring point, however the WFD status is Poor approx. 50m downstream of this point. The WFD status is Poor downstream of the plant 	45000	21771	23229
Kilcormac D0225-01	Preliminary Treatment (screening) Primary (Imhoff Tanks/settlement tanks) Secondary Treatment (Trickling filters and final settlement)	Fail	Ortho-phosphate (as P)-unspecified COD -Cr Suspended Solids Ammonia-Total (as N)	Cause: Plant or equipment maintenance at the plant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plant's discharge was not compliant with the Emission Limit Values set in the waste water discharge licence The ambient monitoring results meet the required Environmental Quality Standards. The discharge from the waste water treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the water quality. The discharge from the plant has no observable negative impact on the WFD status It is noted that consistent achievement with the Emission Limit Values would benefit the quality of the receiving water. 	2000	1130	870

⁵⁴ Source: EPA Annual Environmental Reports for 2018, 2019

Table 4.4 Waste Water Treatment Capacity Register (Irish Water 29/04/20) ^{55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61}

Region	County	Settlement	Census pop. (2016)	Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)	Reg #	Serves other areas?	WWTP Capacity (PE)		Load (PE) 2019	Headroom (PE)		Current project completion year
							Today	Upon works completion		WWDL ELV Capability	UWW Standards Capability (not WWDL ELVs)	
EM	Offaly	Tullamore	14,607	Tullamore WWTP	D0039	No	45,000	=	23,288	21,712		
EM	Offaly	Edenderry	7,359	Edenderry WWTP	D0110	No	9,800	12,500	9,288	512		Post 2024
EM	Offaly	Birr	4,370	Birr WWTP	D0109	No	12,000	=	11,011	989		
EM	Offaly	Clara	3,336	Clara WWTP	D0142	No	9,000	=	4,333	4,667		
EM	Offaly	Banagher	1,760	Banagher WWTP	D0141	No	3,000	=	2,290	710		
EM	Offaly	Ferbane	1,191	Ferbane WWTP	D0147	No	3,184	=	1,519	1,665		
EM	Offaly	Daingean	1,077	Daingean WWTP	D0226	No	1,200	=	1,092	108		
EM	Offaly	Kilcormac	935	Kilcormac WWTP	D0225	No	1,500	=	1,145	355		
EM	Offaly	Mucklagh	826	Mucklagh WWTP	D0364	No	1,100	-	825	275		
EM	Offaly	Rhode	811	Rhode WWTP	D0227	No	1,000	=	939	61		
EM	Offaly	Shinrone	645	Shinrone WWTP	D0365	No	1,000	=	658	342		
EM	Offaly	Cloghan	601	Cloghan WWTP	D0369	No	1,100	=	756	344		
EM	Offaly	Ballinagar	453	Ballinagar WWTP	D0362	No	1,000	=	449	551		
EM	Offaly	Kinnitty	381	Kinnitty WWTP	D0363	No	750	=	386	364		
CoA Headroom (PE)												
EM	Offaly	Bracknagh	Unavailable	Bracknagh WWTP	A0172	No	350	=	258	92		
EM	Offaly	Clonbullogue	439	Clonbullogue WWTP	A0168	No	700	=	366	334		
EM	Offaly	Cloneygowan	Unavailable	Cloneygowan WWTP	A0167	No	450	=	257	193		
EM	Offaly	Coolderry	Unavailable	Coolderry WWTP	A0166	No	150	=	103	47		
EM	Offaly	Geashill	395	Geashill WWTP	A0177	No	750	=	435	315		
EM	Offaly	Killeigh	212	Killeigh WWTP	A0163	No	460	=	288	172		
EM	Offaly	Leamonaghan	Unavailable	Leamonaghan WWTP	A0174	No	400	-	175	225		
EM	Offaly	Moneygall	313	Moneygall WWTP	A0169	No	500	=	372	128		
EM	Offaly	Mountbolus	Unavailable	Mountbolus WWTP	A0170	No	350	=	119	231		
EM	Offaly	Rahan	Unavailable	Rahan WWTP	A0173	No	-	=	87			
EM	Offaly	Shannon Harbour	Unavailable	Shannon Harbour WWTP	A0162	No	200	=	46	154		
EM	Offaly	Shannonbridge	175	Shannonbridge WWTP	A0171	No	500	=	217	283		
EM	Offaly	Walsh Island	Unavailable	Walsh Island WWTP	A0175	No	340	=	492			

⁵⁵ Waste Water Discharge Licences (WWDL) and Certificates of Authorisation (CoA)

⁵⁶ WWTP Capacity (PE) Today = Overall design capacity of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in population equivalents (PE) today (the date at the top of this table).

⁵⁷ WWTP Capacity (PE) Upon works completion = Overall design capacity of the WWTP in population equivalents (PE) upon completion of a relevant project delivering additional capacity. Note that 'WWDL' or 'UWW' following the capacity value indicates that the upgraded WWTP will have capability to achieve the full Waste Water Discharge Licence (WWDL) emission limit values (ELVs) in the former case, or at least the Urban Waste Water (UWW) Treatment Directive parametric values in the latter case.

⁵⁸ Load (PE) 2019 = Wastewater load arising from the settlement(s) being served entering the WWTP in 2019.

⁵⁹ Headroom (PE) = Headroom available at the WWTP in 2019 in terms of population equivalents based on available capacity now or by completion of a project by 2022 (where relevant). Green = spare capacity available. Amber = potential spare capacity. WWTP currently not compliant with Waste Water Discharge Licence emission limit values but is capable of achieving at least UWW standards. Potential availability of capacity in this case would be dependent on any additional load not resulting in a significant breach of the combined approach as set out in Regulation 43 of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007. Red = no spare capacity available

⁶⁰ Current project completion year = This is the current forecasted completion year as of date of this table and is subject to change. 'Post 2024' indicates that the project is proposed to be completed within the next investment period (2025-2029), subject to the planning and approval of the next capital investment plan. Note, there is no guarantee that this capacity will be delivered if the current Investment Plan is amended due to emerging needs or changes due to exchequer funding.

⁶¹ General notes (i) The headroom figure stated is based on available information on the date of issue of this table and is subject to change. (ii) The indication of spare treatment capacity has been determined based on a standardised national review of the available information. (iii) A Pre-Connection Enquiry should be submitted to Irish Water to determine the feasibility of connecting any particular site to the Irish Water network, feasibility should not be inferred from this register.

4.12 Cultural Heritage

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

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 five Zones of Notification in County Offaly at: Banagher; Birr; Daingean; Dunkerrin; and Seir Kieran.

Figure 4.14 shows the spatial distribution of recorded monuments in the County. Clusters of monuments in County Offaly are located within the County's settlements.

There are ten Monuments in State Care (eight in State Ownership and two in State Guardianship)⁶² in County Offaly:

- Cadamstown;
- Cannakill;
- Kinnity Cross;
- Seirkieran;
- Clonfinlough;
- Clonin;
- Clonmacnoise;
- Durrow;
- Gallen Abbey; and
- Rahan.

There are also number of Monuments Protected by Preservation Order in County Offaly, including: ecclesiastical remains in Clonmacnoise; cemetery and enclosure in Derryvilla; Motte castle earthworks in Rathlilhen; Clonony castle; and Coole castle.

County Offaly has a significant archaeological heritage, with over 4,000 archaeological sites dating back to the Mesolithic period, around 7,000 B.C as documented by the National Monuments Service. These sites include 23 recorded Early Christian Monasteries in the County, such as Clonmacnoise, Leamanaghan, Durrow, Rahan and Killeigh.

Clonmacnoise is an example of an early medieval ecclesiastical site of national and international importance as a spiritual, historic, archaeological and cultural centre. The site is

⁶² This list of National Monuments in State care includes those which are in the ownership and guardianship of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

located on the River Shannon and is representative of a significant stage in the development of Early Medieval Christianity. The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its cultural landscape is currently listed as a Tentative World Heritage Site by UNESCO⁶³.

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.

Rivers and lakes within the County 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 curtilage⁶⁴ 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).

Similar to the general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within the County's settlements as shown on Figure 4.15. There are over 1,400 entries to the Record of Protected Structures within the County, including include castles, bridges, schools, fine historic houses and their associated demesne lands. Notable buildings include Frankfort Castle, D.E. Williams House, Tullamore Townhall, Birr Castle and St. Brendan's Church.

In addition to Protected Structures, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). An ACA is a place, area or group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures, whose character it is an objective to preserve in a development plan. The ACA designation requires that planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure in the ACA that might alter the character of the

⁶³ A Tentative List is an inventory of properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

⁶⁴ 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.

structure or the ACA. There is one ACA designated within County Offaly, that of Geashill Village (as shown on Figure 4.12).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a State initiative under the administration of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 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 Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 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 4.15 shows entries to NIAH in County Offaly. Similar to the general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within already developed urban and suburban areas.

4.12.3 Existing Problems

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

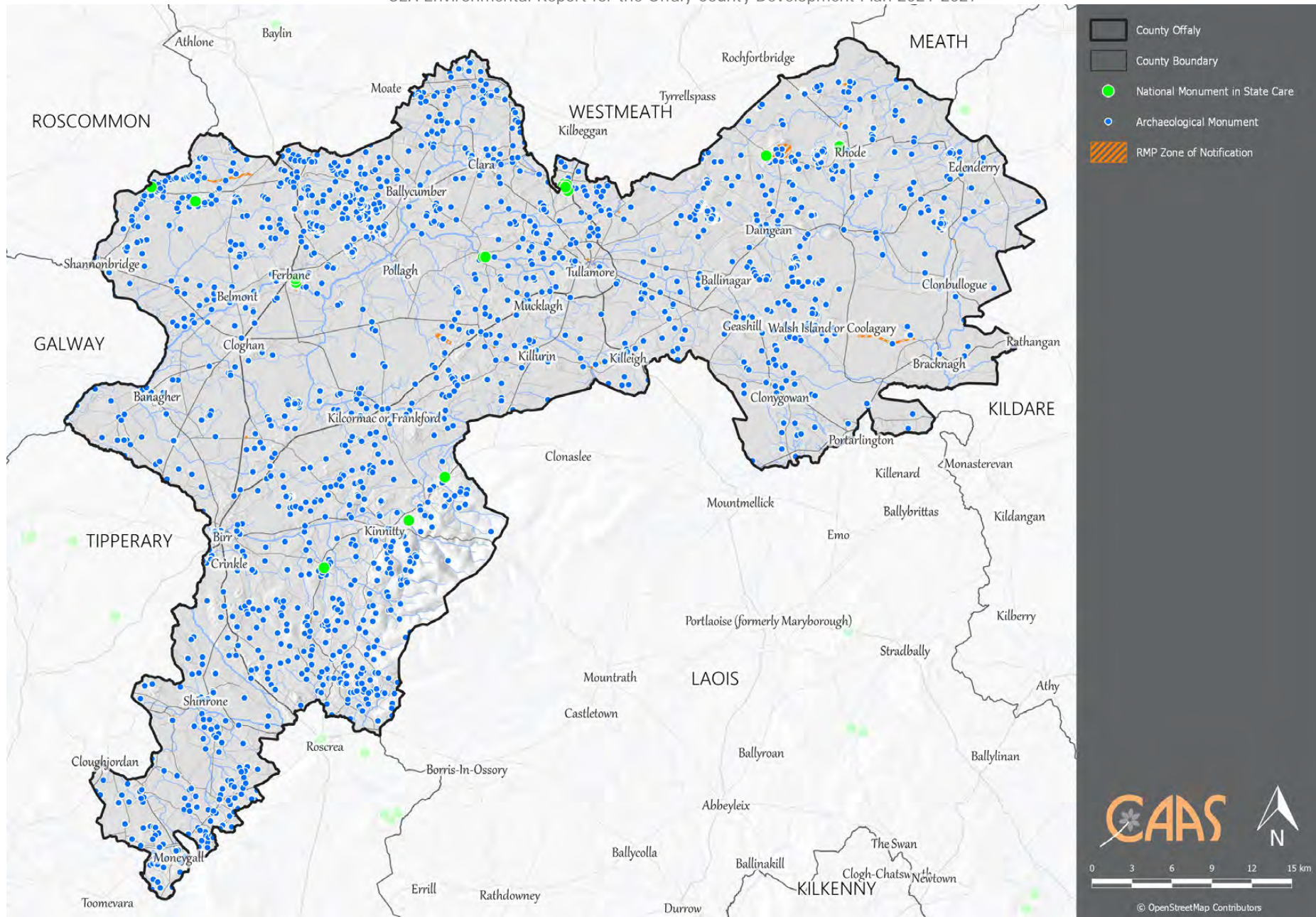


Figure 4.14 Archaeological Heritage

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 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.

Offaly has a diverse landscape, with Slieve Bloom Mountains in the south-west, River Shannon Callows in the west and many peatlands, grasslands, woodlands, eskers and wetlands in various locations across the County. There are a range of different landscapes found in Offaly, each with varying visual and amenity values, topography, exposure levels and contain a variety of habitats. Each landscape type has varying capacity to absorb development related to its overall sensitivity.

4.13.2 Landscape Character Areas

The European Landscape Convention was ratified in Ireland in 2002, this required EU Member States to adopt national measures to promote landscape, planning, protection and management.

The purpose of landscape character assessment is to provide the foundation for policy formulation and decision making for landscape management. The County Offaly Landscape Character Assessment has identified the following 10 Landscape Character Areas:

- Rural and Agricultural Areas;
- Cutaway Bog;
- The River Shannon and Callows;
- The Grand Canal Corridor;
- Wetlands;
- Slieve Bloom Upland Area;
- Croghan Hill and its Environs;
- Bogland Areas;

- The Esker Landscape; and
- Archaeological and Historical Landscapes.

4.13.3 Landscape Sensitivities

The sensitivity of a landscape is the measure of its ability to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. The sensitivity of the landscapes of County Offaly varies and is classified within the following sensitivity classes: low, moderate and high (as mapped on Figure 4.16).

High sensitivity areas within the County include:

- The River Shannon and Callows;
- The Grand Canal Corridor;
- Wetlands;
- Slieve Bloom Upland Area;
- Croghan Hill and its Environs;
- Raised and Blanket Bogland Areas;
- The Esker Landscape; and
- Archaeological and Historical Landscapes.

These areas are the most sensitive to development and therefore developments which are likely to create a significant environmental and particularly visual impact will best be absorbed in areas where the landscape is most robust, i.e. has the capacity to absorb development without significantly changing its character.

4.13.4 Areas of High Amenity

Areas of High Amenity have been identified by the Council to facilitate the protection and enhancement of areas of scenic and amenity value in County Offaly that are worthy of special protection in order to preserve their uniqueness and amenity value. These include the following:

- Waterways and Wetlands (including River Shannon and Callows, Grand Canal, Lough Boora Discovery Park and Pallas Lake);
- Upland Areas (Slieve Bloom Mountains and Croghan Hill);
- Peatlands (Clara Bog and Raheenmore Bog);
- Eskers (Eiscir Riada, Clara Eskers and Other Eskers); and

- Archaeological and Historical (Clonmacnoise and Durrow Monastic Site and Demesne).

Areas of High Amenity are mapped on Figure 4.17.

4.13.5 Protected View Points and Key Amenity Routes

The Council recognises the need to protect the character of the County by protecting Key Scenic Views and Key Prospects. There are 19 Protected Views identified in the County.

In addition, County Offaly contains a number of Key Amenity Routes that offer a very attractive cross-sectional view and overall impression of differing landscapes within Offaly as one traverses the County. These routes include the following:

- R357 Blueball to Shannonbridge; and
- R440 Birr to Kinnitty and R421 Kinnitty to Ballard.

Existing View Points and Key Amenity Routes are mapped on Figure 4.17.

4.13.6 Existing Environmental Problems

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

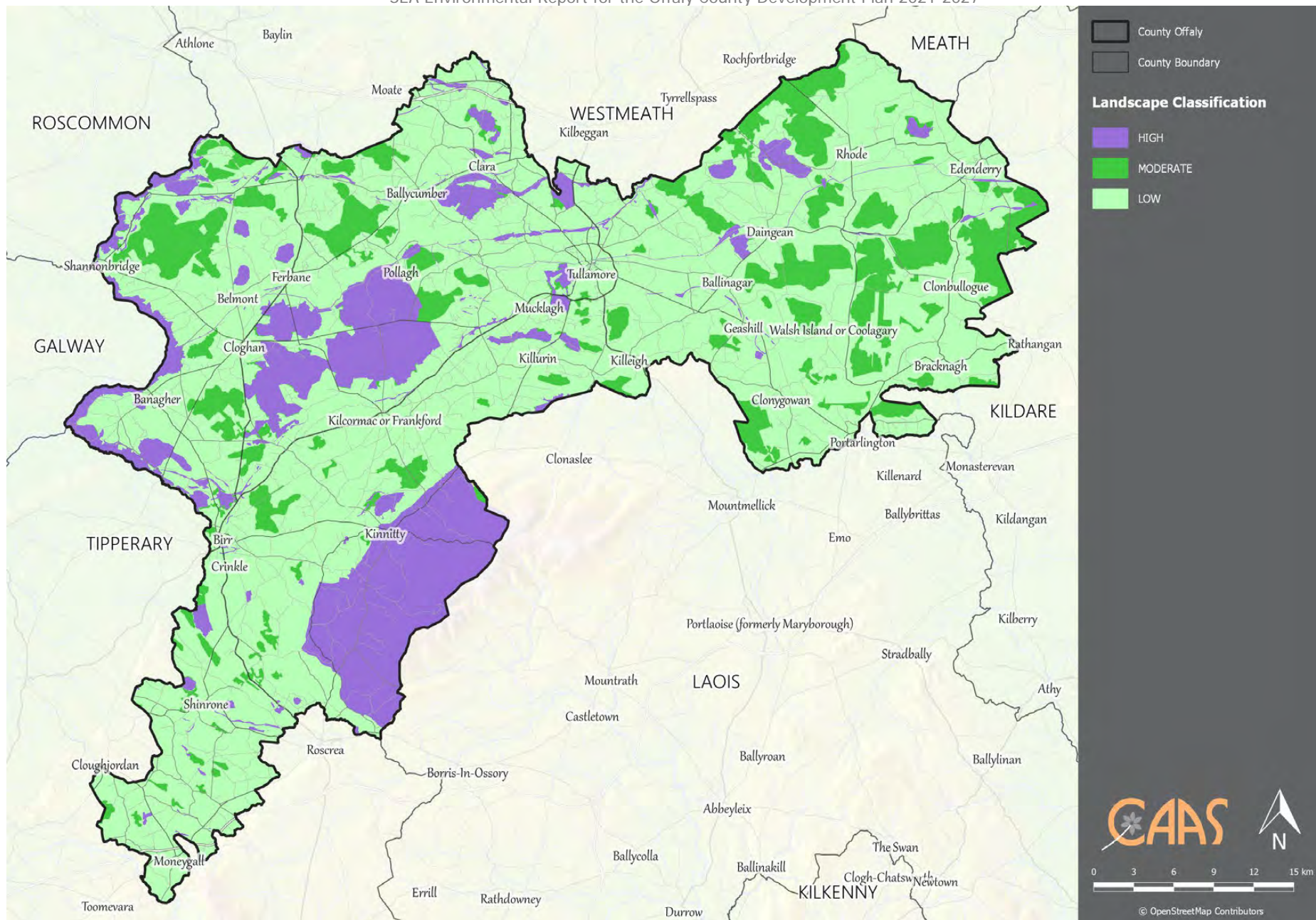


Figure 4.16 Landscape Sensitivity

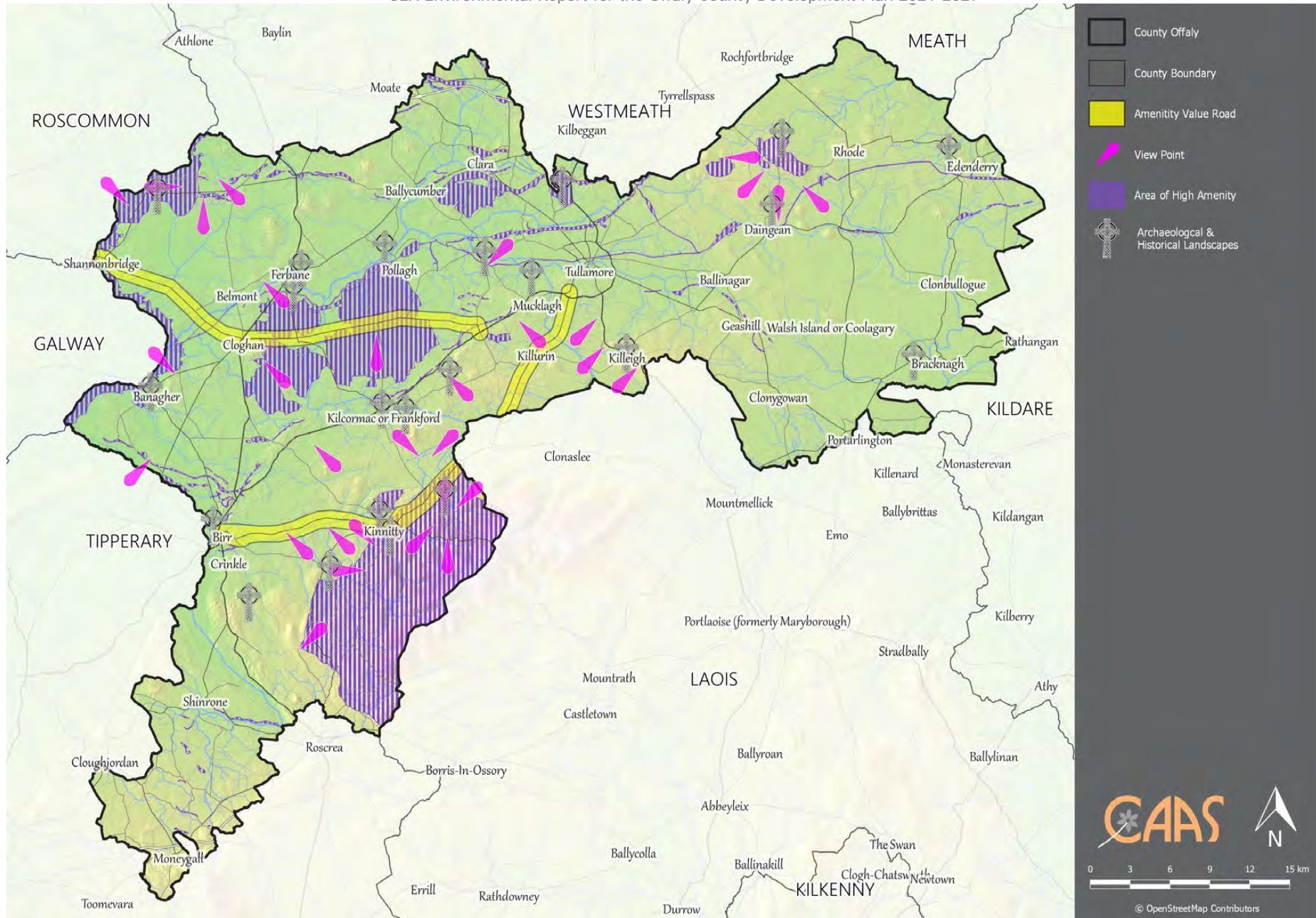


Figure 4.17 Landscape Designations

4.14 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivity Mapping

In order to identify where most sensitivities within the County occur, a number of the environmental sensitivities described above were weighted and mapped overlapping each other.

Figure 4.18 provides an Overlay of Environmental Sensitivities in the County. Environmental sensitivities are indicated by colours which range from higher to lower sensitivity. The map was prepared using Geographical Information System (GIS) software that allowed for a weighting system to be applied with differentiation in certain layers as follows:

- European Sites – SACs and SPAs (10 points);
- Other Ecological designations – NHAs, pNHAs and Fens (5 points);
- Sensitive Landcover Categories (10 points);
- WFD Status of Surface unassigned ecological status (5 points);
- WFD Status of Surface water poor ecological status (10 points);
- WFD Status of Surface water bad ecological status (15 points);
- WFD Status of Groundwater water poor ecological status (10 points);
- Groundwater vulnerability (“extreme” or “extreme – rock at or near surface or karst” 10 points, “high” 5 points);
- Source Protection Areas (10 points);
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Rivers (10 points) and Rivers in Nutrient Sensitive Areas (5 points);
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Fluvial and Pluvial mapping highest (10 points) and moderate risk (5 points);
- Cultural Heritage including Architectural Conservation Areas, entries to the Record of Protected Structures, entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, National Monuments in State Care and entire to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (10 points);
- Areas of High Amenity (10 points); and
- Amenity routes and scenic views (10 points).

Where the mapping shows a concentration of environmental sensitivities there is an increased likelihood that development will conflict with these sensitivities and cause environmental deterioration. However, the occurrence of environmental sensitivities does not preclude development; rather it flags at a strategic level that the mitigation measures - which have been integrated into the Plan - will need to be complied with in order to ensure that the implementation of the Plan contributes towards environmental protection.

Most of the County is identified as having low to moderate levels of sensitivity.

The most sensitive areas in the County include:

- Upland areas, including the Slieve Bloom Mountains and Croghan Hill - on account of ecological and land cover sensitivities, areas of high amenity designation and/or nutrient sensitivity in surface waters;
- The Callows of the River Shannon and Little Brosna - on account of ecological and land cover sensitivities, areas of high amenity designation, nutrient sensitivity in surface waters and surface waters that supply drinking water;
- Individual rivers throughout the County;
- Raised bogs across lowlands and blanket bogs in the Slieve Blooms; and
- Areas of elevated groundwater vulnerability throughout the County, including areas of extreme vulnerability in the uplands in the south-east of the County.

The EPA-funded Environmental Sensitivity Mapping Web Tool is available at www.enviromap.ie and could assist in lower tier consideration of plans and projects.

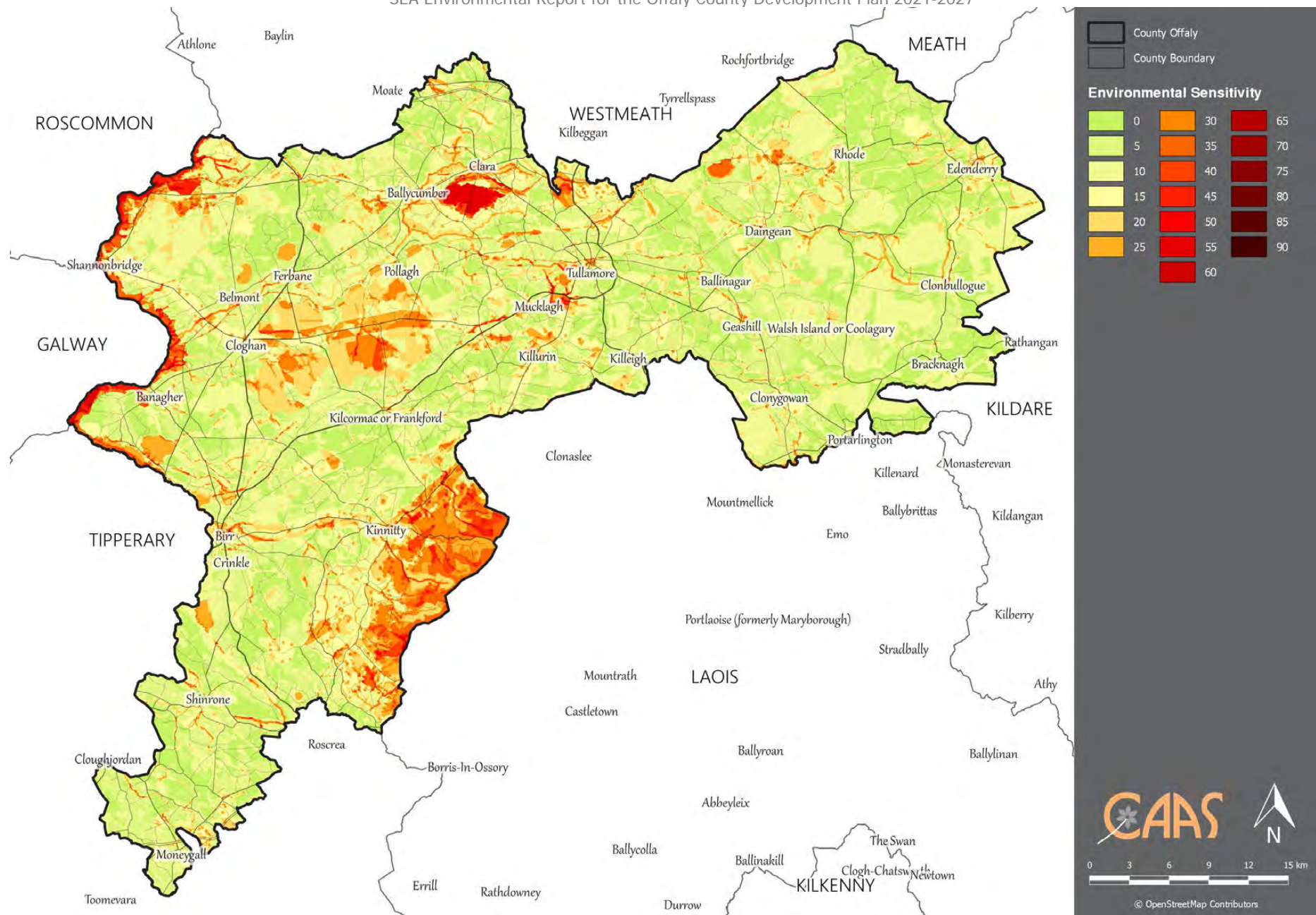


Figure 4.18 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivities in County Offaly

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 Development Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Eastern and Midland RSES, the measures identified in that RSES SEA 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 the County's natural capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 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 SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. Status of water quality in the County's water bodies Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape” 	<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, the Biodiversity Plan for Offaly as incorporated into the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21 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 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 the County's 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 Chapter 5 “Economic Development Strategy” Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<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 Chapter 5 “Economic Development Strategy” No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures. Implementation of Green Infrastructure
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 within the County 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 Volume of contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill Number of AA determinations and environmental assessments undertaken to support applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill as per the NPF.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD • Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 second cycle of the River Basin Management Plan by 2021 (and subsequent iterations as relevant) • 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 in the County • Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, wave solar, tidal, 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed delivery of Irish Water infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Irish Water 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 • Proportion of population within who report regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To map brownfield and infill land parcels across the County. • 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 • Increased budget spends on water and waste water infrastructure • By 2020 all citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
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 by 2020 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 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74% • NO_x, SO_x, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels. • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NO_x and particulate matter

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
Climatic Factors ⁶⁵	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 the County's 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 as provided for by Plan provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy" Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures climate reduction targets as provided for by Plan provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy" Increase in the proportion of people resident in the County reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the County using private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 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 2020 Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating
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 	<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 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 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 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	<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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of 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"> 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 To seek to align with the National Landscape Strategy

⁶⁵ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8.8.3 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically and include those under the headings of Electricity, Built Environment, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry & Land Use and Enterprise.

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.

Whether or not alternatives for the County Development Plan are available has been identified by Offaly County Council under Tiers 1 to 5 detailed below. These alternatives are assessed in Section 7.

6.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by 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 limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region. These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan including on topics such as land use zoning and the sustainable development of rural areas.

6.3 Tier 1: Alternatives for Positioning under the Settlement Hierarchy

The Council have confirmed that no significant realistic alternatives are available for placing of individual settlements under alternative typologies, taking into account the objectives of the higher-level NPF and Eastern and Midland RSES.

6.4 Tier 2: Alternatives for Population Allocations

Following allocation of most of the County's projected new population across the County's settlements, taking into account the requirements of higher level planning objectives, a decision was required as to whether to provide for an unallocated extent of growth – either to the Self-Sustaining Towns of Edenderry or Portarlinton or to the County's Key Town of Tullamore or Self Sustaining Growth Town of Birr.

- A.** Provide additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr; or
- B.** Provide additional extent of growth to Edenderry or Portarlinton.

6.5 Tier 3: Rural Areas

Tier 3(i): Alternatives for Areas under Strong Urban Influence

- A. Include a "Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas⁶⁶, & Areas of Special Control⁶⁷" policy that considers a single dwelling for the permanent occupation of an applicant where a number of criteria can be demonstrated.
- B. Do not include a "Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control" policy that provides for a presumption in favour of applications for single houses by applicants, subject to various criteria being met.

Tier 3(ii): Alternatives for consideration of Sráids in Rural Areas

- A. Provide focus to and targeted policies/objectives for Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy.
- B. Sráids are included within the wider open countryside but there is no focus or no targeted provisions for these locations.

6.6 Tier 4: Alternatives for Densities

The Council have confirmed that no realistic alternatives are available for proportionate densities across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account the objectives of the higher-level NPF and Eastern and Midlands RSES.

6.7 Tier 5: Alternatives for Land Use Zoning

Land use 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 and Eastern and Midlands RSES. Requirements relating to land use zoning provided for by the NPF and RSES limit the availability of alternatives for various settlements.

The Council have identified reasonable alternatives for certain settlements, where these are available.

The findings of the examination of available reasonable land use zoning alternatives for settlements is provided at Table 6.1.

There are existing Local Area Plans (LAPs) in existence for Edenderry and Portarlinton. These LAPs, including land use zoning, will need to be varied after adoption of the County Plan in order to bring them in line with the Core Strategy and any relevant policies/objectives of the new County Plan.

⁶⁶ Areas under Strong Urban Influence & Stronger Rural Areas include:

- Electoral Divisions where at least 15% of their workforce commute to a town of population over 10,000 or a town with more than 2,500 jobs

⁶⁷ Areas of Special Control include:

- National/International Conservation Designations (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas)
- Areas of High Amenity
- Source Protection Zones
- Restricted Regional Roads

Table 6.1 Screening for Available Reasonable Alternatives

Settlements	Available Reasonable Alternatives		
	Not applicable	Not available – taking into account high-level planning objectives	Assessable Alternatives
Tullamore			
Birr, including Crinkill			✓
Edenderry	✓ LAP to be varied		
Portarlinton	✓ LAP to be varied		
Banagher			✓
Clara			✓
Daingean			✓
Ferbane			✓
Kilcormac			✓
Ballinagar			✓
Ballycumber			✓
Belmont			✓
Bracknagh		✓	
Cloghan			✓
Clonbullogue			✓
Cloneygowan		✓	
Coolderry			✓
Geashill			✓
Killeigh			✓
Kinnitty			✓
Moneygall			✓
Mountbolus		✓	
Mucklagh			✓
Pollagh/ Lemanaghan			✓
Rhode			✓
Riverstown			✓
Shannon Harbour		✓	
Shannonbridge			✓
Shinrone			✓
Walsh Island			✓
Rahan		✓	

A description of assessable alternatives, where available, are provided on Table 6.2. Maps for each of these alternatives are provided in Appendix II “Indicative Mapping of Land Use Zoning Alternatives”.

Table 6.2 Description of Assessable Alternatives Available

Settlements	Available Reasonable Alternatives Set 1	Available Reasonable Alternatives Set 2
Tullamore	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	Green buffer along the bypass and canal and train lines: A. Provide or B. Do not provide
Birr, including Crinkill	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	Green belt between Crinkill Village and Birr Town: A. Provide or B. Do not provide
Banagher	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Clara	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a

Settlements	Available Reasonable Alternatives Set 1	Available Reasonable Alternatives Set 2
Daingean	Industrial zoning: A. Less compact - include land to the south of the town or B. More compact - omit land to the south of the town	n/a
Ferbane	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Kilcormac	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zonings: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	n/a
Ballinagar	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Ballycumber	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning along river and park/playground: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	Opportunity vacant site in the south east of the town: A. Provide or B. Do not provide
Belmont	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Cloghan	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Clonbullogue	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Coolderry	Employment zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Geashill	New residential zoning to be provided: A. Behind existing residential development on the west side of the village or B. To the north of the R420 Regional Road	n/a
Killeigh	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Kinnitty	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning at the Rectory: A. Provide or B. Do not provide
Moneygall	Enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Mucklagh	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a

Settlements	Available Reasonable Alternatives Set 1	Available Reasonable Alternatives Set 2
Pollagh/ Lemanaghan	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	Additional Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning in Lemanaghan: A. Provide or B. Do not provide
Rhode	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Riverstown	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Shannonbridge	Enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact, further from village centre or B. More compact, closer to village centre	n/a
Shinrone	New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a
Walsh Island	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	n/a

Section 7 Evaluation of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

This section provides a comparative evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects⁶⁸ 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 degree to which effects can be determined is limited as implementation of the Plan will involve assessment, consideration and decision-making associated with lower tier plans and individual projects. Nonetheless a comparative evaluation of the various alternatives can be provided.

Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁶⁹

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 the County's 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 the County's 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 within the County 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

⁶⁸ These effects include secondary, cumulative (see also Section 8.2), synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

⁶⁹ See also Section 5

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
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 in the County • Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, wave solar, tidal, 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
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 by 2020 and move closer to WHO recommended levels.
Climatic Factors ⁷⁰	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 the County's 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

⁷⁰ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8.8.3 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically and include those under the headings of Electricity, Built Environment, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry & Land Use and Enterprise.

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 local level – sustainable development and compact growth in County Offaly. 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 7.2 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 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 County's settlements) 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 County and beyond • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 in the County by facilitating development within existing settlements. 	<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 existing settlements. 	<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 Tier 2: Alternatives for Population Allocations

Following allocation of most of the County's projected new population across the County's settlements, taking into account the requirements of higher level planning objectives, a decision was required as to whether to provide for an unallocated extent of growth – either to the Self-Sustaining Towns of Edenderry or Portarlington or to the County's Key Town of Tullamore or Self Sustaining Growth Town of Birr. The two alternatives under Tier 2 are therefore:

- A. Provide additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr; or
- B. Provide additional extent of growth to Edenderry or Portarlington.

Edenderry and Portarlington have experienced rapid population growth with high levels of commuter focused residential expansion without equivalent increase in jobs and services. They have been identified by the Planning Department as needing consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment in services, infrastructure, suitable transport options, amenities and local employment to become more self-sustaining.

Consequently, the key environmental differential factor between the two alternatives as a result of providing an additional extent of unquantified population allocation to either Tullamore or Birr (Alternative A) or Edenderry or Portarlington (Alternative B) relates to transport and associated emissions (interacting with Population and Human Health, Material Assets, Air and Climatic Factors – see Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 above).

Allocation of an additional extent of growth to Edenderry or Portarlington would potentially hinder the aforementioned needs being met and would be likely to result in higher levels of commuting, potentially conflicting with both efforts to improve sustainable mobility and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets the most.

Allocation of an additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr would be likely to result in lower levels of commuting, potentially conflicting with both efforts to improve sustainable mobility and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets the least.

All other environmental effects would be considered to be mitigated to similar degrees. It is noted that both Tullamore and Portarlington are identified by the EPA (2019⁷¹) as Priority Areas with respect to the European Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, that is waste water discharges from these plants are the sole significant pressure on water bodies at risk of pollution. However, the EPA also identify that Irish Water has improved waste water treatment at both Tullamore and Portarlington and that the EPA is monitoring surface waters in these areas to determine if the risk of pollution from waste water discharges has been satisfactorily resolved.

Tier 2 alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.3.

⁷¹ Urban Waste Water Treatment in 2018
CAAS for Offaly County Council

Table 7.3 Assessment⁷² of Tier 2 Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives

Alternative	Likely to Improve status of SEOs		Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated	
	to a Greater degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Greater degree
A. Provide additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr	PHH MA A C BFF S W CH L		PHH MA A C BFF S W CH L	
B. Provide additional extent of growth to Edenderry or Portarlinton	BFF S W CH L	PHH MA A C	BFF S W CH L	PHH MA A C

Selected Alternative

Taking into account, inter alia, the issues identified above, it was decided to allocate the additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr (Alternative A).

⁷² The alternatives are evaluated using compatibility criteria 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 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:

1. Interactions that would be likely to improve the status of a particular SEO would be likely to result in a significant positive effect on the protection/management of the environmental component/issues to which the SEO relates.
2. Interactions that would potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated would be likely to result in a potential significant negative effect however these effects would be likely to be mitigated by measures which have been integrated into the Plan.

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

7.3.3 Assessment of Tier 3: Rural Areas

Tier 3(i): Alternatives for Areas under Strong Urban Influence

- A. Include a “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas⁷³, & Areas of Special Control⁷⁴” policy that considers a single dwelling for the permanent occupation of an applicant where a number of criteria can be demonstrated.

Restricting development in rural areas that are under strong urban influence would positively impact upon the protection and management of the environment and sustainable development. The restrictions would help to both reduce levels of greenfield development in areas immediately surrounding existing centres and encourage brownfield development within existing centres.

Rural development would be directed towards appropriate rural areas and urban development would be directed towards established settlements. This alternative would prevent low density urban sprawl and associated adverse effects upon sustainable mobility, climate emission reduction targets and various environmental components.

- B. Do not include a “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control” policy that provides for a presumption in favour of applications for single houses by applicants, subject to various criteria being met.

Not restricting development in rural areas that are under strong urban influence would adversely impact upon the protection and management of the environment and sustainable development. The absence of restrictions would result in increased levels of greenfield development in areas immediately surrounding existing centres and less demand for brownfield development within existing centres.

Urban generated development would occur within rural areas outside of established settlements. This alternative would result in low density urban sprawl and associated adverse effects upon sustainable mobility, climate emission reduction targets and various environmental components.

Tier 3(i) alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Assessment of Tier 3(i) Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives

Alternative	Likely to Improve status of SEOs		Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated	
	to a Greater degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Greater degree
A. Include a Policy for “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control”	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	
B. Do not include a Policy for “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control”		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L

⁷³ Areas under Strong Urban Influence & Stronger Rural Areas include:

- Electoral Divisions where at least 15% of their workforce commute to a town of population over 10,000 or a town with more than 2,500 jobs

⁷⁴ Areas of Special Control include:

- National/International Conservation Designations (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas)
- Areas of High Amenity
- Source Protection Zones
- Restricted Regional Roads

Selected Alternative

Alternative A. Include a Policy for “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control” was selected for the Plan.

Tier 3(ii): Alternatives for consideration of Sráids in Rural Areas

- A.** Provide focus to and targeted policies/objectives for Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy.

Providing focus to and targeted policies/objectives for Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy would provide a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside. Development within Sráids would be more likely to be served by infrastructure (including water services infrastructure) and more likely to protect the environment including the status of ground and surface waters, water used for drinking water, human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the landscape. Development would be required to be subject to siting, design, protection of residential amenities and normal development management criteria, subject to the satisfactory provision of infrastructure and services and in keeping with the character of the settlement.

- B.** Sráids are included within the wider open countryside but there is no focus or no targeted provisions for these locations.

Not providing a focus to and targeted policies/objectives for Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy would be less likely to provide a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside. Development within the open countryside would be less likely to be served by infrastructure (including water services infrastructure) and less likely to protect the environment including the status of ground and surface waters, water used for drinking water, human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the landscape.

Table 7.5 Assessment of Tier 3(ii) Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives

Alternative	Likely to Improve status of SEOs		Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated	
	to a Greater degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Greater degree
A. Provide focus to Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy, supporting housing as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	
B. Sráids are included within the wider open countryside but there are no targeted provisions for these locations		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L

7.3.4 Assessment of Tier 5: Alternatives for Land Use Zoning

Tier 5 alternatives are assessed on Table 7.6.

Table 7.6 Assessment of Tier 5 Alternatives

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Tullamore (Set 1)	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Tullamore (Set 2)	Green buffer along the bypass and canal and train lines: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			A green buffer along the bypass and train lines would help to protect future residential and employment populations from emissions to air including noise. Buffers along the canal would help to facilitate the protection of this amenity asset from visually intrusive developments. The green buffers would also contribute towards the protection of ecological connectivity, water management and protected structures and their context. The absence of a green buffer would make adverse impacts upon the aforementioned sensitivities more likely.
	B. Green buffer along the bypass and canal and train lines: Do not provide			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	
Birr, including Crinkill (Set 1)	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
								unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Birr, including Crinkill (Set 2)	Green belt between Crinkill Village and Birr Town: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			A green belt between Crinkill would facilitate the protection of the character of Crinkill village mature trees (some of which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders), non-designated biodiversity, an Esker between Crinkill and Birr Town which has been previously identified as an Area of High Amenity and the context of various structures of architectural value. The absence of a greenbelt would facilitate sprawl from the south of Birr town, and associated effects, and impacts upon the aforementioned sensitivities.
	Green belt between Crinkill Village and Birr Town: B. Do not provide			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S MA A C CH L		
Banagher (Set 1)	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Clara	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Daingean	Industrial zoning: A. Less compact - omit land to the south			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	Industrial zoning: B. More compact - include land to the south of the town	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Ferbane	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: A. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Kilcormac	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zonings: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	The two areas of Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zonings would provide for needed sporting/athletic facilities, at both local and regional levels. Such facilities are necessary in making settlements more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Attracting new populations into the County's settlements will reduce demand for development in areas that are less well serviced and connected – that type of development would be unsustainable and would have higher environmental impacts. The development of sporting/athletic facilities would present potential local impacts; residual impacts would be mitigated by the measures integrated into the Plan.
	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zonings: B. Do not provide			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	
Ballinagar	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
								development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Ballycumber (Set 1)	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning along river and park/playground: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			The Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning would contribute towards the protection of architectural heritage at the Ballycumber House and the natural heritage of the River Brosna and its adjacent lands. Furthermore this zoning could help to facilitate recreational activities along the canal and adjacent to Ballycumber House. Allowing for such activities are necessary in making settlements more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Attracting new populations into the County's settlements will reduce demand for development in areas that are less well serviced and connected – that type of development would be unsustainable and would have higher environmental impacts. Facilitating recreational activities would present potential local impacts; residual impacts would be mitigated by the measures integrated into the Plan.
	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning along river and park/playground: B. Do not provide							
Ballycumber (Set 2)	Opportunity vacant site in the south east of the town: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			Encouraging the re-development of the Opportunity Site, which is a visually prominent site at the entry into the village, would reduce the need to develop less well serviced, less well connected sites elsewhere. Re-development of this site would make the village a more desirable place to live. Attracting new populations into the County's settlements will reduce demand for development in areas that are less well serviced and connected – that type of development would be unsustainable and would have higher environmental impacts. Facilitating re-development of the site would present potential local impacts; residual impacts would be mitigated by the measures integrated into the Plan.
	Opportunity vacant site in the south east of the town: B. Do not provide			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	
Belmont	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Cloghan	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	the protection of multiple environmental components. By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Clonbullogue	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Coolderry	Employment zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	Employment zoning: A. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
								development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Geashill	New residential zoning to be provided: A. Behind existing residential development on the west side of the village			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	The potential environmental effects that could arise as a result of developments at the alternative sites are similar. Access to the site behind the existing residential development is constrained due to distance from the road and adjacent development/ownership. As a result, it is less likely, all other factors being equal, that this land parcel would be developed for the residential development provided for, thereby making the proper planning and sustainable development of this settlement less likely under this alternative and potentially resulting in increased demand for housing in sites that are less well serviced and further away from the village.
	New residential zoning to be provided: B. To the north of the R420 Regional Road	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			The potential environmental effects that could arise as a result of developments at the alternative sites are similar. Access to the site to the north of the R420 is not significantly constrained. As a result, it is more likely, all other factors being equal, that this land parcel would be developed for the residential development provided for, thereby making the proper planning and sustainable development of this settlement more likely under this alternative, meeting demand for housing and reducing the need to develop sites that are less well serviced and further away from the village.
Killeigh	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Kinnitty (Set 1)	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Kinnitty (Set 2)	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning at the Rectory: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			The Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning would contribute towards the protection of built and natural heritage at and surrounding the Rectory. Furthermore, this zoning would help to facilitate recreational activities around this site of architectural significance in Kinnitty. Allowing for such activities are necessary in making settlements more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Attracting new populations into the County's settlements will reduce demand for development in areas that are less well serviced and connected – that type of development would be unsustainable and would have higher environmental impacts. Facilitating recreational activities would present potential local impacts; residual impacts would be mitigated by the measures integrated into the Plan.
	Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning at the Rectory: B. Do not provide			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	
Moneygall	Enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	Enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Mucklagh	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L						By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Pollagh/ Lemanaghan (Set 1)	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Pollagh/ Lemanaghan (Set 2)	Additional Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning in Lemanaghan: A. Provide	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	The Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning would provide for needed sporting facilities. Such facilities are necessary in making settlements more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Attracting new populations into the County's settlements will reduce demand for development in areas that are less well serviced and connected – that type of development would be unsustainable and would have higher environmental impacts. The development of sporting facilities would present potential local impacts; residual impacts would be mitigated by the measures integrated into the Plan.
	Additional Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning in Lemanaghan: B. Do not provide			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Rhode	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Riverstown	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Shannonbridge	Enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact, further from village centre			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	Enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact, closer to village centre	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L					BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Town	Alternative (selected alternatives in bold)	Likely to Improve status of SEOs			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs – likely to be mitigated			Commentary
		to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
								(with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Shinrone	New residential zoning: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential zoning: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.
Walsh Island	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L	By not consolidating land use zoning and including unnecessary land use zoning, this alternative would provide for a less compact form of development that would fail to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and failing to consolidate zoning, this alternative would decrease the likelihood of brownfield development and conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Providing for unnecessary zoning would be likely to result in higher levels of sprawl and associated avoidable potential adverse environmental effects.
	New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: B. More compact	BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			BFF PHH S MA A C CH L			By consolidating land use zoning and reducing unnecessary land use zoning this alternative would provide for a more compact form of development that would help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment. By consolidating the zoning and helping to avoid unnecessary sprawl of the settlement, this alternative would increase the likelihood of brownfield development and contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health). Reducing unnecessary zoning would help to minimise sprawl and would avoid potential adverse environmental effects that would otherwise occur - this would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.

7.4 Selected Alternatives for the Plan

Selected alternatives for the Plan that emerged from the planning/SEA process are indicated on Table 7.7 below.

These alternatives have been selected and developed by the Planning Team and placed on public display by the Council 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 Council.

Table 7.7 Selected Alternatives for the Plan

Tier	Alternatives Considered	Selected Alternative
Tier 1: Alternatives for Positioning under the Settlement Hierarchy	Not available – refer to Section 6	n/a
Tier 2: Alternatives for Population Allocations	A. Provide additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr or B. Provide additional extent of growth to Edenderry or Portarlington	A. Provide additional extent of growth to Tullamore or Birr
Tier 3: Alternatives for Rural Areas	(i) Alternatives for Alternatives for Areas under Strong Urban Influence A. Include a Policy for “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control” or B. Do not include a Policy for “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control”	A. Include a Policy for “Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, & Areas of Special Control”
	(ii) Alternatives for consideration of Sráids in Rural Areas A. Provide focus to Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy, supporting housing as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside or B. Sráids are included within the wider open countryside but there are no targeted provisions for these locations	A. Provide focus to Sráids as part of Rural Tier of Settlement Hierarchy, supporting housing as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside
Tier 4: Alternatives for Densities	Not available – refer to Section 6	n/a
Tier 5: Land Use Zoning	Tullamore (Set 1 of 2) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Tullamore (Set 2 of 2) Green buffer along the bypass and canal and train lines: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Birr, including Crinkill (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Birr, including Crinkill (Set 2 of 2) Green belt between Crinkill Village and Birr Town: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Banagher (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact

Tier	Alternatives Considered	Selected Alternative
	Clara (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Daingean (Set 1 of 1) Industrial zoning: A. Less compact – include land to the south of the town or B. More compact - omit land to the south of the town	B. More compact - omit land to the south of the town
	Ferbane (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Kilcormac (Set 1 of 1) Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zonings: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Ballinagar (Set 1 of 1) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Ballycumber (Set 1 of 2) Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning along river and park/playground: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Ballycumber (Set 2 of 2) Opportunity vacant site in the south east of the town: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Belmont (Set 1 of 1) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Cloghan (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Clonbullogue (Set 1 of 1) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Coolderry (Set 1 of 1) Employment zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Geashill (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning to be provided: A. Behind existing residential development on the west side of the village or B. To the north of the R420 Regional Road	B. To the north of the R420 Regional Road
	Killeigh (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Kinnitty (Set 1 of 2) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact

Tier	Alternatives Considered	Selected Alternative
	Kinnitty (Set 2 of 2) Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning at the Rectory: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Moneygall (Set 1 of 1) Enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact ⁷⁵
	Mucklagh (Set 1 of 1) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Pollagh/ Lemanaghan (Set 1 of 2) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Pollagh/ Lemanaghan (Set 2 of 2) Additional Open Space, Amenity and Recreation zoning in Lemanaghan: A. Provide or B. Do not provide	A. Provide
	Rhode (Set 1 of 1) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact ⁷⁶
	Riverstown (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact
	Shannonbridge (Set 1 of 1) Enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact, further from village centre or B. More compact, closer to village centre	B. More compact, closer to village centre
	Shinrone (Set 1 of 1) New residential zoning: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact ⁷⁷
	Walsh Island (Set 1 of 1) New residential and enterprise and employment zonings: A. Less compact or B. More compact	B. More compact

⁷⁵ Note that the zoning in the Plan most resembles this alternative, however an additional area of Enterprise and Employment Zoning was added following consideration of the pre-Draft Plan by the Elected Members.

⁷⁶ Note that the zoning in the Plan most resembles this alternative, however: the New Residential zoning in the south east of the Plan area shown by this alternative and included in the pre-Draft Plan was removed; and New Residential Zoning was added in the north east for the Draft Plan.

⁷⁷ Note that the zoning in the Plan most resembles this alternative, however: the New Residential zoning in the north east of the Plan area at Rathbaun shown by this alternative and included in the pre-Draft Plan was replaced by a smaller extent of Existing Residential as these lands surround an unfinished housing estate; and lands to the east of the Village centre, previously not included in the pre-Draft Plan were added to compensate for the aforementioned change at Rathbaun.

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 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 Objectives⁷⁸

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 the County's 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 the County's 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 within the County 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 in the County Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, wave solar, tidal, 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

⁷⁸ 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 by 2020 and move closer to WHO recommended levels.
Climatic Factors ⁷⁹	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 the County's 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

8.2 Cumulative Effects⁸⁰

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 8.4 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 8.2.

Other policies, plans and programmes that have been considered by the assessment of effects include those which are detailed under Section 2.7 (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:

⁷⁹ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8.8.3 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically and include those under the headings of Electricity, Built Environment, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry & Land Use and Enterprise.

⁸⁰ The EPA's guidance note 'Good Practice Guidance note on cumulative effects assessment in SEA' has been considered in the assessment.

- Land use policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, adjoining County Development Plans and Local Area Plans)
- Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plans of adjoining counties;
- Energy policy, plans and programmes (e.g. Grid25 and associated Implementation Programme, Ireland's National Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010, Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020, Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, Draft 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, Low Carbon Development Act 2015 and White Paper Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015, Climate Action Plan 2019, National Mitigation Plan 2017, the National Adaptation Framework 2018 and the Offaly Climate Change
- Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024);
- Water services, waste management, transport and energy infrastructure plans (e.g. Irish Water'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 Plans 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;
 - sustainable mobility/a shift from motorised transport modes to more sustainable and non-motorised transport modes; and
 - renewable energy development.
- 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 County border;
- 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 8.2. 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 County Offaly.

A variety of the issues covered by the Plan provisions are regional issues which are considered: at Regional Assembly level, in the Eastern and Midland RSES and by planning authorities across the Region. The solutions to these issues are often regional solutions which are subject their own

consenting procedures. Works arising outside of the Plan as a result of providing for new development within the County including those arising as a result of the cumulative provision of development in the wider Eastern and Midland region would potentially conflict with a number of environmental components, across the wider Eastern and Midland 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

Offaly County Council have integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA, AA and SFRA processes into the Plan (see Section 9). Table 8.2 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 through both provisions integrated into the Plan – 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 8.2 Overall Evaluation – Effects arising from the Plan

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework			SEO Codes
	Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP 2018, the Eastern and Midland RSES, adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			
	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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 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

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework			SEO Codes
	Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP 2018, the Eastern and Midland RSES, adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			
	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 County's settlements) 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 County and beyond • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County and beyond. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination the highest standards of remediation, and where appropriate to consultations with the EPA and other relevant bodies, will be required to resolve any instances of environmental pollution created by contaminated land. 	<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. 	S

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework			SEO Codes
	Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP 2018, the Eastern and Midland RSES, adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			
	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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart buildings, cities and grids. 	<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

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework			SEO Codes
	Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP 2018, the Eastern and Midland RSES, adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			
	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 County's settlements) 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 County 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 infrastructure design solutions including energy efficient buildings; 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 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. 	<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 in the County by facilitating development within existing settlements. • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within existing settlements 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 existing settlements. 	<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

8.4 Instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan

The Plan, considered as a whole, contributes towards environmental protection and management and sustainable development and complies with various legislative requirements. This is identified throughout the SEA documentation.

Various Plan provisions that would contribute towards the sustainable development of the County would, at the same time, have the potential to conflict with the environment, were mitigation measures not taken into account. This is normal and mitigation measures have been integrated into the Plan to deal with these potential effects.

However, a small number of provisions have been adopted by the Elected Members as part of the Plan that are particularly internally inconsistent with the overall approach provided for by the Plan. These provisions relate are detailed below.

Rahan

As identified in the Chief Executive's Report with regard to Rahan's change in typology from a Sráid to a Village:

"For the purpose of the county development plan settlement hierarchy, the distinction made between Villages and Sráids is that Villages are serviced by mains wastewater treatment, whereas Sráids are not. Without mains wastewater treatment, a settlement is dependent on individual on-site effluent treatment systems and therefore cannot develop at a sustainable rate. Rahan has no mains wastewater treatment plant. College View housing estate is served by a shared septic tank system and the remainder of the properties in the Sráid have individual effluent treatment systems.

The policy approach for Sráids is the promotion of balanced sustainable development, in an incremental and consolidated manner with the emphasis on small scale development over a medium to long term period, in keeping with the character of the settlement. The Rahan Sráid Plan includes a variety of objectives to support local facilities and amenities, including the development of facilities to improve tourism potential (see also response to Submissions Ref. CDP/D/28).

It is recommended that Rahan is designated as a Sráid under the county settlement hierarchy, thus no change to the draft Plan."

Taking the above into account, there is potential for significant adverse environmental effects, including on water resources, ecology and human health, to occur as a result of lack of water services infrastructure – which could result in increased pressure for development in surrounding less well serviced and connected rural areas. These effects would be mitigated by measures providing for environmental protection and management that have been integrated into the Plan.

Various Land Use Zonings

Material Alterations (such as MA262, MA263, MA265, MA274, MA276, MA277, MA299, MA330, MA349, MA352, MA368, MA395, MA401, MA408 and MA409) that have been adopted as part of the Plan were advised against, with SEA documentation identifying at the time that:

"There is no planning justification for these Proposed Alterations, they would not align with objectives relating to sustainable development, relate to greenfield lands in many cases and would present additional, unnecessary and potentially significant adverse effects on various environmental components. Potentially significant adverse effects, alone and/or in-combination with other similar changes alterations to zoning, would be likely to include:

- Effects on ecology and ecological connectivity
- Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces
- Increased loadings on water bodies
- Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth and sustainable mobility
- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts

Where such alterations are beyond the established settlement envelope, potentially significant adverse effects would be likely to include:

- Difficulty in providing adequate and appropriate waste water treatment as a result of zoning outside of established built development envelopes of settlements
- Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure
- Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives
- Conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality

- Conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors
- Potential effects on human health as a result of potential interactions with environmental vectors

MA330 could potentially impact upon the protection of a European site and has been subject to Stage 2 AA. The AA recommended that the following text is integrated into the Plan at further modification stage: "Any proposal for development at these lands must demonstrate that it will not affect the nearby Ferbane Bog SAC, including as a result of changes to drainage patterns".

BLO-07 "Any proposal for development at the lands to the north west of the town as shown in the Ferbane Town Objectives Map must demonstrate that it will not affect the nearby Ferbane Bog SAC, including as a result of changes to drainage patterns." was integrated into the Plan to mitigate the concerns relating to MA330.

Similarly, in advance of the Draft Plan being placed out on public display a number of Members' motions were included that were advised against and identified by the SEA documentation at the time as having potential for likely significant environmental effects. These included: Enterprise and Employment zoning, Moneygall (has no established planning justification, would facilitate the unnecessary sprawl of the settlement and would fail to consolidate zoning); New Residential Zoning, Rhode (not consistent with the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas); and a Boundary change at Dunkerrin Sráid (no established planning justification and would provide for a less compact form of development, facilitating the unnecessary sprawl of the Sráid).

Architectural Heritage

Certain Material Alterations (MA422, MA423, MA424, MA425 and MA426) that were adopted as part of the Plan were advised against, with SEA documentation identifying at the time that these alterations:

"would reduce the protection of architectural heritage by removing a structure that merits inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures from this list."

Wind Energy

Certain Material Alterations (MA440 and MA444) that were adopted as part of the Plan were advised against, with SEA documentation identifying at the time that these alterations:

"...would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to: Undermine and negate practical measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions climate change in compliance with high-level climate action policy; and Restrict the potential for wind energy development in the County, which is contrary to national energy policy that supports reductions in the reliance on fossil fuels and the development of renewable energy resources including wind energy infrastructure."

8.5 Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) HAS BEEN undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan.

The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The AA assesses the effects of the Plan on European Sites designated for certain habitats and species. The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network⁸¹.

SFRA is required by '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. Recommendations from the SFRA have been integrated into the Plan.

Various policies and objectives have been integrated into the Plan through the SEA, SFRA and AA processes. The preparation of the Plan, SEA, AA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA and SFRA have informed both the Plan and the SEA.

⁸¹ 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/programme/project to proceed; and
(c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

8.6 Interactions with Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Table 8.3 summarises how considerations relating to climate have been incorporated into the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Table 8.3 How Climate Action has been integrated into the Plan

Chapter	Contribution towards Climate Action
1: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate resilience integrated into the Plan's Strategic Vision Principle of Compact Growth outlined in the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy integrated throughout Strategic Objectives Strategic Objective (no. xi) included that focuses on Climate Action Alignment provided with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including in areas such as climate action, clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, economic growth and innovation and infrastructure
2: Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan's Principles for Growth provide for compact growth, infill/brownfield development, better use of vacant, derelict and under-occupied buildings, a low carbon society, the strengthening of settlements cores, development of regeneration areas, self-sustaining rather than commuter driven activity, sequential development, the management of urban generated growth and integrated transportation and landuse The Core, Settlement and Housing Strategies focus on sustainable settlement patterns and compact urban growth with access to public transport, thus minimising need to travel Energy efficiency promoted in social and affordable housing
3: Climate Action and Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards comprehension of risks and vulnerabilities of climate change Supports and facilitates European, national, regional and county objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, including the Offaly Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Supports the implementation of EirGrid's Grid Development Strategy and promotes the use of efficient energy storage systems and infrastructure Provides for an investigation into the potential for a Green Energy Hub on peatlands Requires a consideration of carbon emissions balance for developments on peatlands Provides for renewable energy development, energy efficiency in buildings, micro-renewable energy, low carbon district heating Supports the growth of Electric Vehicles, E-Bikes, Fuel Cell Vehicles and Autonomous Vehicles Integrates climate change considerations into flood risk management provisions Provides for the development of green infrastructure and afforestation
4: Biodiversity and Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for protection and management of ecosystems processes and highlights associated benefits including climate regulation and natural hazard regulation Provides a Green Infrastructure Strategy which will benefit managing flood risk, climate adaptation and mitigation Supports the use of green infrastructure for carbon sequestration to combat climate change Includes measures to counter invasive species, the prevalence of which have the potential to be accelerated by climate change
5: Economic Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages and facilitates the development of renewable energy projects Supports green jobs creation, which are sustainable over the longer-term Supports measures to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy Supports the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county
6: Tourism and Recreation Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises the importance of greenways and peatways in the interests of the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society Promotes and supports the enhancement and development of the tourism industry in County Offaly in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county
7: Retail and Town Centre Strategy and Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports the development of environmentally sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and encourages a climate adaptation approach to retail and regeneration developments Recognises the importance of a high quality, low carbon and more resilient built environment for existing and future generations Recognises that the adaptation of existing, as well as the design of new, buildings will be critical to meet the targets set by the Climate Action Plan 2019 Links regeneration and redevelopment initiatives to climate action
8: Sustainable Transport Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This chapter focuses on helping to achieve sustainable mobility, which will facilitate climate mitigation by reducing future emissions Recognises that an integrated and environmentally sustainable public transport system is required to service climate action goals Promotes sustainable integration of landuse and transport planning with the objective of addressing the necessity of adaptation to climate change Includes a wide range of measures that will reduce emissions under the headings of Sustainable Transport Strategy, Land Use and Transportation Integration, Trip Generation/Modal Shift, Walking/Cycling and Public Transport
9: Social Inclusion, Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards the provision and extension of social, community and cultural facilities and amenities in a low carbon climate resilient manner

Chapter	Contribution towards Climate Action
and Cultural Development	
10: Built Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes measure relating to upgrading the energy efficiency of Protected Structures and historic buildings, referencing the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's publication Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings
11: Water Services & Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises that the impact of climate change on the water cycle and the resultant impact on water services poses a challenge and seeks to ensure the effects of climate change are mitigated in the delivery of water services infrastructure, in association with Irish Water Recognises that 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 Supports the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to mitigate against climate change. Promotes the use of green infrastructure in the interests of climate change adaptation. Commits to delivering on the key principles of environmental protection and climate action as a backdrop to sustainable growth. Actively promotes measures to 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.
12: Land Use Zoning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates the appropriate management and sustainable use of previously developed flood risk areas through objective relating to Constrained Land Use Zones.
13: Development Management Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a Sustainable Design and Climate Action standard that covers issues relating to energy efficiency, minimisation of resource consumption, energy-saving and energy generating technologies, sustainably sourced materials, natural ventilation, summer shading, openable windows, the incorporation of living green roofs and walls, planting and trees, sustainable urban drainage systems Includes requirements for various developments related to Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statements Includes requirements relating to considering the potential contribution of peatlands for mitigation and adaptation, including renewable energy production Includes requirements relating to achieving carbon emissions balance in peatlands
Settlement Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Settlement Plans direct compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages that better serviced and connected Compact development will contribute towards climate mitigation and adaptation.

8.7 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 8.4.

Table 8.4 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								

8.8 Detailed Evaluation⁸²

For an explanation of SEO codes e.g. **BFF**, **PHH**, **S**, **W**, etc. refer to Table 8.1 on page 89.

The following applies to each of the sub-sections 8.8.1 to 8.8.14 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 Mitigation Plan, the National Adaptation Framework, the Climate Action Plan and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (for additional detail please refer to Section 2.7 *“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.

8.8.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Strategic Vision: <i>To create a sustainable and competitive county that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to employment opportunities supported by high quality housing and physical, social and community infrastructure for all, in a climate resilient manner and with respect for our biodiversity.</i></p> <p>Strategic Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for a population increase in County Offaly during the plan period of 9,239 persons. Consolidate settlements to avoid undesirable and inefficient sprawl. This will be achieved through targeting a significant proportion of future development on infill/ brownfield/ underutilised sites within the existing built-up footprint of all settlements in accordance with the principle of Compact Growth set out in the National Planning Framework. Ensure better alignment between the location of population growth and employment growth. This will allow settlements to become more self-sustaining, sustainable and balanced rather than based on long distance commuter driven activity. Reduce car dependency, and increase the use of sustainable mobility such as walking, cycling and public transport through planning for and encouraging integrated transportation and landuse. Direct a significant proportion of the county's development and population growth into Tullamore a Key Town as designated in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy in order to build up its critical mass and fulfil its role as a key growth driver of the county and midland region. 	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

⁸² The Plan's provisions are evaluated using compatibility criteria 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 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 result in a significant positive effect on the protection/management of the environmental component/issues to which the SEO relates.
- Interactions that would potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated would be likely to result in a potential significant negative effect however these effects would be likely to be mitigated by measures which have been integrated into the Plan.

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Reverse the decline / stagnation of towns and villages through renewal and regeneration, and create healthy place-making by improving the attractiveness, quality, design, viability, vibrancy and liveability of the county's settlements. Also to manage urban generated growth in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas. vii. Protect and enhance Offaly's natural assets of clean water, biodiversity, landscape, green infrastructure, heritage and agricultural land. viii. Provide high quality housing of a sufficient scale, mix, tenure, sequence and density, located in optimum locations and aligned with adequate infrastructure, services and amenities. ix. Make more efficient use of key resources such as land, water, energy, waste and transportation infrastructure. x. Create a competitive business environment supporting economic development, job creation, tourism and prosperity for all. xi. Achieve transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. This should be facilitated through reducing the need to travel, by integrating land use and sustainable modes of transport, and by reducing the use of non-renewable resources. In line with this, promote active and healthy lifestyles through increased opportunities for walking, cycling and active sport recreation. xii. Encourage inclusive and active sustainable communities based around a strong network of community facilities and amenities. xiii. Contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as outlined in Figure 1.2. 				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Strategic Vision and Objectives 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, 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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The Strategic Vision and all of the Strategic Objectives (i to xiii) in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment.</p>				

8.8.2 Chapter 2: Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy & Housing Strategy

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Principles for growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Compact growth, by targeting at least 30% of all new homes that are proposed in settlements within their existing built-up footprints, with a focus on infill / brownfield lands, rather than continually sprawling outwards; ii. Making better use of under-utilised land and buildings including vacant, derelict and under-occupied buildings; iii. Supporting, facilitating and promoting a transition to a low carbon society; iv. Strengthening town and village centres to meet their full potential; v. Aligning population, employment, community and housing growth in a balanced fashion; vi. Renewal and rejuvenation of all settlements by identifying significant regeneration areas in the existing built-up areas of our towns and villages as well as rural regeneration opportunities; vii. Moving towards self-sustaining rather than long distance commuter driven activity; viii. In order to achieve more balanced and sustainable development, some settlements need to attract increased population, whereas others need more jobs, amenities or better transport links; ix. Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities, jobs and services catch-up, together with a slower rate of population growth in recently expanded commuter settlements; 	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

<p>x. Sequential provision of housing and infrastructure;</p> <p>xi. Managing urban generated growth in rural areas under strong urban influence and stronger rural areas and reverse the decline or stagnation of many rural villages;</p> <p>xii. Developing the designated Key Town of Tullamore of sufficient scale and quality to be a driver of regional growth, investment and prosperity, followed by Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns to grow to a sustainable level. Other towns need to be promoted for regeneration, local employment and managed levels of growth, and the rural area which includes villages, Sráids and the open countryside, shall be promoted for regeneration and local employment and services with targeted rural housing policies;</p> <p>xiii. Developing serviced zoned land and serviceable zoned land within the life of this County Development Plan;</p> <p>xiv. Compliance with government policy and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines including specific planning policy requirements;</p> <p>xv. Reducing car dependency, promoting sustainable mobility and regional accessibility, and integrating transportation and landuse;</p> <p>xvi. Towns and villages to become more attractive, well-designed, of high quality design and 'liveable' through healthy place-making;</p> <p>xvii. Promoting economic development and enterprise activity;</p> <p>xviii. Protecting assets by preserving the quality of the landscape, open space, recreational resources, biodiversity, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage and material assets in the county;</p> <p>xix. Promoting social inclusion; and</p> <p>xx. Collaboration between key stakeholders in land amalgamation and coordination.</p> <p>These principles stem from the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and are significant guiding principles for the County Development Plan.</p> <p>Core Strategy Policies</p> <p>CSP-01 It is Council policy to implement the Core Strategy for Offaly in order to be consistent with policies at a national and regional level, in particular population targets and distribution.</p> <p>CSP-02 It is Council policy to support the compact growth of towns and villages to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the Core Strategy Table.</p> <p>CSP-03 It is Council policy not to exceed, through the facilitation of residential development, the allocated housing requirements set out in the Core Strategy. In this regard, development shall not be permitted where it conflicts with the Core Strategy.</p> <p>2.2 Core Strategy Objectives</p> <p>CSO-01 It is an objective of the Council to monitor and manage the delivery of residential development in County Offaly through the development management process to ensure it is in line with the Core Strategy. In this respect, the Planning Authority shall maintain a record of residential development permitted in the open countryside, sráids and individual settlements in order to ensure compliance with the population allocations defined by the Core Strategy Table.</p> <p>CSO-02 It is an objective of the Council to zone an appropriate amount of lands within the settlement areas to accommodate the projected population growth as set out in the Core Strategy, including the undertaking of variations or reviews of Portllington Joint Local Area Plan and Edenderry Local Area Plan which will be prioritised in view of legislation requirements to ensure consistency with the provisions of the Core Strategy.</p> <p>CSO-03 Where any ambiguity arises between the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan and residential proposals on land zoned to accommodate residential development in Local Area Plans, the County Development Plan shall take precedence, including during the transitional period before the variation of Local Area Plans.</p> <p>CSO-04 It is an objective of the Council to make Local Area Plans for Tullamore and Birr during the plan period of the County Development Plan 2021-2027. During the transition period between adoption of this County Development Plan and the adoption of the Local Area Plans for Tullamore and Birr, the objectives (including zoning objectives), policies and standards in this County Development Plan shall apply to Tullamore and Birr.</p> <p>CSO-05 It is an objective of the Council that development proposed on new residential zoned land and on mixed use / town or village centre zoning should proceed on a sequential basis with priority given to lands closest to the centre and / or closest to key transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Settlement Strategy Policies</p> <p>Countywide</p> <p>SSP-01 It is Council policy to develop the county in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and to require future residential development to locate at and be of a scale appropriate to the settlement tiers and levels identified in the Core Strategy Table.</p> <p>SSP-02 It is Council policy to require at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements to be located within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements in an effort to make settlements more compact and reduce unsustainable urban sprawl and ribbon development.</p> <p>SSP-03 It is Council policy to strengthen the core of settlements and encourage the compact growth of settlements by way of the development of infill sites, brownfield lands, under-utilised land / buildings, vacant sites, and derelict sites within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements, and develop outwards from the centre in a sequential manner.</p> <p>SSP-04 It is Council policy to arrest the decline and stagnation in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and manage the growth of rural areas that are under strong urban influence and stronger rural areas to avoid over-development, whilst sustaining vibrant urban communities.</p> <p>SSP-05 It is Council policy that residential development proposals shall be prepared, designed and laid out in accordance with the standards as set out in Chapter 13 Development Management Standards and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. This includes promoting densities, high quality design, layout and public realm for new residential development appropriate to its location and surrounding context, while recognising the need to protect existing residential communities and the established character of the area.</p> <p>Key Town (Tullamore)</p> <p>SSP-06 It is Council policy to strategically prioritise the development of Tullamore to underpin its role as a designated Key Town and driver of economic development for the county.</p> <p>SSP-07 It is Council policy to require sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in Tullamore by consolidating the built-up footprint through a focus on</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>regeneration and development of town centre infill and brownfield sites, and encouraging regeneration of underutilised, vacant and derelict lands for residential development and mixed use to facilitate population growth.</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Growth Town (Birr)</p> <p>SSP-08 It is Council policy that Birr, a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, continues to grow at a sustainable level and at a commensurate scale in accordance with the Core Strategy Table in an effort to become more self-sustaining.</p> <p>SSP-09 It is Council policy to reinforce the attractive rural character of Crinkill, which exists at present, by permitting appropriate and sensitively designed new development.</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Towns (Edenderry and Portarlington)</p> <p>SSP-10 It is Council policy that Edenderry and Portarlington, Self-Sustaining Towns which have experienced high levels of commuter driven population growth and have weak employment bases, are developed to deliver population growth at a rate to achieve a sustainable balancing effect that is in line with the Core Strategy Table, and to deliver consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment in services, infrastructure, amenities and local employment in order to become more self-sustaining.</p> <p>Towns (Banagher, Clara)</p> <p>SSP-11 It is Council policy to support housing and repopulation taking place within towns in a consolidated, sustainable and sequential manner, whilst also managing the levels of growth at an appropriate scale to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy Table.</p> <p>SSP-12 It is Council policy to promote the regeneration and revitalisation of towns and support local enterprise and employment opportunities to ensure their viability as service centres for the surrounding rural areas.</p> <p>Rural (Smaller Towns, Villages, Sráids and Open Countryside)</p> <p>(A) Smaller Towns (Daingean, Ferbane, Kilcormac)</p> <p>SSP-13 It is Council policy to support housing and repopulation taking place within smaller towns in a consolidated, sustainable and sequential manner, and to promote the provision of serviced sites supported by Irish Water in order to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns, as an alternative to one-off housing whilst also managing the levels of growth at an appropriate scale to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy Table.</p> <p>SSP-14 It is Council policy to facilitate the expansion of and provision of new mixed-use and employment-generating development within smaller towns at an appropriate size and scale subject to normal planning requirements.</p> <p>SSP-15 It is Council policy to promote the regeneration and revitalisation of smaller towns and support local enterprise and employment opportunities to ensure their viability as service centres for the surrounding rural areas.</p> <p>SSP-16 It is Council policy to be proactive in piloting combined local authority and private investment to stimulate high quality individual housing or private site development to attract population growth and further investment in smaller towns, subject to resources.</p> <p>(B) Villages (listed in the Settlement Hierarchy)</p> <p>SSP-17 It is Council policy to support housing and repopulation taking place within villages in a consolidated, sustainable and sequential manner, and to promote the provision of serviced sites supported by Irish Water in order to attract people to build their own homes and live in villages as an alternative to one-off housing, whilst also managing the levels of growth at an appropriate scale to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy Table.</p> <p>SSP-18 It is Council policy to facilitate the expansion of and provision of new mixed-use and employment-generating development within villages at an appropriate size and scale subject to normal planning requirements.</p> <p>SSP-19 It is Council policy that there will be a presumption in favour of small developments of differing scale and character rather than larger, more homogenous urban-scaled housing 'estates'. (For example 3 separately designed 10-house developments would generally be preferable to a single homogenous suburban style 30-house development). This approach would be more likely to create a sense of individualism and differing aspirations to each development.</p> <p>SSP-20 It is Council policy to be proactive in piloting combined local authority and private investment to stimulate high quality individual housing or private site development to attract population growth and further investment in villages, subject to resources.</p> <p>(C) Sráids (listed in the Settlement Hierarchy)</p> <p>SSP-21 It is Council policy to support housing taking place within Sráids to act as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside but with limited scope for small-scale multi-house developments of up to 4 houses only.</p> <p>SSP-22 Within the designated development limits of the Sráids, development will be permitted where it involves infilling, conversion, single site housing development, or the use of derelict or underutilised land or premises, subject to siting, design, protection of residential amenities and normal development management criteria.</p> <p>SSP-23 It is Council policy to encourage the sustainable, balanced development of the Sráids in an incremental manner, with the emphasis on small scale development over a medium to long-term period, in keeping with the character of the settlement.</p> <p>SSP-24 It is Council policy that where a multi-unit residential development (2 to 4 houses) is proposed within the boundary of a Sráid, the onus will be on the developer to justify the demand for housing proposed.</p> <p>SSP-25 It is Council policy that any development shall be centred on the focal point of the settlement assisting in creating a 'centre' with a greater sense of place, and shall be subject to the satisfactory provision of infrastructure and services.</p> <p>SSP-26 It is Council policy to facilitate the provision of appropriately scaled commercial development within Sráids. This may include limited new mixed-use development, including employment generating development, childcare and other appropriate commercial development.</p> <p>(D) Open Countryside</p> <p>Housing in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas, and Areas of Special Control</p> <p>Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Divisions where at least 15% of their workforce commute to a town of population over 10,000 or a town with more than 2,500 jobs. <p>Areas of Special Control include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National/International Conservation Designations (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas) • Areas of High Amenity • Source Protection Zones • Restricted Regional Roads 				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>Refer to Figure 2.6</p> <p>SSP-27 Having regard to the need to protect County Offaly's natural resources, environment, landscape and infrastructure, it is Council policy to consider a single dwelling for the permanent occupation of an applicant in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas and Areas of Special Control where all of the following (1-4) can be demonstrated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant has a functional economic or social requirement to reside in this particular rural area in accordance with (i) or (ii): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Economic requirements will normally encompass persons referred to in the revision to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 and, if applicable, circulars. Pending the making of the revised Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines by the Minister, a Functional Economic Requirement in County Offaly shall be taken as including persons who by the nature of their work have a functional economic need to reside in the local rural area close to their place of work. It includes persons involved in full-time farming, horticulture or forestry as well as similar rural-based part-time occupations where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation. The 'local rural area' is defined as the area generally within 8km radius (5km radius particular to Areas of Special Control) of the place of work. Or (ii) Social requirements will normally encompass persons referred to in the revision to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 and, if applicable, circulars. Pending the making of the revised Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines by the Minister, a Functional Social Requirement in County Offaly shall be taken as including (a) or (b) below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The applicant was born within the local rural area, or is living or has lived in the local rural area for a minimum of 5 years (15 years particular to Areas of Special Control) at any stage prior to making the planning application. It includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area. The 'Local Rural Area' for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally within an 8km radius (5km radius particular to Areas of Special Control) of where the applicant was born, living or has lived. For the purpose of this policy, the rural area is taken to include 'Villages' listed in the Settlement Hierarchy, but excludes Tullamore, Birr, Edenderry, Portarlington, Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Ferbane and Kilmacomb (i.e. the Key Town, Self-Sustaining Growth Town, Self-Sustaining Towns, Towns and Smaller Towns listed in the Settlement Hierarchy. Or (b) Special consideration shall be given in cases of exceptional health circumstances - supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical practitioner and a disability organisation proving that a person requires to live in a particular environment or close to family support, or requires a close family member to live in close proximity to that person. 2. The applicant does not already own or has not owned a house in the open countryside. 3. If the site is located within an Area of Special Control, there is no alternative site outside of Areas of Special Control. 4. High quality siting and design. <p>Housing outside of Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence, Stronger Rural Areas and outside of Areas of Special Control</p> <p>SSP-28 It is Council policy that within areas of the open countryside identified as being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence or not in a Stronger Rural Area • Not in an Area of Special Control <p>(Refer to Figure 2.6)</p> <p>there will be a presumption in favour of applications for single houses by persons from within or outside these areas who seek a permanent dwelling and will therefore contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the area, subject to high quality siting and design.</p> <p>It is the policy of the Planning Authority to prohibit speculative development in these areas. Any application for a single permanent dwelling must be made in the name of the person for whom it is intended and a condition will be attached to any permission granted requiring them to occupy the house in the first instance.</p> <p>Refurbishment of a Derelict Dwelling in the Open Countryside</p> <p>SSP-29 It is Council policy to encourage the sensitive refurbishment of existing derelict dwelling houses (policies SSP27 and SSP-28 do not apply) which have fallen derelict subject to fulfilling the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refurbishment provides for quality design, scale, form, material and finishes; • The refurbishment does not detract negatively from the original character of the derelict dwelling; • The existing derelict dwelling house must exhibit all the essential characteristics of a dwelling house; and • The existing derelict dwelling house must have last been used, as a dwelling house. <p>Refurbishment and / or Reuse of and Existing Structure as a Dwelling in the Open Countryside</p> <p>SSP-30 It is Council policy to favourably consider applications (policies SSP27 and SSP-28 do not apply) for the refurbishment and/or reuse of older building stock subject to fulfilling the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external walls and roof are substantially intact; • The design of the proposal does not erode the siting and design qualities of the building which makes it attractive in the first instance; • The size of any extension takes account of the siting and size of the existing building; • The design, scale and materials used in the refurbishment and/or extension are in keeping and sympathetic with the existing structure; • Mature landscape features are retained and enhanced, as appropriate; and • Normal planning considerations i.e. road safety, amenities, public health, design etc. shall take precedence over the 'principle' of encouraging such development. <p>Replacement of Derelict Dwelling in the Open Countryside</p> <p>SSP-31 It is Council policy to favourably consider applications for the replacement of derelict dwellings in the open countryside (SSP-27 and SSP-28 do not apply) subject to fulfilling the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The derelict building was last used as a dwelling house which exhibits all the essential characteristics of a dwelling house; • The siting of a replacement dwelling should be within the same curtilage as the existing building; • The derelict dwelling or parts of the derelict dwelling is not of special, architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest; and • The derelict dwelling was not inappropriately sited in the first instance; for example, located in an area at flood risk or located in an area which would result in 				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>public health or traffic hazard issues.</p> <p>Replacement of Habitable House in the Open Countryside</p> <p>SSP-32 It is Council policy to consider applications (policies SSP27 and SSP-28 do not apply) for replacement of a habitable dwelling with a new single dwelling subject to fulfilling the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing dwelling house must exhibit all the essential characteristics of a dwelling house; • The existing dwelling house must be in use, or have last been used, as a dwelling house. This use must not have been abandoned or changed from another use, without previous planning permission; • The existing dwelling or parts of the dwelling must not be of special, architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.; <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable environmental, siting (be within the same curtilage of the existing dwelling house), design and layout standards must be proposed. <p>Ribbon Development</p> <p>SSP-33 It is Council policy to consider applications for housing that fall under the description of 'ribbon development' against Appendix 4 of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005, or any subsequent Guidelines</p> <p>2.4 Housing Policies</p> <p>HP-01 It is Council policy to facilitate the housing needs of the existing and future population of County Offaly through the management of housing development in the county in accordance with the Housing Need Demand Assessment, Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.</p> <p>HP-02 It is Council policy to seek to ensure that groups with special housing needs, such as older people (in accordance with the Age Friendly Strategy for Offaly 2018-2021 and any subsequent editions), single person households, persons with physical and / or learning disabilities, the homeless, the travelling community, asylum seekers and refugees, and those in emergency accommodation are accompanied in a way suitable to their specific needs.</p> <p>HP-03 It is Council policy to encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises for residential accommodation.</p> <p>HP-04 It is Council policy to promote the retention of town centre residential units and to discourage their conversion into non-residential uses.</p> <p>HP-05 It is Council policy to promote social integration and to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.</p> <p>HP-06 It is Council policy to ensure that new social and affordable housing developments are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design and life-long adaptability, are energy efficient, and of excellent design and contribute to healthy place-making.</p> <p>HP-07 It is Council policy to ensure that a mixture of house types, tenures and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households, and ensure that the special requirements of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with learning difficulties are developed in convenient, easily accessible and permeable locations.</p> <p>HP-08 It is Council policy as required under Section 95 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) that 10% of all land zoned for residential or for a mixture of residential and other uses shall be reserved for the provision of housing for the purposes of meeting social and affordable housing need arising in the county.</p> <p>HP-09 It is Council policy to promote social inclusion by ensuring that new social and affordable housing developments are strongly integrated into the structure of existing settlements at locations with access to public transport services and community facilities, to ensure that settlements grow in a manner that is self-sustaining with sufficient social and economic infrastructure.</p> <p>HP-10 It is Council policy to support the work of voluntary and cooperative housing associations in County Offaly.</p> <p>HP-11 It is Council policy to ensure that there is a balanced supply of private, social and affordable housing such that no settlement in the county experiences an over-concentration of any one type of accommodation.</p> <p>HP-12 It is Council policy to work with all relevant stakeholders to implement the Midland Housing First Initiative 2020, and any subsequent initiatives to address the accommodation needs of homeless persons.</p> <p>HP-13 It is Council policy to work with all relevant stakeholders to secure the satisfactory completion of unfinished housing developments in the county.</p> <p>HP-14 It is Council policy to encourage purpose-built student accommodation proximate to any third level educational facility in County Offaly by foot, bicycle and / or public transport.</p> <p>HP-15 It is Council policy to reserve sufficient lands to facilitate and implement the Housing Strategy and its policies, as informed by the Housing Need Demand Assessment undertaken as part of this Plan.</p> <p>HP-16 It is Council policy to provide social housing through a combination of mechanisms including through Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), through direct build subject to funding, turnkey developments and the acquisition of second-hand housing in accordance with the county's settlement hierarchy to meet the identified social housing needs outlined in the Council's Housing Strategy.</p> <p>HP-17 It is Council policy to encourage the compact growth of settlements; to promote healthy place-making; to increase the liveability factor of a place; to encourage the most efficient use of land; to ensure a mixture of residential unit types that are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design, life-long adaptability and energy efficiency; to support permeability and sustainable mobility with priority for pedestrians and cyclists; and in general to support the transition to a low carbon economy by way of reduction of greenhouse gases.</p> <p>2.5 Housing Objectives</p> <p>HO-01 It is an objective of the Council to procure vacant homes to ensure their continued use for residential purposes into the future, and develop housing in infill and brownfield sites within town and village centres for social and affordable housing provision.</p> <p>HO-02 It is an objective of the Council to monitor the effectiveness of the Housing Strategy in meeting and resolving identified housing needs, and to review and revise the Housing Strategy as necessary should a variation to this Plan be made or if Part V planning legislation is amended during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>HO-03 It is an objective of the Council to support the ongoing monitoring and review of the Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) in accordance with a forthcoming HNDA methodology to be issued by Central Government. Furthermore, it is an objective of the Council to monitor and maintain a record of residential development permitted in the open countryside, sráids and individual settlements in accordance with forthcoming Departmental guidance around the establishment of a Housing Need Demand Assessment Coordination and Monitoring Unit and related implementation of a centralised spatial database for local authority housing.</p> <p>HO-04 It is an objective of the Council to increase and effectively manage the stock of social housing within the county in order to meet the long-term housing needs of those</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>households on the local authority housing list.</p> <p>HO-05 It is an objective of the Council to provide suitable housing accommodation and living conditions for the Traveller community in accordance with the Offaly Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024, and any subsequent programme adopted by the Council.</p> <p>HO-06 It is an objective of the Council to secure implementation of the Part V Housing Strategy in accordance with Section 95(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in particular, through the reservation of 10% of all land zoned solely for residential use, or for a mixture of residential or other uses, to be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing referred to in Section 94(4)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and shall be provided in accordance with an Agreement referred to in Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and in accordance with Part V Ministerial Guidance or any future revised Guidance.</p>				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-served and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. This includes the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that designates Tullamore as a Key Town – this designation has informed the Settlement and Housing Strategies.</p> <p>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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the Principles for growth, the Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing Strategies • SSP-02 "require at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements to be located within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements⁸³ in an effort to make settlements more compact and reduce unsustainable urban sprawl and ribbon development" • SSP-03 "encourage the compact growth of settlements... and develop outwards from the centre in a sequential manner." • SSP-04 "manage the growth of rural areas that are under strong urban influence and stronger rural areas to avoid over-development, whilst sustaining vibrant urban communities". • SSP-05 "residential development proposals shall be prepared, designed and laid out in accordance with the standards as set out in Chapter 13 Development Management Standards and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines... while recognising the need to protect existing residential communities and the established character of the area." • HP-02 "seek to ensure that groups with special housing needs, such as older people (in accordance with the Age Friendly Strategy for Offaly 2018-2021 and any subsequent editions), single person households, persons with physical and / or learning disabilities, the homeless, the travelling community, asylum seekers and refugees, and those in emergency accommodation are accompanied in a way suitable to their specific needs." • HP-03 "encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises for residential accommodation." • HP-14 "encourage purpose-built student accommodation proximate to any third level educational facility in County Offaly by foot, bicycle and / or public transport" • HO-01 "develop housing in infill and brownfield sites within town and village centres for social and affordable housing provision" 				

8.8.3 Chapter 3: Climate Action and Energy

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Climate Action & Energy Policies Electricity Transmission and Distribution CAEP-01 It is Council policy to support and facilitate the development, reinforcement, renewal and expansion of the electricity transmission and distribution grid, including</p>	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	

⁸³ National Policy Objective 3c of the National Planning Framework 2018

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<p>the development of new lines, pylons and substations as required to provide for the future physical and economic development of Offaly.</p> <p>CAEP-02 It is Council policy to require that, in all new developments, local services such as medium and low voltage electricity cables shall be undergrounded, with multiple services accommodated in shared strips underground and that access covers are shared, whenever possible.</p> <p>CAEP-03 It is Council policy that proposals for new electricity distribution lines 38 kV or above along with transmission lines 110 kV or above will be considered subject to the protection of Designated and Non Designated Sites as outlined in Objectives BLO-02 to BLO-06 and landscape considerations as outlined in objectives BLO-22 Areas of High Amenity, BLO-24 Landscape and BLO 26 and BLO-27 Protection of Key Scenic Views, Prospects and Key Amenity Routes.</p> <p>CAEP-04 It is Council policy to support EirGrid's Implementation Plan 2017 – 2022 and Transmission Development Plan 2019 and any subsequent plans prepared during the plan period that facilitate the timely delivery of major investment projects subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process.</p> <p>CAEP-05 It is Council policy to support the reinforcement and strengthening of the electricity transmission and distribution network to facilitate planned growth and transmission/ distribution of a renewable energy focused generation across the major demand centres. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating trans-boundary networks into and through the County and Region to ensure the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner; • Facilitate the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to allow linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner; and • Support the safeguarding of strategic energy corridors from encroachment by other developments that could compromise the delivery of energy networks. <p>Energy Storage</p> <p>CAEP-06 It is Council policy to promote the use of efficient energy storage systems and infrastructure that supports energy efficiency and reusable energy system optimization, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation</p> <p>CAEP-07 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>CAEP-08 It is Council policy to support the implementation and provision of the decarbonisation projects listed in Table 3.2 of the County Development Plan.</p> <p>CAEP-09 It is Council policy to raise general awareness of issues associated with climate action and climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>CAEP-10 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.</p> <p>CAEP-11 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.</p> <p>CAEP-12 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.</p> <p>CAEP-13 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.</p> <p>CAEP-14 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Peatlands</p> <p>CAEP-16 It is Council policy to support the preparation of a comprehensive after use framework plan for the industrial peatlands and associated workshops, office buildings and industrial sites in the midlands and adjacent parts of the north west and southern regions, which meets the environmental, economic and social needs of communities in these areas, and also demonstrating leadership in climate change mitigation and land stewardship. The Council recognises that the industrial peatlands in the midlands are a significant resource will transition to after uses ranging from amenity, tourism, biodiversity services, 'wild areas', flood management, climate mitigation, energy development, industry, education, conservation and many more.</p> <p>CAEP-17 It is Council policy to investigate the potential for a Green Energy Hub on peatlands in the county and facilitate it if possible.</p> <p>CAEP-18 It is Council policy to investigate the feasibility of an energy park with educational and amenity facilities relating to any future development of renewable energy projects of significant scale that comes forward over the lifetime of this Plan. Any development of renewable energy on cutaway bog will be required to provide increased opportunities for amenity access and educational facilities.</p> <p>CAEP-19 It is Council policy that planning applications for development on or immediately adjacent to peatlands shall be accompanied by assessments considering the following issues where relevant; peatland stability, hydrology, carbon emissions balance and ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CAEP-20 It is Council policy to support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Peatlands Strategy 2015 and any subsequent revisions.</p> <p>Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility and Integrated Transport and Landuse Planning</p> <p>CAEP-21 It is Council policy to proactively encourage decarbonisation of local journeys by focusing on compact growth and reduced sprawl by targeting infill and brownfield</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>lands in the existing built-up footprint of settlements.</p> <p>CAEP-22 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.</p> <p>Reasonable Alternatives and Existing Infrastructural Assets</p> <p>CAEP-23 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.</p> <p>Renewable Energy</p> <p>CAEP-24 Offaly County Council recognises the significant economic and social impact of the cessation of peat harvesting in parts of County Offaly and the added impact of the closure of associated power stations in some areas. The Council also recognises that it is imperative that these impacts be mitigated to the greatest extent possible. The re-casting of the economic role of those areas most affected is a crucial element of this mitigation and it is the Council policy to lead a collaborative approach between all relevant organisations and the affected communities to implement appropriate responses.</p> <p>In that context, it is Council policy to support the application of the 'Just Transition' concept in the affected areas and in particular to ensure that National Programmes and the EU Programme for Coal Regions in Transition are leveraged to the maximum possible extent to support the regeneration of those communities in County Offaly which have been dependent on the peat industry and the electrical power generation industry using fossil fuels for over 8 decades. In pursuing the implementation of this policy, the Council will seek to ensure that the national and European funding streams focus on those areas of activity which are likely to be most effective in mitigating the negative impacts referred to.</p> <p>These focuses will include but will not necessarily be limited to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of funding to support projects which will contribute to the social and economic resilience of those towns, villages and rural areas of County Offaly which have suffered loss of employment due to the cessation of peat harvesting, the knock-on impacts on associated industries such as briquette manufacture and horticulture and the cessation of peat as a fuel for power stations. • Delivery of the 'Midlands Cycling Destination – Offaly' which is essentially a c.300km network of cycling and walking paths overlain on rehabilitated peatlands, waterways and other primarily publicly-owned lands, with key links to adjoining counties and National and Regional Greenways. • Appropriate re-use of some, (where identified within an overall strategic framework) former industrial peatlands and associated infrastructure / works sites with a focus on sustainable employment generation, renewable energy projects community resilience, tourism facilities and amenities. • Provision of technical support to affected communities in the form of project management, community planning, community resource activation and similar to enable them to play a full partnership role in their regeneration. <p>In considering which projects and/or programmes to prioritise, the Council will have regard, amongst other matters, to the level of impact of the closures involved on a particular settlement or community and will give priority, other things being equal, to those projects or programmes which will benefit those communities most affected.</p> <p>CAEP-25 It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from bioenergy, waste material, solar, hydro, geothermal and wind energy, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.</p> <p>CAEP-26 It is Council policy to encourage developers of proposed large scale renewable energy projects to carry out community consultation in accordance with best practice and to commence the consultation at the commencement of project planning.</p> <p>CAEP-27 It is Council policy to ensure that whenever possible, community benefits are derived from all renewable energy development in the county such as near-neighbour benefit funds and general community benefit funds, which may take the form of contributions in kind to local projects, assets and facilities such as public amenities on the renewable energy site, measures to promote energy efficiency or a local energy discount scheme.</p> <p>CAEP-28 It is Council policy to co-operate if required with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly in identifying Strategic Energy Zones as areas suitable for larger energy generating projects, community and micro energy production, whilst ensuring environmental constraints and a regional landscape strategy are considered.</p> <p>Circular Economy</p> <p>CAEP-29 It is Council policy to support the circular economy and within that the bio-economy including in particular through greater efficiency in land management, greater use of renewable resources and by reducing the rate of land use change from urban sprawl and new development, resulting in optimal socioeconomic and environmental impacts such as resource efficiency and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Geothermal</p> <p>CAEP-30 It is Council policy to facilitate large and smaller scale geothermal energy generating developments both standalone and in conjunction with other renewable energy projects, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and consideration of environmental and ecological sensitivities.</p> <p>CAEP-31 It is Council policy to promote the use of geothermal heat pumps for space heating and cooling as well as water heating in domestic, commercial and recreational buildings subject to the protection of water quality and any other relevant considerations.</p> <p>Hydro Energy</p> <p>CAEP-32 It is Council policy to facilitate the development of new river based hydroelectricity plans subject to due consideration of the free passage of fish, any protected structures, maintenance of biodiversity corridors, protected species and any designated nature conservation area such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and National Heritage Areas etc.</p> <p>CAEP-33 It is Council policy to ensure that any proposed projects do not conflict with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Solar Energy</p> <p>CAEP-34 It is Council policy to promote the development of solar energy infrastructure for on-site energy use, including solar PV, solar thermal and seasonal storage technologies subject to environmental safeguards and the protection of natural or built heritage features, biodiversity views and prospects.</p> <p>CAEP-35 It is Council policy to ensure that the assessment of solar farm proposals will have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site selection, by focusing in the first instance on developing solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value. 				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>• where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays. Decommissioning and site rehabilitation plans will be required providing for the land to be restored to its previous use.</p> <p>Biomass CAEP-36 It is Council policy to facilitate and support the development of projects that convert biomass to gas or electricity subject to national and regional policy, normal siting, design, environmental and planning considerations.</p> <p>Wind Energy CAEP-37 It is Council policy to recognise the importance of wind energy as a renewable energy source which can play a vital role in achieving national targets in relation to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and therefore greenhouse gas emissions. CAEP-38 It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall: (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; (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; (c) the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4; (d) have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and (e) have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation. CAEP-39 It is Council policy to consider the repowering and renewal of existing windfarm development on a case by case basis where the proposal does not result in a net increase in the number of turbines and it is demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on the receiving environment, landscape, designated sites or residences in the area. CAEP-40 It is Council policy to consider on-site wind energy development by auto producers/micro producers where energy generated is primarily required to meet the needs of the development; community, agricultural or small enterprise.</p> <p>Data Centres CAEP-41 It is Council policy to consider applications for proposed data centres in County Offaly in line with the following criteria: • Accessibility/ease of connection to power; • Availability of renewable energy to power proposed data centre; • Availability of high powered fibre optic infrastructure; • Transport/road accessibility; • Compatibility of surrounding land uses/zoning; • Avoidance of designated sites; and • Availability of significant landbanks. CAEP-42 It is Council policy that any application for a data centre shall take account of the cumulative impact of the proposed connections of the data centre with electricity transmission, renewable energy and broadband infrastructure in the area.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency in Buildings CAEP-43 It is Council policy to encourage development proposals that are low carbon, well adapted to the impacts of climate change and which include energy saving measures and which maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout and design. CAEP-44 It is Council policy to support and encourage pilot schemes which promote innovative ways to incorporate energy efficiency. CAEP-45 It is Council policy to consider the adaptability of buildings over time and seek to improve the efficiency of existing building stock, promote energy efficiency and high levels of energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources in the design and development of all new buildings in the county. CAEP-46 It is Council policy to support and promote structural materials in the construction industry that have low to zero embodied energy and carbon dioxide emissions. CAEP-47 It is Council policy to support and facilitate the development of an Energy Efficient Building Centre of Excellence in East Offaly.</p> <p>Micro Renewable Energy CAEP-48 It is Council policy to facilitate micro-renewable energy installations and auto-generator installations where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that they will not result in a significant adverse impact on residential, visual or environmental amenity.</p> <p>Low Carbon District Heating CAEP-49 It is Council policy to support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by promoting the use of district heating systems in new residential and commercial developments where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment, landscape, biodiversity or local amenities. CAEP-50 It is Council policy to consider using heat mapping to support developments which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted.</p> <p>Electric Vehicles, Fuel Cell Vehicles and Autonomous Vehicles CAEP-51 It is Council policy to support the growth of Electric Vehicles, E-Bikes, Fuel Cell Vehicles and Autonomous Vehicles with support facilities, through a roll-out of additional electric charging points and refuelling infrastructure in collaboration with relevant agencies and in accordance with the siting criteria set out in the National Policy Framework Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017-2030.</p> <p>Smart City Technologies CAEP-52 It is Council policy to support the use of smart city technologies in Offaly's settlements to assist in energy reduction through integrating public lighting infrastructure with EV charging points and also providing real time data on street lighting energy usage, atmospheric pressure, CO2 emissions and average noise pollution levels.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>Flood Risk Management</p> <p>CAEP-53 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 PI2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>CAEP-54 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 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>CAEP-55 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>CAEP-56 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>CAEP-57 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>CAEP-58 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>CAEP-59 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>CAEP-60 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>CAEP-61 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>CAEP-62 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>CAEP-63 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>Green Infrastructure and Afforestation</p> <p>CAEP-64 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>CAEP-65 It is Council policy to promote forestry development of appropriate scale and character whilst ensuring that the development does not have a negative visual impact on the countryside or cause pollution or degradation to wildlife habitats, natural waters or European designated sites.</p> <p>CAEP-66 It is Council policy to support the fulfilment of the vision of carbon neutrality in the agriculture, forest and land use sector through better sustainable agricultural, land management and resource efficiency.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems</p> <p>CAEP-67 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.</p> <p>CAEP-68 It is Council policy to discourage the use of hard non-porous surfacing and pavements within the boundaries of rural housing sites that are within 100 metres of watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity or adjacent to Flood Zone A or B areas.</p> <p>CAEP-69 It is Council policy to encourage the use of Green Roofs and Green Walls particularly on apartment, industrial, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.</p> <p>CAEP-70 It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate the maintenance of rivers and waterways by statutory authorities and the cleaning of drains in urban areas where appropriate subject to the requirements of OPW Best Practice Guidelines.</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>Climate Change and Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>CAEP-71 It is Council policy to promote awareness and the appropriate adaptation of Ireland's built and archaeological heritage to deal with the effects of climate change.</p> <p>CAEP-72 It is Council policy to identify the built and archaeological heritage in local authority ownership and areas at risk from climate change including, but not necessarily restricted to, the Record of Monuments and Places, protected structures and Architectural Conservation Areas designated in the development plan.</p> <p>CAEP-73 It is Council policy to undertake climate change vulnerability assessments for the historic structures and sites in Offaly.</p> <p>CAEP-74 It is Council policy to develop disaster risk reduction policies addressing direct and indirect risks to the built and archaeological heritage in Offaly.</p> <p>CAEP-75 It is Council policy to develop resilience and adaptation strategies for the built and archaeological heritage in Offaly, in line with Department Guidance and an associated methodology.</p> <p>Climate Action & Energy Objectives</p> <p>Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation</p> <p>CAEO-01 It is an objective of the Council to implement the current Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for County Offaly.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Renewable Energy</p> <p>CAEO-03 It is an objective of the Council to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to government policy on renewable energy and in enabling the wind energy resources of the county to be harnessed in an environmentally sustainable manner.</p> <p>Wind Energy</p> <p>CAEO-04 It is an objective of the Council to ensure the security of energy supply by supporting the potential of the wind energy (and other renewable) resources of the County in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p> <p>CAEO-05 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Council's Wind Energy Strategy as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 'Areas Deemed Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Development' as identified in Map No. 10 'Wind Energy Strategy Designations', the development of windfarms and smaller wind energy projects will be considered; 2. In all other areas, wind energy developments shall not normally be permitted – except as provided for under relevant exemption provisions in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); and 3. Applications for re-powering (by replacing existing wind turbines) and extension of existing and permitted wind farms will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be subject to criteria listed in Development Management Standard 109 contained in Chapter 13 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan and the Section 28 Ministerial Wind Energy Development Guidelines. <p>Peatlands</p> <p>CAEO-06 It is an objective of the Council to source E.U. and national funding to support projects which assist the transition of the industrial peatlands to sustainable after uses.</p> <p>CAEO-07 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that renewable energy projects located on peatlands or in close proximity to peatlands do not negatively impact on any rehabilitation measures including enhanced rehabilitation measures (i.e. drain blocking and rewetting).</p> <p>Low Carbon District Heating</p> <p>CAEO-08 It is an objective of the Council to carry out a feasibility assessment for district heating in County Offaly and identify local waste heat sources or renewable energy sources.</p> <p>Gas</p> <p>CAEO-09 It is an objective of the Council to support the further extension of the gas grid into County Offaly to serve existing and envisaged future residential, commercial and industrial development.</p> <p>CAEO-10 It is an objective of the Council to support and facilitate the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) production of low carbon renewable biogases such as hydrogen and biomethane, produced largely from agricultural organic matter, that can be exported to the National Grid; and (ii) development of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicle usage and refuelling infrastructure on appropriate sites. <p>Flood Risk Management</p> <p>CAEO-11 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>CAEO-12 It is an objective of the Council to co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of the Birr, Portarlinton and Rahan Flood Relief Schemes and other schemes that may be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>Mobility Management and Travel Plans</p> <p>CAEO-13 It is an objective of the Council to prepare Mobility Management and Travel Plans for Tullamore and Edenderry to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use.</p> <p>Local Authority Housing</p> <p>CAEO-14 It is an objective of the Council to introduce minimum standards in the Local Authority social housing stock as part of retrofit works being carried out on older stock or refurbishment of vacant dwellings.</p> <p>LED Luminaires</p> <p>CAEO-15 It is an objective of the Council to ensure LED luminaires display warmer colours (i.e., CCT values at or below 2700K) in future installations to avoid environmental impacts associated with blue-rich LED light in keeping with Dark Sky Ireland Lighting Recommendations.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

Commentary

The assessment of the Plan's Climate Action & Energy provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.7 of this report; and
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.

Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. These include:

- The Climate Action Plan that allocates the following three actions to local authorities: Action 64 Introduce minimum BER standards in the Local Authority social housing stock as part of retrofit works being carried out on older stock or refurbishment of vacant dwellings; Action 65 Develop and establish a climate-action toolkit and audit framework for Local Authority development planning to drive the adoption of stronger climate action policies in relation to the patterns and forms of future development.; and Action 66 Roadmap to develop supply chain to support the phase out of fossil fuel boilers in new dwellings.
- 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 has identified various Regional Policy Objectives relating to climate action, including 7.32 "With the assistance and support of the Climate Action Regional Offices, local authorities shall develop, adopt and implement local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies which shall address issues including local vulnerability to climate risks and identify and prioritise actions, in accordance with the guiding principles of the National Adaptation Framework, National Mitigation Plan.", 7.35 "EMRA shall, in conjunction with local authorities in the Region, identify Strategic Energy Zones as areas suitable for larger energy generating projects, the role of community and micro energy production in urban and rural settings and the potential for renewable energy within industrial areas. The Strategic Energy Zones for the Region will ensure all environmental constraints are addressed in the analysis. A regional landscape strategy should be developed to support delivery of projects within the Strategic Energy Zones." and "Local authorities shall include policies in statutory land use plans to promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock and energy efficiency in traditional buildings. All new buildings within the Region will be required to achieve the Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)."

Provisions relating to energy, would contribute towards achieving various government objectives and targets including those relating to climate mitigation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the amount of energy to be consumed from renewable sources. Further general commentary on the types of potential effects arising from certain renewable energy types is provided below.

Bio-Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets. Can provide for the use of agricultural and other wastes

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impact upon designated and non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna arising from changes in vegetation. Soil structure may also be impacted upon.
- Changes in farming practices may lead to changes in drainage and runoff which could impact upon biological and chemical status of waters - this could interact with drinking water sources and biodiversity
- Potential human health impact: odour and noise from operation of plants
- Potential impacts upon traffic during operation due to transportation of fuel to plants
- Fuels derived from bio-mass still produce emissions however these are less than those derived from fossil fuels
- Changes to the land cover of areas could occur however visual impacts would depend on perception of the relevant area;
- Biomass plants may have visual impacts - these would depend on perception of the relevant area

Geothermal Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impacts upon the status of waters and ecology contained within, especially arising from changes in the temperature of groundwater which can impact upon the structure and ecology of the aquifer and any dependent surface waters - this could interact with drinking water sources
- Potential interactions leading to change in structure of soil and geology
- Potential impacts upon archaeology, including unknown underground archaeology
- Potential impacts upon on site water services
- Potential impacts upon context of archaeological and architectural heritage arising from surface installation
- Large scale installations may have visual impacts – these would depend on perception of the relevant area

Hydro-Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Depending on the scale and location of the development there is potential for impacts to occur on biodiversity, in particular aquatic biodiversity
- Potential to impact upon the morphological, biological and chemical status of waters - this could interact with drinking water sources (in freshwater) and biodiversity
- Potential interactions leading to change in structure of soil and geology
- Operation could impact upon flood risk elsewhere
- Potential impacts upon archaeological heritage or nearby architectural heritage, including context
- Changes to the character of locations may occur however visual impacts would depend upon, inter alia, the size of the installation, ancillary facilities and the perception and visibility of the relevant area

Solar Energy and Solar Thermal Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impacts on architectural heritage – including the context of this heritage – at micro scale
- Potential impacts on habitats and species and micro scale

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale installations may have visual impacts – these would depend on perception of the relevant area -, however these are unlikely to be provided for <p>Waste to Energy Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets. Meets waste management objectives Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential odour issues Construction of facilities can result in impacts similar to other built development – potential visual impact, impact on ecology, waters Design needs to ensure that emissions comply with relevant standards <p>Wind Energy Policy CAEP-46 integrates both requirements from the Wind Energy Development Guidelines and the accompanying County Offaly Wind Energy Strategy into the Plan. Development Management Standard 109 (which contains various provisions relating to the protection of the environment) is also referred to. The Wind Energy Strategy provides an evidence based framework that takes into account relevant environmental considerations and will contribute towards facilitating wind energy developments in the County and associated environmental effects. Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impacts include those associated with construction and operation of the turbines and ancillary facilities and infrastructure (including roads and electrical infrastructure) Potential human health impact: shadow flicker, noise, and impacts arising from bog bursts and landslides Potential impact upon designated and non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna including birdlife Potential interactions leading to change in structure of soil and geology and changes to drainage Potential impacts on water status during construction – this could interact with drinking water sources and biodiversity Potential impacts upon the context of protected archaeological and architectural heritage – including the context of this heritage – as well as unknown archaeological heritage Potential impacts upon traffic during construction due to transportation of turbine components Changes to the character of areas would be likely to occur however visual impacts would depend on various factors including the size, number and spacing of the turbines, perception of the relevant areas and any cumulative effect arising from multiple wind farms <p>Provisions relating to the management of flood risk and surface water drainage would benefit the protection 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. Potential adverse effects will be mitigated both by measures which have been integrated into the Plan (including those identified at Section 9 of this report) and by measures arising from lower tier assessments.</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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>Please also refer to Section 8.6 “Interactions with Climate Mitigation and Adaptation”.</p>

8.8.4 Chapter 4: Biodiversity and Landscape

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Biodiversity & Landscape Policies Designated and Non-Designated Sites BLP-01 It is Council policy to protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity. BLP-02 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. BLP-03 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. BLP-04 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. BLP-05 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. BLP-06 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. BLP-07 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. BLP-08 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. Geology, Eskers and Quarries BLP-09 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. BLP-10 It is Council policy to encourage, where practical and when not in conflict with ownership rights, access to geological features in the county. BLP-11 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>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

<p>BLP-12 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>BLP-13 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>Peatlands</p> <p>BLP-14 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>BLP-15 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>BLP-16 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>BLP-17 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; • Ferbane Bog; • Mongan Bog; • Moyclare Bog; • Raheenmore Bog; and • Sharavogue Bog. <p>BLP-18 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>Waterways, Lakes and Wetland Landscapes</p> <p>BLP-19 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>BLP-20 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>BLP-21 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>BLP-22 It is Council policy to promote the removal of historic culverts and infilling of watercourses.</p> <p>BLP-23 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>Trees, Forestry and Hedgerows</p> <p>BLP-24 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>BLP-25 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>BLP-26 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>Green Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>BLP-27 It is Council policy to recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value of green infrastructure.</p> <p>BLP-28 It is Council policy to protect existing green infrastructure within the county, to provide additional green infrastructure where possible and to encourage green infrastructure to be spatially connected to facilitate the extension or establishment of ecological corridors.</p> <p>BLP-29 It is Council policy to seek to increase investment in green infrastructure provision and maintenance by accessing relevant EU funding mechanisms and national funding opportunities.</p> <p>BLP-30 It is Council policy to integrate the provision of green infrastructure with infrastructure provision and replacement, including walking and cycling routes, as appropriate, while protecting natural heritage.</p> <p>BLP-31 It is Council policy to support the use of green infrastructure for carbon sequestration to combat climate change.</p> <p>All Ireland Pollinator Plan</p> <p>BLP-32 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>BLP-33 It is Council policy to support alternative landscape maintenance regimes which promote and work towards the reduction and ultimate elimination of use of herbicides in Parks and public land, while supporting the National Bee Pollinator Plan in promoting bee friendly habitats.</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>Invasive Species BLP-34 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>Areas of High Amenity BLP-35 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>BLP-36 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>BLP-37 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>Landscape BLP-38 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>BLP-39 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>BLP-40 It is Council policy to ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses.</p> <p>BLP-41 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>BLP-42 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>Protection of Key Scenic Views and Prospects and Key Amenity Routes BLP-43 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>Rural houses and National Railway Network BLP-44 It is Council policy, to ensure that rural houses in close proximity to the national rail network are of an appropriate scale and design, and sited sensitively to ensure that attractive vistas of the county's landscape are protected.</p> <p>High Nature Value (HNV) BLP-45 It is Council policy to support and promote High Nature Value (HNV) farming projects and schemes.</p> <p>Public Awareness BLP-46 It is Council policy to raise public awareness and understanding of the County's natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>Biodiversity & Landscape Objectives Natural Capital BLO-01 It is an objective of the Council that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of County Offaly's natural capital.</p> <p>Designated and Non-Designated Sites BLO-02 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>BLO-03 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 of 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 				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</p> <p>BLO-04 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>BLO-05 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>BLO-06 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>Geology, Eskers and Quarries</p> <p>BLO-07 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>BLO-08 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>BLO-09 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> <p>Peatlands</p> <p>BLO-10 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>BLO-11 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 Wetland Landscapes</p> <p>BLO-12 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>BLO-13 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>BLO-14 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>BLO-15 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>BLO-16 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>BLO-17 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>BLO-18 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</p> <p>BLO-19 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 network as an essential part of the design process.</p> <p>Invasive Species</p> <p>BLO-20 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>BLO-21 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>Areas of High Amenity</p> <p>BLO-22 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. 				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>Landscape BLO-23 It is an objective of the Council to prepare a County Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and following the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment. BLO-24 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. BLO-25 It is an objective of the Council to protect skylines and ridgelines from development where such developments will create significant visual intrusion. Protection of Key Scenic Views, Key Prospects and Key Amenity Routes BLO-26 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. BLO-27 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that proposed developments take into consideration their effects on views from Key Scenic Views and Prospects and Key Amenity Routes and are designed and located to minimise their impact on this views and prospects. Wilderness Corridors BLO-28 It is an objective of the Council to work with stakeholders such as Bord Na Móna, Coillte, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland and Just Transition related groups to examine the feasibility of developing a Wilderness Corridor on rehabilitated peatlands linked to routes identified in Figure 6.13 'Midlands Cycling Destination, Offaly Network Map at: (i) Cavemount, Esker, Ballycon, Derrycricket, Clonsast North, Clonsast and Derryounce Bogs in East Offaly; and (ii) Blackwater, Ballaghurt and Belmont Bogs in West Offaly, from Clonmacnoise in the direction of Belmont village in West Offaly.</p>				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Biodiversity and Landscape 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc.. This includes the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that includes objectives relating to, for example, the consideration of a National Park for the peatlands area in the Midlands (Regional Policy Objective 7.22) and the delivery of sustainable strategic greenways, blueways and peatways projects (Regional Policy Objective 7.25).</p> <p>The development of green infrastructure would facilitate: contributions towards increases in sustainable mobility and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; increases in flood risk management and protection of human health; protection and management biodiversity and water quality; and protection cultural heritage and landscape sensitivities. The development of green infrastructure also potentially conflicts with most environmental components. This type of infrastructure is often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. Potential adverse effects (including in-combination effects across County borders) would be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into other provisions within the Plan (see Section 9 of this report) and any additional requirements arising through lower tier assessments or granting of permission. The preparation of a lower-tier Green Infrastructure Strategy or network would have to be subject to lower-tier environmental assessment processes as relevant.</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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The focus of most of the provisions in this Chapter is the protection and management of the environment, including biodiversity and landscape.</p>				

8.8.5 Chapter 5: Economic Development Strategy

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Enterprise Policies Strategy ENTP-01 It is Council policy to support the Midlands Regional Enterprise Action Plan 2019-2020 and any future editions. ENTP-02 It is Council policy to facilitate and work pro-actively with interest groups (both public and private sector) in the location of industry, business and enterprise in particular by zoning of lands for enterprise development and activity which can facilitate the provision of large-scale and small-scale development, as appropriate. This includes the identification and possible reservation of lands at suitable locations which will accommodate, where appropriate – for example, business / technology activity, industry, enterprise and retail having regard to proper planning and sustainable development. The Council will protect zoned lands from inappropriate development that</p>	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	

<p>would undermine future economic activity or the unsustainable development of such areas.</p> <p>ENTP-03 It is Council policy to co-operate with local, regional and national enterprise authorities, most notably the IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, in the attraction of investment into the county, including both overseas investment and local investment and the provision of employment and enterprise within County Offaly.</p> <p>ENTP-04 It is Council policy to promote Tullamore as a suitable location for Foreign Direct Investment.</p> <p>ENTP-05 It is Council policy to build a resilient economic base and promote innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems that support smart specialisation, cluster development and sustained economic growth.</p> <p>ENTP-06 It is Council policy to support existing successful clusters in Offaly, such as those in Med-Tech, FinTech, ICT, and Engineering and Food and Drinks sectors, and promote new and emerging clustering opportunities across all economic sectors within the County.</p> <p>ENTP-07 It is Council policy to recognise the significant economic and employment benefits of similar enterprises clustering in an area.</p> <p>ENTP-08 It is Council policy to prioritise, facilitate and promote the development of infrastructure that supports and attracts new economic activity-related investment in County Offaly.</p> <p>Settlement Hierarchy</p> <p>ENTP-09 It is Council policy that future economic and enterprise development in Offaly that is urban in nature should be in the first instance located in urban areas and be largely distributed throughout the county's settlement hierarchy, having regard to each individual area's (a) identified role within the region, (b) existing size, (c) existing function (d) capacity for sustainable growth (i.e. growth without detriment to its surroundings, its built or natural assets and/or its character) and (e) available infrastructure capacity. There is, however, a positive presumption in terms of employment creation and therefore it is Council policy to examine such proposals within other locations on a case-by-case basis for example employment related development in a location clearly linked to a rural resource activity.</p> <p>ENTP-10 It is Council policy to consider valid propositions for enterprise development where strong locational drivers apply and which do not apply to the same extent elsewhere.</p> <p>Key Town – Tullamore</p> <p>ENTP-11 It is Council policy to strengthen and channel development into Tullamore the primary driver for economic development within the county, which is designated as a Key Town in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>ENTP-12 It is Council policy to promote Tullamore as a key location for economic development supporting the provision of increased employment through the expansion of the existing enterprise ecosystem in the town and smart specialisation and support the provision of physical infrastructure and zoned lands to realise the delivery of strategic employment lands in central accessible locations.</p> <p>ENTP-13 It is Council policy to support infrastructural development in Tullamore to facilitate the development of Strategic Employment Zones.</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Growth Town – Birr</p> <p>ENTP-14 It is Council policy to promote Birr as a competitive and attractive location for economic development emphasising Foreign Direct Investment.</p> <p>ENTP-15 It is Council policy to promote and support the development of the lands zoned 'Business or Technology Park' in the northern part of the town.</p> <p>ENTP-16 It is Council policy to support leveraging opportunities in big data and data analytics from Irish Low Frequency Array (I-LOFAR), which is the Birr-based Irish station in a European wide network of state of the art radio telescopes used to observe the universe at low frequencies, and in this regard recognise Birr as a technology hub.</p> <p>ENTP-17 It is Council policy to support economic development and job creation through Birr's role as a Tourism Destination Town.</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Towns – Edenderry, Portarlington</p> <p>ENTP-18 It is Council policy to encourage job creation in the Self-Sustaining Towns of Edenderry and Portarlington in order for them to become more self-sustainable and balanced considering they have experienced rapid population growth with high levels of commuter focused residential expansion without equivalent increases in jobs and services.</p> <p>ENTP-19 It is Council policy to support the proportionate economic growth of and appropriately designed development in self-sustaining towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal.</p> <p>ENTP-20 It is Council policy to promote Self-Sustaining Towns as an employment base for start-up businesses and enterprises.</p> <p>Towns – Banagher, Clara</p> <p>ENTP-21 It is Council policy to promote employment and enterprise development in Towns.</p> <p>Smaller Towns (Kilcormac, Ferbane, Daingean) and Villages</p> <p>ENTP-22 It is Council policy to support the sustainability of Smaller Towns and Villages, by supporting appropriately scaled economic development and services together with the enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities and improved sustainable transport links.</p> <p>Sector Focused</p> <p>ENTP-23 It is Council policy to actively encourage, facilitate and provide for the location and development of knowledge-intensive and technology based specialisation companies within the county, as appropriate, in accordance with development / environmental standards.</p> <p>ENTP-24 It is Council policy to actively encourage the redevelopment of sites with antecedent uses or disused sites which were formerly ESB plants and Bord na Móna works for enterprise and employment creation.</p> <p>ENTP-25 It is a Council policy to encourage the building of a resilient economic base by means of supporting investment in exporting, innovation, productivity, competitiveness, developing and enhancing accessibility and connectivity, development of talent / skills and the creation of attractive places and suitable infrastructure.</p> <p>ENTP-26 It is Council policy to encourage foreign direct investment through greater levels of enterprise collaboration, clustering and global connectivity.</p> <p>ENTP-27 It is a policy of the Council to support digital technologies in the interests of efficiency and competitiveness such as robotics, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, digital fabrication, augmented / virtual reality, blockchain and autonomous mobility.</p> <p>ENTP-28 It is Council policy to encourage collaboration in science, technology and innovation with a view to increasing Offaly's innovation capacity. This can be supported by the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund under the National Planning Framework.</p> <p>ENTP-29 It is Council policy to support Advanced Manufacturing as a centre of excellence in the Midlands.</p> <p>ENTP-30 It is Council policy to design, develop and roll-out social enterprise practices with a strong emphasis on collaboration.</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>Home Based Employment, Remote Working and Non-Commuting</p> <p>ENTP-31 It is Council policy to support remote working opportunities from home and innovative designated hub/ co-working spaces, in the interests of mitigating long commuting times.</p> <p>ENTP-32 It is Council policy to co-operate with and facilitate Government agencies, and other bodies where feasible, in encouraging home-based employment including the provision of small-scale individual enterprises. Proposals which involve the change of use and/or new development for purposes of home-based employment will generally be considered favourably where it can be clearly demonstrated that a) the proposal is of an appropriate scale for its location; b) there are no adverse environmental, health and safety impacts, c) the proposal is without prejudice to residential amenity and d) the proposal will not detract from the vitality and viability of town or village centres.</p> <p>ENTP-33 It is Council policy to support local employment creation where it can mitigate against long distance commuting.</p> <p>Higher Education</p> <p>ENTP-34 It is Council policy to encourage and establish links between County Offaly, Maynooth University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Limerick, Athlone Institute of Technology and Cork Institute of Technology and other higher level colleges as appropriate, which will improve the skills base/education of inhabitants within County Offaly.</p> <p>ENTP-35 It is Council policy to encourage third level education in County Offaly through the provision of outreach / campus facilities for the accommodation of courses.</p> <p>ENTP-36 It is Council policy to support in conjunction with local, regional and national enterprise authorities' efforts to counteract the effects from industrial decline by way of lifelong learning programmes, appropriate business supports and upskilling to facilitate moving to alternative sectors in the locality or region.</p> <p>ENTP-37 It is Council policy to support the examination of a need for complementary third level outreach facilities in Tullamore, particularly with regard to support for Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore and where appropriate, its continued development as a Teaching / University Hospital, together with potential for linkages to existing and new med-tech businesses and research facilities.</p> <p>ENTP-38 It is Council policy to encourage the provision of incubator units at a scale appropriate to their location, in accordance with the county's settlement hierarchy and to ensure that an appropriate programme of support is in place across the county that will both provide education and networking opportunities for new businesses.</p> <p>Ferbane Food Campus</p> <p>ENTP-39 It is Council policy to promote the development of Ferbane Food Campus as a state-of-the-art food product development and training facility to give food entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their product.</p> <p>Communications Infrastructure</p> <p>ENTP-40 It is Council policy to promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high quality Information and Communications Technology (ICT) network in the county in order to achieve balanced social and economic development whilst protecting the amenities of urban and rural areas.</p> <p>ENTP-41 It is Council policy to support and facilitate the delivery of the National Broadband Plan and the Offaly Digital Strategy as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development.</p> <p>ENTP-42 It is Council policy to require underground telecommunications ducting to be provided in all new developments and public realm schemes as appropriate, to support the rollout of all digital infrastructure including the National Broadband Plan throughout the county.</p> <p>ENTP-43 It is Council policy to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and protecting residential amenity and environmental quality. The Council will have regard to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Governments Guidelines on Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures (and any future editions) and Circular Letter PL07/12 (Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures) in assessing development proposals.</p> <p>ENTP-44 It is Council policy to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of masts in the county through co-location of antennae on existing support structures and masts. Masts and antennae shall be restricted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upland areas of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, masts will not be permitted in areas above the 150-metre contour, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is not possible to locate antennae on the existing mast clusters at Wolfrap Mountain or Coolcreen; • Designated Areas of High Amenity; and • Within significant views or settings of recorded monuments and places, national monuments, protected structures, architectural conservation areas and archaeological sites. <p>Climate Action</p> <p>ENTP-45 It is Council policy to support the creation of quality green jobs which are sustainable over the longer-term.</p> <p>ENTP-46 It is Council policy to support enterprise development of industries, agencies and communities that create and employ green technologies in the provision of their goods and services, while taking measures to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy.</p> <p>ENTP-47 It is Council policy to support and promote the development of economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county.</p> <p>Strategy</p> <p>Enterprise Objectives</p> <p>ENTO-01 It is an objective of the Council to encourage, in co-operation with Enterprise Ireland, the Local Enterprise Office, and other local development bodies, the development of further small / medium-scale industries and services. Further, to promote the establishment of a number of small incubator units, together with a county-wide support programme, within designated areas to accommodate new business start-ups.</p> <p>ENTO-02 It is an objective of the Council to continue to liaise and work alongside the enterprise agencies, ESB and Bord na Móna and the private sector, to develop enterprise space at various locations throughout the county, where feasible and appropriate.</p> <p>ENTO-03 It is an objective of the Council to work alongside IDA to identify appropriately sized land banks and business premises at suitable locations in Tullamore in order to attract foreign direct investment.</p> <p>ENTO-04 It is an objective of the Council to improve the cluster-specific business environment by putting in place a favourable business ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship that supports the development of new industrial value chains and emerging industries.</p> <p>ENTO-05 It is an objective of the Council to support smart specialisation partnerships at a county and regional level.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>Key Town – Tullamore</p> <p>ENTO-06 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the development of Tullamore, a Key Town under the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, in accordance with regional policy. This will include measures to seek to reserve lands within Tullamore to make provision for potential nationally and regionally significant activities and to attract specialist large-scale enterprise development within the county.</p> <p>ENTO-07 It is an objective of the Council to identify and quantify suitable locations in Tullamore for strategic employment development, for large scale employment and enterprise activity.</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Growth Town – Birr</p> <p>ENTO-08 It is an objective of the Council to support leveraging opportunities in big data and data analytics from Irish Low Frequency Array (I-LOFAR), which is the Birr-based Irish station in a European wide network of state of the art radio telescopes used to observe the universe at low frequencies, and in this regard facilitate the development of Birr as a technology hub.</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Towns – Edenderry and Portarlinton</p> <p>ENTO-09 It is an objective of the Council to encourage job creation in the Self-Sustaining Towns of Edenderry and Portarlinton in order for them to become more self-sustainable and balanced considering they have experienced rapid population growth with high levels of commuter focused residential expansion without equivalent increases in jobs and services.</p> <p>ENTO-10 It is an objective of the Council to require that developments within or adjacent to the area of the Blundell Masterplan, Edenderry, 2020 demonstrate adherence to the urban design, place making and connectivity principles for the masterplan area.</p> <p>Towns – Banagher, Clara</p> <p>ENTO-11 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate new employment and enterprise development in Towns.</p> <p>Smaller Towns (Kilcormac, Ferbane, Daingean) and Villages</p> <p>ENTO-12 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate appropriately scaled enterprise development and services in Smaller Towns and Villages, together with the enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities and improved sustainable transport links.</p> <p>Communications Infrastructure</p> <p>ENTO-13 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the development / expansion of a further digital/e-commerce hub in Offaly to serve the county in improving and promoting the use of the internet as a key educational and business driver.</p> <p>ENTO-14 It is an objective of the Council to support the national objective to promote Ireland as a sustainable international destination for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities at appropriate locations. In this regard, the Council will support the provision of data centres at appropriate locations in the county subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process and the criteria set out in Policies CAEP-41 and CAEP-42 in Chapter 3 of this Plan.</p> <p>ENTO-15 It is an objective of the Council to work with government agencies and telecommunication providers to facilitate the delivery of high speed broadband to all premises in Offaly.</p> <p>ENTO-16 It is an objective of the Council to work with statutory undertakers to make the most efficient use of infrastructure in the delivery of broadband in the county, particularly encouraging the use of existing telecommunications ducting where it is available.</p> <p>ENTO-17 It is an objective of the Council to encourage the provision of Wi-Fi zones in public buildings and tourist destinations in the county.</p> <p>ENTO-18 It is an objective of the Council to avail of funding opportunities for the provision of Wi-Fi and broadband in the county to support economic development and social inclusion.</p> <p>Rhode Green Energy Park</p> <p>ENTO-19 It is an objective of the Council to support and promote the development of Rhode Green Energy Park for green energy, smart specialization and clustering and other complimentary green uses as outlined as 'Uses Considered Appropriate for the Rhode Green Energy Park' in Table 5.4. 'Uses not considered appropriate for the Rhode Green Energy Park' as outlined in Table 5.4 will not be encouraged.</p> <p>ENTO-20 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that proposed developments within the Rhode Green Energy Park adhere to the principles set out in Table 5.3: Guiding Principles for the Rhode Green Energy Park.</p> <p>ENTO-21 It is an objective of the Council to support and facilitate the infrastructural upgrades and works outlined in Table 5.5 in conjunction with the development of the Rhode Business Park.</p> <p>ENTO-22 It is an objective of this Plan for the Council to prepare the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Design Statement showing the developers the preferred approach to materials, colours, boundary treatment, signage etc. in the Rhode Green Energy Park; • a Green Infrastructure Masterplan for the Rhode Green Energy Park to advise developers of how to retain and enhance existing green infrastructure and to provide new green infrastructure within and around the Rhode Green Energy Park; and • an Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement for the Rhode Green Energy Park. <p>Strategy.</p> <p>Rural Economic Development Policies</p> <p>REDP-01 It is Council policy to liaise and co-operate with statutory, local development, sectoral and community / voluntary agencies and groups to develop economic, social and cultural benefits for the rural community and its service base.</p> <p>REDP-02 It is Council policy to support the regeneration of smaller towns and villages through identification of regeneration projects which could harness untapped assets with community support and wider private and public sector support and investment including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.</p> <p>REDP-03 It is Council policy to continue to protect existing resource-based industry from encroachment by residential development, for example mining, quarrying, gravel pits, and intensive agriculture.</p> <p>Agriculture</p> <p>REDP-04 It is Council policy to support the development of agriculture where it is compatible with the sustainable development of the county and commensurate with sustaining the farming community.</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<p>REDP-05 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.</p> <p>REDP-06 It is Council policy to proactively encourage the Bord na Móna Peatlands Rehabilitation Scheme (which is to be administered by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) and regulated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) to deliver on potential amenity and tourism benefits for example complimenting the delivery of the Midlands Cycling Destination – Offaly, where routes pass through the rehabilitated bogs, subject to environmental, biodiversity and hydrological requirements’.</p> <p>Food and Beverage</p> <p>REDP-07 It is Council policy to have a positive presumption to developments that seek to provide added value in the food sector, including processing and servicing, subject to the relevant environmental considerations. The Council supports the development of the artisan food sector.</p> <p>REDP-08 It is Council policy to support food and beverage enterprises with the Origin Green accreditation in view of their sustainable food production.</p> <p>Diversification</p> <p>REDP-09 It is Council policy to facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting sustainability and economic efficiency in agriculture and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities such as the food and drinks sector, forestry, horticulture, crafts, agri-business, fishing, aquaculture, waste management, rural tourism, renewable energy and the bio-economy, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.</p> <p>REDP-10 It is Council policy to favourably consider proposals for on-farm based diversification, which are complementary to the agricultural operation on the farm such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist farming practices, for example, flower growing, equine facilities, poultry, mushroom growing, and specialised animal breeding; • Farm enterprises such as processing, co-ops, farm supply stores and agri-business; • The production of organic and specialty foods to meet the increase in demand for such products; and • The conversion of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner-run enterprises such as agri-tourism, as a way of supporting a viable rural community, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. <p>REDP-11 As part of Offaly County Council's recognition of the contribution that rural areas make to social and economic wellbeing, it is Council policy to support and protect existing rural economies such as (i) valuable agricultural lands to ensure sustainable food supply, (ii) the value and character of the open countryside and (iii) the diversification of rural economies to create additional jobs and maximise opportunities in emerging sectors, such as agri-business, renewable energy, tourism, and forestry enterprise.</p> <p>REDP-12 It is Council policy to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based industries and those addressing climate action and sustainability.</p> <p>Industry / Business</p> <p>REDP-13 It is Council policy to support rural entrepreneurship and rural enterprise development of an appropriate scale at suitable locations in the County.</p> <p>REDP-14 It is Council policy to favourably consider proposals for the expansion of existing industrial or new business enterprise in the open countryside where the proposal;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) is an appropriate size and scale, b) does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area, c) has regard to and complies with guidelines/standards including traffic, noise and environmental considerations, and d) is rural in nature by being rural resource based and not urban in nature. <p>Climate Action</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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> <p>Aggregates and Minerals</p> <p>REDP-19 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>Rural Economic Development Objectives</p> <p>REDO-01 It is an objective of the Council to support rural employment initiatives across the county, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>REDO-02 It is an objective of the Council to support the progression and delivery of projects in the context of available National and European funding, that support:</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community structural development; • Local business and enterprise development; • Infrastructure and capital development, • Agricultural development; and • Tourism and heritage development. <p>Agriculture</p> <p>REDO-03 It is an objective of the Council to support agricultural development and encourage the continuation of agriculture as a contributory means of maintaining population in the rural area and sustaining the rural economy.</p> <p>REDO-04 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that all agricultural activities adhere to any legislation on water quality and biodiversity, for example, Phosphorus Regulations, Water Framework Directive, Nitrates Directive and Habitats Directive.</p> <p>Peatland After-use</p> <p>REDO-05 It is an objective of the Council to support the longer-term strategic planning for industrial peatland areas, which should include a comprehensive after-use framework plan for the industrial peatlands and associated infrastructure including workshops, office buildings and industrial sites, which addresses environmental, economic and social issues including employment and replacement enterprise reflecting the current transition from employment based around peat extraction. Examples of after use and re-purposing of workshops and production facilities could include outreach training centres, gravel extraction, bike-hire facilities, enterprise space / co-working facilities, aquaculture, birch water harvesting, herb growing, resource management / recycling centre, climate change mitigation (such as through renewable energy, carbon sink, data centres, battery energy storage, afforestation including native woodland, a Green Energy Hub, flood management), and tourism (such as through peatways, recreational forestry, wilderness, eco-tourism based on biodiversity, and a designation of a National Peatlands Heritage Park).</p> <p>REDO-06 It is an objective of the Council to support the Midlands Regional Transition Team in developing a 'Holistic Plan for Just Transition in the Midland Region' including an inventory of project proposals and actions to support just transition in the Midlands and to assist the region in identifying potential investment needs for inclusion in a programme of support under the new EU Just Transition Fund.</p> <p>REDO-07 It is an objective of the Council to support the development of Lough Boora Discovery Park as a National Peatlands Centre and to support the development of further strategic linkages with the local and regional green infrastructure network.</p> <p>REDO-08 It is an objective of the Council to consider proposals for the potential re-purposing of both Shannonbridge and Edenderry peat powered electricity generating plants, and the appropriate rehabilitation of associated lands.</p>				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Economic Development 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc., including the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy identifies the key elements of the growth strategy identified within the NPF, which establish the baseline for the economic development strategy for Offaly and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills • A focus on contained growth and reduced sprawl by targeting infill and brownfield lands in existing built-up areas • Sequential provision of infrastructure with some critical infrastructure in place to promote investment • A comprehensive approach to rural fabric supporting sustainable growth and reversing decline <p>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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENTP-02 "having regard to proper planning and sustainable development" • ENTP-31 "support remote working opportunities from home and innovative designated hub/ co-working spaces, in the interests of mitigating long commuting times" • ENTP-33 "local employment creation" • ENTP-40 "protecting the amenities of urban and rural areas" • ENTP-43 "environmental quality" • ENTP-45 "support the creation of quality green jobs which are sustainable over the longer-term" 				

- ENTP-47 “development of economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county”
- ENTO-09 “self-sustainable and balanced”
- ENTO-14 “subject to appropriate environmental assessment”
- REDP-05 “protected from the threat of pollution in line with Water Quality Regulations and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive”
- REDP-07 “subject to the relevant environmental considerations”
- REDP-09 “maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism”
- REDP-12 “addressing climate action and sustainability”
- REDP-14 “environmental considerations”
- REDP-15 “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-17 “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”

8.8.6 Chapter 6: Tourism and Recreation Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Tourism Policies</p> <p>Tourism Development</p> <p>TRP-01 It is Council policy to implement Offaly Tourism Statement of Strategy 2017-2022 and any subsequent editions.</p> <p>TRP-02 It is Council policy to continue to support and encourage increased co-ordination, cohesion and linkages between agencies involved in tourism development, for example, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Bord na Móna, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Coillte and Offaly County Council.</p> <p>TRP-03 It is Council policy to co-operate with strategic partners such as Bord na Móna, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Coillte on the identification of land use strategies for appropriate areas of peatland and forestry within the county focusing on the tourism, environmental and heritage value of these areas.</p> <p>TRP-04 It is Council policy to encourage tourism related developments inside existing settlements where the scale and size of the proposed development is appropriate and in keeping with the character of the settlement.</p> <p>TRP-05 It is Council policy that tourism related developments outside of settlements will be considered where there is proven sustainable need. The need to locate in a particular area must be balanced against the environmental impact of the development and the benefits to the local community and adhere to Section 13.9.8 of Chapter 13 Development Management Standards which address tourism and recreation.</p> <p>TRP-06 It is Council policy to support the provision and improvement of visitor facilities, infrastructure (including signage, bicycle stands, service facilities, seating and if necessary parking) and accommodation (including self-catering, hotels, hostels, guesthouses, B&Bs, caravanning, campervanning, camping, motorhome service areas and glamping) at appropriate locations, including rural areas in proximity to tourist attractions, in order to expand the visitor experience provided to serve tourist attractions within the county. In so doing, the Council will facilitate increased bed nights supply in accordance with the 2025 targets set out in ‘Tourism: An Industry Strategy for Growth to 2025’ by The Irish Tourism Industry Federation.</p> <p>TRP-07 It is Council policy to favourably consider tourism infrastructure related to sport, recreation and information including boating, cruising, angling, walking, cycling, pony trekking routes, golf courses, bird watching, adventure centres, and interpretive centres subject to proper planning, environmental protection and sustainable development and policies of this plan.</p> <p>TRP-08 It is Council policy to protect natural resources on which tourism is based through the enforcement of policies and relevant legislation in relation to protection of resources, architectural conservation areas, peatlands, water quality, species and populations of conservation concern and biodiversity.</p> <p>TRP-09 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> <p>Branding</p> <p>TRP-10 It is Council policy to facilitate Fáilte Ireland initiatives for the development of tourism experiences in the county which deliver on the Ireland’s Ancient East and Ireland’s Hidden Heartland’s brands.</p> <p>TRP-11 It is Council policy to engage with Fáilte Ireland in the making of Ireland’s Ancient East ‘Ancient Visitor Experience Development Plan’ which will be a long-term tourism plan focused on experiences which bring the region’s ancient history to life.</p> <p>TRP-12 It is Council policy to support the making and implementation of ‘Great Houses and Gardens Experience Development Programme’ which will focus on Offaly’s rich historic houses and gardens, as part of Ireland’s Ancient East ‘Tales of Two Worlds Visitor Experience Development Plan’.</p> <p>Monastic Heritage</p> <p>TRP-13 It is Council policy to promote the monastic sites of County Offaly as tourist attractions in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, the OPW and relevant stakeholders, in particular Durrow Abbey and Monastic Site and Clonmacnoise Monastic Site with a view to developing proposals to enhance their visitor experience through the provision of signage, improved access in the case of Durrow Monastic Site, and associated infrastructure as appropriate and as resources allow.</p> <p>Peatlands</p> <p>TRP-14 It is Council policy to promote the continued development of Lough Boora Discovery Park as a tourist and ecological amenity and its linkages with the Grand Canal Greenway and surrounding towns and villages subject to proper planning, environmental protection and sustainable development.</p> <p>TRP-15 It is Council policy to promote the tourist development potential of ‘after use’ quarries and peatlands, subject to appropriate reinstatement for their recreational amenity value and potential for habitat nesting sites, subject to proper planning, environmental protection and sustainable 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>Greenways / Blueways / Peatways / Trails</p> <p>TRP-16 It is Council policy to support the extension of greenways, blueways, peatways and trails within the county and the integration and linkage of them with other existing / proposed greenways, blueways, peatways and trails both within and outside County Offaly.</p> <p>TRP-17 It is Council policy to promote the provision of appropriate infrastructural requirements to meet the needs of greenways, blueways, and peatways and other pedestrian / cycling trails such as high quality signage, bicycle stands, service facilities, seating and if necessary, car parking (all with regard to Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's 'Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines'), and the provision of visitor interpretation along these routes such as storyboards, artworks and other media to create a greater sense of place, connecting and immersing visitors in the local heritage and stories.</p> <p>TRP-18 It is Council policy to support in conjunction with relevant landowners and recreational / tourism agencies, the maintenance of and enhanced access to the countryside, waterways, monuments, historic properties, for recreational and tourism purposes. Access should be planned and managed in a manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism. Where significant effects cannot be ruled out to biodiversity, such as those within riparian zones, floodplains and peatlands, the subject development shall be subject to Ecological Impact Assessment.</p> <p>TRP-19 It is Council policy to further investigate the potential of and opportunities for the development of existing and new trails in County Offaly to include a mixture of walking, cycling and driving trails, for the provision of appropriate services along these trails, and for the development of linkages between these trails and key tourism assets both within Offaly and adjoining counties. An example includes Derryounce Experience Lake and Trails and its potential linkage to the People's Park in Portarlington (with potential for Portarlington as a trailhead) and the wider linkages to the Mount Lucas windfarm. The Council will only support such developments where it is demonstrated that no significant environmental effects would arise as a consequence of their construction or operation.</p> <p>TRP-20 It is Council policy to 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 Laois County Council. In addition, it is the Council policy to (i) promote the further development of walking trails on the mountains, (ii) connect to and develop Kinnitty as a service hub for the area and (iii) promote and facilitate links to / from other existing and proposed greenways, blueways and peatways.</p> <p>TRP-21 It is Council policy to recognise the value of the Slieve Bloom Mountains as an area of natural beauty with considerable recreation value and potential for diverse opportunities for the tourism industry. The Council acknowledges the designation of the Slieve Bloom Mountains as a Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area and will only support opportunities where it can be demonstrated that they would not result in significant effects to the conservation objectives of the Slieve Bloom European Sites and is carried out in a sustainable manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism.</p> <p>TRP-22 It is Council policy to promote the 'Feasibility Study on the Development of a Major Cycling Destination in the Midlands of Ireland' (2016) in conjunction with Bord na Móna and Coillte in accordance with 'Outdoor Recreation Plan for Public Lands and Waters in Ireland' 2017-2021 and in particular to recognise Tullamore as a hub in this respect.</p> <p>TRP-23 It is Council policy to support Fáilte Ireland in the making of 'The Beara Breifne Way Tourism Activation Plan' which will identify a number of towns as walking hubs along a trail which extends from Cork to Cavan through Offaly.</p> <p>Towns and Villages</p> <p>TRP-24 The Council acknowledges that towns and villages act as focal points and service zones for nearby tourist attractions and so it is Council policy to invest in public realm enhancements in order to increase the attractiveness of Offaly's towns and villages and so in turn encourage further investment and increased visitor numbers.</p> <p>TRP-25 It is Council policy to support Birr's role as a Tourism Destination Town having particular regard to its built heritage including Birr Castle, Gardens and Science Centre, its accessibility and proximity to key tourism destinations including natural amenities, and recreational opportunities including the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Lough Boora Discovery Park and Banagher marina on the River Shannon.</p> <p>TRP-26 It is Council policy to support Tullamore's role as a tourism hub and its development as a Tourism Destination Town having particular regard to its distilling heritage including Tullamore Dew Visitor Centre, its accessibility and proximity to key tourism destinations including natural amenities, and recreational opportunities including the Grand Canal and adjoining greenway, Lough Boora Discovery Park, Slieve Bloom Mountains, Durrow Monastic Site and Clara Bog Visitor Centre.</p> <p>TRP-27 It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate Charleville Castle and Demesne as an amenity area for the longer-term development of Tullamore. The Council acknowledges the designation of Charleville Wood as a Special Area of Conservation and will only support opportunities where it can be demonstrated that they would not result in significant effects to the conservation objectives of Charleville Wood European Site and is carried out in a sustainable manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism.</p> <p>TRP-28 It is Council policy to promote and facilitate conferencing facilities in the county and in particular recognise Tullamore's role as a conferencing and event hub, given its location, accessibility and experience.</p> <p>TRP-29 It is Council policy to recognise Edenderry's role as a service hub for the Grand Canal Greenway in the east of the county.</p> <p>Arts, Heritage and Culture</p> <p>TRP-30 It is Council policy to promote and facilitate the role of arts, heritage and culture in recognition of its importance to people's identity and the potential for economic development through a unique cultural tourism offering, including the development of themed trails to showcase Offaly's rich monastic heritage, culture and food offering.</p> <p>Public Rights of Way</p> <p>TRP-31 It is Council policy to support the preservation, protection, promotion and improvement, for the common good, existing public rights of way for recreation and tourism purposes, particularly those which provide access to state and semi-state lands such as archaeological sites, National Monuments and amenities, including upland areas and water corridors, and to create new ones or extend existing ones where appropriate either by agreement with landowners or through the use of compulsory purchase powers, whereby access is planned and managed in a sustainable manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism.</p> <p>TRP-32 It is Council policy to seek to ensure that new development will not have a negative impact on established walking routes/public rights of way, in particular in Areas of High Amenity and along the inland waterways of the county.</p> <p>TRP-33 It is Council policy to identify existing public rights of way and walking routes prior to any new planting, new infrastructural development and any new energy / telecommunications or golf course developments.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>Climate Action</p> <p>TRP-34 It is Council policy to promote and support the enhancement and development of the tourism industry in County Offaly in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county.</p> <p>Tourism Objectives</p> <p>Tourism Development</p> <p>TR0-01 It is an objective of the Council to implement the actions and measures in Offaly Tourism Statement of Strategy 2017-2022 in conjunction with the community, businesses, state agencies, and Offaly Tourism Marketing CLG.</p> <p>TR0- 02 It is an objective of the Council to support the increase in dwell time spent by tourists in County Offaly and to support the development in a sustainable manner of a range of tourism accommodation options for visitors.</p> <p>TR0-03 It is an objective of the Council to support the preservation, improvement and extension of recreational amenities.</p> <p>TR0-04 It is an objective of the Council to provide public Wi-Fi in proximity to tourist attractions in County Offaly.</p> <p>TR0-05 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the tourist attractions of the county are appropriately signposted and to seek to promote the provision of tourism amenity signs in accordance with the Policy on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads (March 2011) and the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) or any updated editions, and any other relevant Government policy.</p> <p>Branding</p> <p>TR0-06 It is an objective of the Council to work in collaboration with other key stakeholders to implement the programmes and plans of the Ireland's Ancient East initiative and Ireland's Hidden Heartland's initiative over the lifetime of the plan.</p> <p>Monastic Heritage</p> <p>TR0-07 It is an objective of the Council to support and work with the Office of Public Works who manage Clonmacnoise Monastic Site on behalf of the National Monuments Service to conserve the site and present it appropriately to visitors.</p> <p>TR0-08 It is an objective of the Council to develop proposals in conjunction with the OPW for Durrow Abbey and Monastic Site to become a key tourist attraction in County Offaly and potentially become a UNESCO World Heritage Site by enhancing the visitor experience through the provision of signage, improved access, and associated infrastructure as appropriate and as resources allow.</p> <p>Peatlands</p> <p>TR0-09 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the development of a tourism resource using cutaway peatlands in conjunction with Bord na Móna and Fáilte Ireland, subject to environmental considerations and nature designations for example, recreational forestry, outdoor pursuits, peatways on the network of bogs and industrial railways and a designation of a National Peatlands Heritage Park.</p> <p>TR0-10 It is an objective of Offaly County Council to encourage the development of water-based recreation activities on flooded cutaway bog where the opportunity arises, including possibly in Noggus Boy Bog and in Garryhinch, subject to environmental considerations and nature designations.</p> <p>TR0-11 It is an objective of the Council to promote the existing educational and amenity facilities at Clara Bog Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre and Lough Boora Discovery Park and their expansion, subject to appropriate assessment and environment.</p> <p>TR0-12 It is an objective of the Council to investigate the feasibility of an Energy Park with educational and amenity facilities, relating to any future development of renewable energy projects of significant scale that comes forward over the lifetime of this plan. Any development of renewable energy on cutaway bog will be required to provide increased opportunities for amenity access and education facilities.</p> <p>TR0-13 It is an objective of the Council to explore the potential for a Dark Sky area in County Offaly which is an area possessing an exceptionally or distinguished quality of stary nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage and / or public enjoyment.</p> <p>Greenways / Blueways / Peatways / Trails</p> <p>TR0-14 It is an objective of the Council to implement 'A Strategy for Walking and Cycling in Offaly: Connecting People Connecting Places' (2015).</p> <p>TR0-15 It is an objective of the Council to implement the 'Feasibility Study on the Development of a Major Cycling Destination in the Midlands of Ireland' (2016) in conjunction with Bord na Móna, Coillte, Waterways Ireland, the Office of Public Works and the Product Development Group, in accordance with the Offaly Tourism Statement of Strategy 2017-2022.</p> <p>TR0-16 It is an objective of the Council to implement the 'Outdoor Recreation Plan for Public Lands and Waters in Ireland' 2017-2021 and any subsequent edition in conjunction with stakeholders, in the design of outdoor recreational facilities.</p> <p>TR0-17 It is an objective of the Council to protect potential greenway, blueway and peatway routes (i) along and in proximity to abandoned rail lines and (ii) routes identified in Figure 6.13 'Midlands Cycling Destination, Offaly Network Map' from inappropriate development that could compromise the delivery of a cycling or walking route in the future.</p> <p>TR0-18 It is an objective of the Council to work with the relevant stakeholders to examine the feasibility of developing the Kilbeggan to Ballycommon link of the Grand Canal, as a potential navigational route.</p> <p>TR0-19 It is an objective of the Council to support the implementation of 'The Lough Ree and the Mid-Shannon Spirit Level; Wet and Wild Lands; A Shared Ambition' (December 2017) Waterway Ireland's Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon, and any other future tourism initiatives by state or semi-state bodies.</p> <p>Towns and Villages</p> <p>TR0- 20 It is an objective of the Council to build on Birr's role as a Destination Town in particular having regard to its built heritage and proximity to key tourism attractions.</p> <p>TR0-21 It is an objective of the Council to explore the potential of Tullamore becoming a destination for Whiskey tourism based on the presence of the Tullamore Dew Visitor Centre in the town, and the potential of Tullamore forming part of a 'Whiskey Trails' linkage throughout the region and beyond.</p> <p>Rights of Way</p> <p>TR0-22 It is an objective of the Council to examine the feasibility of identifying and mapping new Public Rights of Way in the recreational and amenity areas of the county in the context of emerging national guidance.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

Commentary

The assessment of the Plan's Tourism provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.7 of this report; and
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.

Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. This includes the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that specifically highlights the region as a “key destination for tourism, leisure and recreation activities”, with a policy to support the development of an integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways, while ensuring that high value assets and amenities are protected and enhanced. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy emphasises Tullamore as a Tourism Destination Town: RSES RPO 4.68: “Support Tullamore's role as a tourism hub and development as a Tourism Destination Town having particular regard to its distilling heritage and industry and accessibility to key tourist destinations, natural amenities and recreational opportunities including the Grand Canal Greenways, Lough Boora Discovery Park, Slieve Bloom Mountains and peatlands. This is coupled with support for Tullamore as a service hub for the ‘Midlands Cycle destination – Offaly’ and the recognition of the settlement's potential as a conferencing and event hub, given the town's central location, accessibility and experience of event provision.”

The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan land use activities and developments relating to tourism – and would be likely to contribute towards an increase in the number and dwell time of visitors and associated potential adverse effects. Such effects would include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, including tourism. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, energy, access or accommodation. The mitigation of potential adverse effects arising would be contributed towards by Plan provisions including those relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management, green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

The development of new and existing greenways, blueways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those between County Offaly, adjoining counties and beyond has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of tourism in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. The development of these projects, 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. Potential adverse effects would be mitigated both by measures which have been integrated into the Plan which provide for and contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development (including those identified at Section 9 of this report) and by measures arising from lower tier assessments (including those for the preparation of lower tier plans and projects).

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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is helping to ensure that:

- 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.

The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment, for example:

- TRP-08 “It is Council policy to protect natural resources on which tourism is based through the enforcement of policies and relevant legislation in relation to protection of resources, architectural conservation areas, peatlands, water quality, species and populations of conservation concern and biodiversity, rural housing and holiday home development.”
- TRP-19 “where it is demonstrated that no significant environmental effects would arise as a consequence of their construction or operation”
- TRP-21 “The Council acknowledges the designation of the Slieve Bloom Mountains as a Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area and will only support opportunities where it can be demonstrated that they would not result in significant effects to the conservation objectives of the Slieve Bloom European Sites and is carried out in a sustainable manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism”
- TRP-07, 14 & 15 “subject to proper planning, environmental protection and sustainable development”
- TRP-09 “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”

Development Management Standard 82 – DMS-82 Tourist Facilities – from Chapter 13 is noted; Tourist and recreation facilities, in particular accommodation, shall be generally located within towns and villages unless;

- 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.
- 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 the need arise.

8.8.7 Chapter 7: Retail and Town Centre Strategy and Regeneration

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Retail Policies</p> <p>Retail Hierarchy</p> <p>RTCP-01 It is Council policy to implement the retail hierarchy. The Council shall seek to locate retail development in the designated settlements where the scale and size of retail development proposed is in accordance with the size and the defined function of the settlement as outlined in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>RTCP-02 It is Council policy to promote Tullamore, a Key Town, as the main retail centre in the county and to ensure that the retail quantity, quality and range is of a standard that contributes to the strengthening of the retail economy within Tullamore Town, the county and the region as a whole.</p> <p>RTCP-03 It is Council policy to ensure that higher order retail services and developments are located in higher order settlements, as set out in Offaly's Settlement Hierarchy. The Council shall consider the scale, type and location of retail developments within the county when determining their suitability.</p> <p>Vibrancy / Revitalisation</p> <p>RTCP-04 It is Council policy to support the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing sector into the future by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified retail hierarchy, the sequential approach, and the needs of the projected population of the settlement areas.</p> <p>RTCP-05 It is Council policy to promote the reuse of vacant retail floorspace. Where no viable retail use can be sustained, alternative uses shall be assessed on their own merits against the requirements of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area within which they are located.</p> <p>RTCP-06 It is Council policy to encourage retail development, including new forms of shopping which relates to the regeneration of existing town and village centres. Proposals, which would undermine the vitality and viability of core retail areas or town centres, as a whole shall not be permitted.</p> <p>RTCP-07 It is Council policy to encourage retail development primarily in core retail areas and to apply the sequential approach in the consideration of the location of retail developments located outside of core retail areas.</p> <p>RTCP-08 It is Council policy that there will be a general presumption against large out-of-town retail centres in particular those located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads/motorways.</p> <p>Use</p> <p>RTCP-09 It is Council policy to resist the loss of retail units to non-retail use at pedestrian level, particularly in the primary shopping frontages of towns.</p> <p>RTCP-10 It is Council policy that the types of goods to be sold from retail parks shall be limited to bulky household goods or goods which are not portable by customers travelling by foot, cycle, or bus as defined in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 and any updated versions.</p> <p>RTCP-11 It is Council policy to address leakage of retail expenditure from the county by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer.</p> <p>Design</p> <p>RTCP-12 It is Council policy to encourage high quality architectural design and high quality layout / urban design in retail development to support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life.</p> <p>RTCP-13 It is Council policy to require that a Design Brief is submitted with applications for retail development that is large-scale or complex or located on sensitive sites. The Design Brief shall show the rationale and evolution of the proposal and how the proposal complements its context and setting.</p> <p>RTCP-14 It is Council policy to require applicants to demonstrate a degree of flexibility by providing for adaptation of standard retail design and format in order to accommodate retail development which is centrally located or sensitively located in the context of the sequential approach.</p> <p>RTCP-15 It is Council policy to encourage the repairing and retaining of historic shop fronts or historic features in a shop front.</p> <p>RTCP-16 It is Council policy that illumination of fascia signage, shopfronts or distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to externally lit signs, spotlighting, uplighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting. In this regard, internally illuminated fascias, internally illuminated signs and neon type signs are generally not permitted.</p> <p>RTCP-17 It is Council policy to encourage the design of shopfront and signs in accordance with the Advice Leaflet 'Guide to Shopfronts and Signs' by Offaly County Council.</p> <p>Climate Action</p> <p>RTCP-18 It is Council policy to support the development of environmentally sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and to encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to retail development, for example the provision of green infrastructure, sustainable mobility and accessibility, sustainable urban drainage systems, water harvesting and renewable energy.</p> <p>Retail Objectives</p> <p>RTCO-01 It is an objective of the Council to encourage the continued vitality and viability of town centres by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and promoting key town and village centre Opportunity Sites for development; • Promoting the revitalisation of vacant and derelict properties/shop units; • Promoting ongoing environmental improvements to the public realm; • Preventing overdevelopment of particular non-retail uses such as fast food outlets, amusement arcades / centres, off licences and betting shops in core retail areas; • Promoting activities including events, festivals, street markets and farmer's/country markets in appropriate town and village centres in the county; and • Facilitating sustainable mobility, accessibility and permeability improvements. <p>RTCO-02 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that, in the interest of vitality and viability, development proposals result in a balance of services and outlets thus avoiding an over-concentration of a particular type of retail activity in a given area.</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

<p>Regeneration Policies</p> <p>Reuse</p> <p>RP-01 It is Council policy to promote the regeneration of settlements by making better use of under-utilised land and buildings, particularly within the existing built-up areas where a transformational difference in the sustainability of a settlement can take place through compact growth.</p> <p>RP-02 It is Council policy to promote and encourage the suitable redevelopment of derelict and vacant sites as an alternative to new build on greenfield sites.</p> <p>RP-03 It is Council policy to promote and facilitate the habitation of vacant homes in accordance with the Council's Vacant Homes Action Plan.</p> <p>RP-04 It is Council policy to support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres.</p> <p>RP-05 It is Council policy to promote heritage-led regeneration in historic towns / villages through the reuse of historic buildings, the enhancement of places of special cultural / natural interest and the protection of the historic urban fabric.</p> <p>RP-06 It is Council policy to encourage a mixture of uses within built-up areas in order to promote the liveability and sustainability of our settlements.</p> <p>RP-07 It is Council policy to apply for funding under various funding streams to facilitate the enhancement, revitalisation, renewal and regeneration of communities and town / village centres, and the delivery of innovative and transformational regeneration proposals, for example, under the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds and Town and Village Renewal Schemes.</p> <p>Design</p> <p>RP-08 It is Council policy to encourage high quality and well-designed buildings, structures, public spaces and streets to support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life.</p> <p>RP-09 It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of the town and village centres including streetscape, street furniture, landscaping (hard and soft), signage and wirescapes, while recognising that both private and public developments can contribute to effective public realm.</p> <p>RP-10 It is Council policy to be flexible in terms of enabling brownfield / infill development within settlements, focusing on design-led and performance-based outcomes, rather than specifying absolute requirements in all cases.</p> <p>Opportunity Sites / Taller Buildings</p> <p>RP-11 It is Council policy to facilitate, promote and encourage the re-development of Opportunity Sites identified in Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans for appropriate development that contributes positively to the character of the settlement. Any proposal brought forward on Opportunity Sites shall be in accordance with the Development Principles for Opportunity Sites as set out in section 7.2.4 of the County Development Plan, with the inclusion of an urban design statement and masterplan and shall demonstrate the rationale for the proposal and how it will interact within its context and the wider urban area.</p> <p>RP-12 It is Council policy to consider the development of taller buildings on the 'Harbour site' and 'Texas site' in Tullamore as identified in Figure 7.8 of the County Development Plan, subject to assessment by the Planning Authority of the following documents prepared by a prospective applicant / applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A masterplan and local planning framework to deal with movement, public realm, and design; • An urban design statement addressing aspects of impacts on the historic built environment; • A specific design statement on the individual proposal from an architectural perspective; • A visual impact assessment; and • Daylight and shadow projection diagrams. <p>Collaboration</p> <p>RP-13 It is Council policy to promote a collaborative approach between Offaly County Council, central government, semi-state bodies, the community, the private sector and voluntary associations to successfully achieve the regeneration of areas.</p> <p>RP-14 It is Council policy to work in conjunction with the Land Development Agency in co-ordinating and developing strategic publically owned land banks suitable for housing provision in order to contribute towards achieving compact growth, sustainable development and regeneration.</p> <p>RP-15 It is Council policy to support the consolidation and aggregation of land where required in order to enable regeneration and proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>RP-16 It is Council policy that scheduled town and village improvement schemes shall be informed by joint walkability audits involving local older people together with relevant local authority officials in accordance with the Age Friendly Strategy for Offaly 2018-2021, and any future editions.</p> <p>Climate Action</p> <p>RP-17 It is Council policy to support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and to encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to developments which enable regeneration.</p> <p>Regeneration Objectives</p> <p>Renewal</p> <p>RO-01 It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate, where appropriate, the development and renewal of areas throughout the county which are in need of regeneration and in particular to apply for funding under government urban and rural regeneration / renewal schemes.</p> <p>RO-02 It is an objective of the Council to encourage the continued vitality and viability of town and village centres by promoting ongoing environmental improvements to the public realm.</p> <p>RO-03 It is an objective of the Council to promote the development and renewal of areas identified in need of regeneration in order to prevent (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land, (ii) urban blight and decay, (iii) anti-social behaviour, or (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other use.</p> <p>RO-04 It is an objective of the Council to establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites so that brownfield land re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders as part of an active land management process.</p> <p>RO-05 It is an objective of the Council to support the examination of a Purple Flag status for a town(s) in County Offaly in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Reuse</p> <p>RO-06 It is an objective of the Council to identify derelict sites and vacant sites which are suitable for redevelopment and to maintain the respective registers.</p> <p>RO-07 It is an objective of the Council as per the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended), to use site activation measures such as the Vacant Site Levy in</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<p>specific areas to bring forward vacant or underutilised 'Residential Lands' and 'Regeneration Lands' (which includes Opportunity Sites) into beneficial use where considered necessary for renewal and regeneration. Each year of the plan period the planning authority will assess the county's settlements for the purposes of identifying vacant sites for addition to the Vacant Site's Register and accordingly implement the statutory provisions for same.</p> <p>RO-08 It is an objective of the Council to encourage and be proactive in the habitation of vacant homes in accordance with the Council's Vacant Homes Action Plan. Strategy / Guide</p> <p>RO-09 It is an objective of the Council to make a Place-Making Strategy for towns and implementation of Town Centre Renewal Plans .</p> <p>RO-10 It is an objective of the Council to support the preparation of Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes and for revitalising vacant spaces for example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Retail and Town Centre Strategy and Regeneration 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, 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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTCP-05 "promote the reuse of vacant retail floorspace" • RTCP-12 "high quality architectural design and high quality layout / urban design in retail development to support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life." • RTCP-18 "support the development of environmentally sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and to encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to retail development, for example the provision of green infrastructure, sustainable mobility and accessibility, sustainable urban drainage systems, water harvesting and renewable energy" • RP-02 "suitable redevelopment of derelict and vacant sites" • RP-05 "heritage-led regeneration" • RP-06 "promote the liveability and sustainability of our settlements" • RP-08 "high quality and well-designed buildings, structures, public spaces and streets to support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life." • RP-11 "that contributes positively to the character of the settlement" • RP-17 "support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and to encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to developments which enable regeneration" 				
--	--	--	--	--

8.8.8 Chapter 8: Sustainable Transport Strategy

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Sustainable Transport Strategy Policies Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility</p> <p>SMAP-01 It is Council policy to support sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and connectivity within County Offaly in accordance with the National Policy Outcomes of the National Planning Framework 2040 and the National Development Plan.</p> <p>SMAP-02 It is Council policy to support the growth in the use of electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles and fuel cell vehicles; prioritise car parking spaces for these vehicles; and facilitate the provision of battery charging infrastructure and refuelling infrastructure for these vehicles where considered appropriate.</p> <p>SMAP-03 It is Council policy to promote the transition to a low carbon integrated transport system by firstly reducing the need for travel through the use of design solutions and innovative approaches with regards to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the complementary publication The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads by Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and subsequently to shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>SMAP-04 It is Council Policy to continue to work with the relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders to facilitate the integration of active travel (walking, cycling) with public transport.</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

<p>Land Use and Transportation Integration</p> <p>SMAP-05 It is Council policy to promote the integration of landuse and transport planning to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Ensure a sustainable, safe, coherent, efficient, and effective approach to transport provision for development in County Offaly; (ii) Support permeability, accessibility and connectivity in settlements (both in terms of new development and retrofitting into existing built-up areas); (iii) Strive to continue decreasing the distance between housing and employment; (iv) Reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources; (v) Reduce anthropogenic greenhouse house emissions; and (vi) Address the necessity of adaptation to climate change <p>In particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new developments.</p> <p>SMAP-06 It is Council policy that larger-scale, trip intensive developments, such as high employee dense offices and retail, should in the first instance be focused into central urban locations and developed in a sequential manner and may be subject to Mobility Management / Travel Planning.</p> <p>SMAP-07 It is Council policy that all proposed major employment developments and schools shall be subject to Travel Plans in a manner consistent with National Transport Authority Guidance.</p> <p>Trip Generation/Modal Shift</p> <p>SMAP-08 It is Council policy to promote more compact development forms that reduce overall demand for private transport and private transport infrastructure and support proposals that encourage modal shift towards sustainable travel modes.</p> <p>SMAP-09 It is Council policy to encourage better integration of transport services with the aim of reducing car trips by encouraging and fostering improved consultation and co-operation between both public and private providers of transport services operating in the county and in the midland region, including all providers of bus and rail services.</p> <p>SMAP-10 It is Council policy to allow for the reduction in car parking standards in suitable town centre locations in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.</p> <p>Walking/Cycling</p> <p>SMAP-11 It is Council policy to prioritise the need for people to be physically active in their daily lives; to improve permeability and to promote walking and cycling in the design of streets and public spaces as an alternative and sustainable mode of transport; and to support safer walking and cycling routes to schools under the Green Schools Initiative subject to appropriate environmental assessments, including Habitats Directive Assessment.</p> <p>SMAP-12 It is Council policy to support the pedestrianisation and permeability of town and village centres where appropriate, in order to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe places. In doing this the Council will strive to support the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Provision of 'cycle friendly' towns and villages; (ii) Provision of key cycling routes through larger towns; (iii) Potential for a walking and cycling route around Tullamore incorporating the Grand Canal, the banks of the Tullamore river and inside the barriers of the Tullamore by-pass. <p>SMAP-13 It is Council policy to facilitate and support, subject to appropriate environmental assessments (including the 'Corridor and Route Selection Process' set out in section 8.6.4 of this Plan), the continued development of walking and cycling routes including greenways, blueways and peatways in County Offaly for recreational and utility purposes.</p> <p>SMAP-14 It is Council policy to support the provision of secure cycle parking facilities in the public realm of towns and villages, at all public service destinations and in other developments.</p> <p>SMAP-15 It is Council policy to be supportive of exploring opportunities for the provision of cycle lanes along the N80, preferably off road cycle tracks separated from vehicular traffic where feasible, subject to adhering to road safety standards and complying with Transport Infrastructure Ireland's Publications, safeguarding the strategic function of the N80 and the undertaking of a safety audit.</p> <p>Public Transport</p> <p>SMAP-16 It is Council policy to co-operate with and encourage Iarnród Éireann to (i) secure the upgrading of the existing rail linkages between Athlone, Clara, Tullamore and Portarlington (ii) improve the frequency of trains between Athlone and Dublin and (iii) ensure that train stations in County Offaly are manned and have frequent services.</p> <p>SMAP-17 It is Council policy to promote and facilitate, in co-operation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Iarnród Éireann and adjoining local authorities, the provision of a second rail line between Portarlington and Athlone. In conjunction with this there is an opportunity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullamore Train Station and adjoining lands to be developed as a transport (bus/rail) node with possible integration of local bus services to serve the town and catchment area; and • Clara Train Station and adjoining lands to be developed as a transport (bus/rail) node with possible integration of local bus services to serve the town and catchment area. <p>SMAP-18 It is Council policy to support the reopening of Geashill Train Station.</p> <p>SMAP-19 It is Council policy to support and develop public transport routes throughout the county through collaboration with the National Transport Authority and other relevant statutory bodies.</p> <p>SMAP-20 It is Council policy to support and facilitate the operation and improvement of existing bus services and connections, and to facilitate the provisions of improved facilities and services for bus users in towns and villages including the provision of set down areas for coaches and bus shelters at all bus stops where feasible.</p> <p>SMAP-21 It is Council policy to support the Local Link Rural Transport Programme 2018-2022 in County Offaly and subsequent programmes, including 'Connecting Ireland: Rural Mobility Plan', providing for social and economic connectivity between settlements and rural areas.</p> <p>Roads</p> <p>SMAP-22 It is Council policy to facilitate development of the road network in Offaly and the midland region in accordance with the National Development Plan and with Government policy. The Council will also support the relevant agencies and bodies involved in achieving such development including Transport Infrastructure Ireland and</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>the National Transport Authority.</p> <p>SMAP-23 It is Council policy to strictly control development, outside of identified settlements, which could generate significant additional traffic, thereby potentially compromising the capacity and efficiency of the national roads/restricted regional roads and associated interchanges and possibly lead to the premature and unacceptable reduction in the level of service available to road users. This policy will also apply to national roads which may be downgraded during the lifetime of this Plan but which will still comprise high quality regionally important links.</p> <p>SMAP-24 It is Council policy to maintain and protect the safety, strategic transport function, capacity and efficiency of national roads, motorways and associated junctions and in accordance with Strategic Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012 or any subsequent edition.</p> <p>SMAP-25 It is Council policy that development(s) requiring a new direct access or an intensification of an existing access onto a National Secondary road, or onto a privately owned road leading onto a National Secondary road where a speed limit greater than 60 km/h applies will be avoided in accordance with the provisions of Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities, January 2012. Exceptional circumstances may be considered where the development is of national and regional strategic importance, is plan-led and complies with the criteria set out in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines in this regard.</p> <p>SMAP-26 It is Council policy that proposals for rural dwellings that are seeking direct access onto a restricted regional route as identified in Table 8.4 and Figure 8.10 of this plan, will only be permitted provided all of the criteria are complied with as set out under Policy SSP-27 (Policy for Housing in Areas under Strong Urban Influence and in Stronger Rural Areas and in Areas of Special Control) in Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy.</p> <p>SMAP-27 It is Council policy to improve the road links between the national roads network and identified settlements within Offaly's Settlement Hierarchy in order to cater for anticipated additional traffic flows and to facilitate the economic development of these settlements.</p> <p>SMAP-28 It is Council policy to ensure that developments which have the potential to generate significant traffic movement are subject to a Traffic and Transportation Assessment, Quality Audit and Road Safety Audit as appropriate.</p> <p>SMAP-29 It is Council policy to support the upgrading of the R422 from the M7 motorway in County Laois to Mountmellick in County Laois where it links with the N80 route that links to Tullamore a Key Town.</p> <p>SMAP-30 It is Council policy that development at national road interchanges or junctions shall be carried out in accordance with the procedure set out in section 2.7 of the Ministerial Guidelines Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012 or subsequent edition.</p> <p>SMAP-31 It is Council policy that the capacity and efficiency of the road network drainage regimes in County Offaly will be safeguarded for road drainage purposes.</p> <p>Air Transport</p> <p>SMAP-32 It is Council policy to support the provision of a green international trade and distribution zone based on international air connectivity within the county or the midlands where it would contribute towards the proper planning and sustainable development of the county, comply with all environmental legislation, policies and objectives contained within this Plan and would be consistent with higher level planning documents, including the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>General</p> <p>SMAP-33 It is Council policy to improve deficiencies in pavement surface, riding quality and general alignment to protect the heavy investment in existing facilities in line with the annual roads programme and allocated budgets.</p> <p>SMAP-34 It is Council policy to recognise the importance of hedgerows and roadside boundaries for wildlife and biodiversity when designing or inputting into road schemes. Retention of such features should be incorporated into design and where this is not possible, replacement planting with native species of indigenous provenance shall be provided.</p> <p>SMAP-35 It is Council policy that in considering applications for quarries, the Council shall seek to ensure access to the highest possible category of the road network hierarchy.</p> <p>SMAP- 36 It is Council policy that proposals for rights of way extinguishment should only be considered where these do not result in more circuitous trips for local residents accessing public transport, or local destinations.</p> <p>Sustainable Transport Strategy Objectives</p> <p>Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility</p> <p>SMAO-01 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of transport infrastructure in County Offaly in line with national policy as outlined in the National Development Plan, Government policy and also in line with the Councils own programme of works.</p> <p>SMAO-02 It is an objective of the Council to prepare a Local Transport Plan in accordance with 'Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance' by TII and NTA, for the Key Town of Tullamore in conjunction with the National Transport Authority and in tandem with the Local Area Plan, and to prepare Transport Plans for other towns that are subject to Local Area Plans, namely Birr, Edenderry and Portlaurington subject to the provision of funding and agreement with statutory agencies.</p> <p>SMAO-03 It is an objective of the Council to specify baseline figures and targets for modal share in new / varied Local Area Plans in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.</p> <p>SMAO-04 It is an objective of the Council to improve the baseline modal share figures for the county that are set out in this Development Plan, in particular a reduction in the percentage usage of the car which shall be informed by measures set out in Appendix 1 of this Development Plan including the improvement of rural accessibility through rural transport systems, improvements in inter-settlement and intra- settlement accessibility and improvements advocated by Local Transport Plans, all in conjunction with setting modal share targets within the county in cooperation with NTA, CARO, EMRA and other relevant stakeholders and in accordance with any relevant Guidelines that may come into effect.</p> <p>SMAO-05 It is an objective of the Council to identify suitable areas in towns and villages for age-friendly parking bays, in accordance with the Age Friendly Strategy for Offaly 2018-2021, and any future editions.</p> <p>Walking / Cycling</p> <p>SMAO-06 It is an objective of the Council to implement Connecting People Connecting Places: A Strategy for Walking and Cycling in Offaly September 2015.</p> <p>SMAO-07 It is an objective of the Council that cycle lanes are designed and maintained in accordance with the National Cycle Manual by the National Transport Authority 2011.</p> <p>SMAO-08 It is an objective of the Council to collaborate with Bord na Móna and Coillte in the development of the 'Major Cycling Destination in the Midlands of Ireland –</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>Feasibility Study 2016' and to pursue the development of greenway links to adjoining counties.</p> <p>Public Transport</p> <p>SMAO-09 It is an objective of the Council to safeguard all existing rail infrastructure, to encourage the re-opening of rail stations, and to preserve disused stations / halts and tracks, appropriate to future strategic county public transport needs.</p> <p>SMAO-10 It is an objective of the Council to improve poor road alignment and junctions where incidents of collision are recorded and funding is available. In general, the decision regarding which road section will be prioritised for improvement will be guided by the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to provide strategic links to National Road access; • The elimination of traffic hazards; • The development of industry, agriculture, forestry, housing and commercial development wherever such development would be of substantial social or economic benefit to the county; and • The need to provide for essential communications at an acceptable social and economic cost. <p>Roads</p> <p>SMAO-11 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the development of the national secondary road network in Offaly through the continued construction, upgrading and improvement of the national secondary roads in the county, the N62, the N52 and the N80 where on examination it is found to be feasible, including as outlined in the accompanying table:</p> <p>Scheme Description</p> <p>N52: To support the construction of a road between Tullamore and Kilbeggan (Link Road) in accordance with National Development Plan investment objectives taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan and in accordance with statutory processes and TII Publications subject to compliance with requirements of various TII Planning Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Impacts that include headings such as "Constraints Study", "Route Corridor Selection" and "Environmental Impact Assessment".</p> <p>To examine the feasibility of the provision of a Western Bypass/Relief Road to the west of Tullamore town linking the R420 to the north west of the town with the N52 to the south west of the town taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process. The line on the map in Volume 2 is indicative only.</p> <p>To co-operate with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in the examination of the feasibility of providing a bypass for the following towns and villages, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process. Where lines are shown on the maps in Volume 2, they are indicative only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N52: Kilcormac • N80: Killeigh <p>N62: To investigate the feasibility of upgrading, widening and reconstructing the N62 from Kennedy's Cross to the county boundary at Ballynahown taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process.</p> <p>N62: To investigate the feasibility of constructing a Birr Relief Road and construction of Birr By-pass and Distributor Road Network (Birr LUTS), taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process. The lines on the map in Volume 2 are indicative only.</p> <p>N62: To investigate the feasibility of carrying out Birr-Riverstown road improvements taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process.</p> <p>SMAO-12 It is an objective of the Council to construct, upgrade and improve, where necessary, the regional roads in the county as outlined in the accompanying table, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process. Where lines are shown on the maps in Volume 2, they are indicative only. The Council will have regard to national and regional transport plans and the Council's programme of works. The undertaking of any works will be subject to examination of its feasibility including the availability of finance and resources and will be subject to environmental assessments where necessary:</p> <p>Scheme Description</p> <p>R402: Examine the feasibility of the construction of Edenderry by-pass and relief roads.</p> <p>R420: Examine the feasibility of the construction of by-passes and relief roads for both Portarlington and Clara.</p> <p>To secure the provision and undertake upgrades of regional roads in the county where necessary, feasible and as funds allow.</p> <p>R420: To examine the feasibility of providing a bypass for Cloneygowan and to protect from development any reservation bands / corridors so as to avoid compromising the construction of the road.</p> <p>R420: To examine the feasibility of securing the provision of a bypass for Geashill, and, where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process.</p> <p>R420: To co-operate with Laois County Council to examine the feasibility of providing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relief road from the Tullamore Road to Botley Lane, Portarlington. 2. Long-term bypass to the south of Portarlington. 				
---	--	--	--	--

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<p>SMAO-13 It is an objective of the Council to examine the feasibility of providing effective linkages between national and county roads taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility.</p> <p>SMAO-14 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the continued improvement and upgrading of all roads, should their status be re-graded, under the national roads programme and / or the Council's road programme. The Council will seek and support the upgrading of the status of regional roads in the midlands which perform functions akin to National Secondary Routes for example the R420 Tullamore to Monastervin road and the routes that link Tullamore to the M6 at Enfield via Edenderry, namely the R420 and R402.</p> <p>SMAO-15 It is an objective of the Council to improve and maintain regional and county roads in line with the annual roads programme and allocated budgets.</p> <p>SMAO-16 It is an objective of the Council to examine the feasibility of providing future relief / distributor roads adjacent to / within the following towns and villages, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, the Council will seek to pursue and / or facilitate the relevant project, subject to other provisions in the Plan, including section 8.6.4 Corridor and Route Selection Process. Where lines are shown on the maps in Volume 2, they are indicative only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullamore • Birr • Clara • Ferbane • Portarlington • Cloghan • Killeigh • Geashill • Cloneygowan • Edenderry • Kilcormac <p>SMAO-17 It is an objective of the Council to improve and upgrade bridges in the county as identified in the annual roads programme and budget allocation.</p> <p>SMAO-18 It is an objective of the Council to protect the study area, route corridor options and thereafter the preferred route corridor selected for the national road schemes being progressed in the Development Plan in accordance with National Development Plan Objectives and to prohibit development that could prejudice their future delivery.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

Commentary

The assessment of the Plan's Sustainable Transport Strategy provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.7 of this report; and
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.

Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other higher-level planning and sectoral 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.

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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is helping to ensure that:

- 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.

The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the planning framework for the future development of sustainable transport and movement in County Offaly and will, in combination with the implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans and programmes, contribute towards the overall development of the County. 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 facilitation of journeys by car, in particular, would give rise to emissions to air.

Implementation of SMAP-17 (a second line between Portarlington and Athlone) is required to be subject to the requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directives, which are reflected elsewhere in the Plan. Other provisions contributing towards sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment include those referring to environmental assessments, those referring to environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and those referring to the 'Corridor and Route Selection Process' set out in Section 8.6.4 of the Plan.

Policy SMAP-32 supports the provision of a green international trade and distribution zone based on international air connectivity within the county or the midlands subject to certain requirements being met. If this encompassed the development of an airport, such a development would have to be accompanied by significant amounts of infrastructure - including supporting public and private transport infrastructure and services and water services. Significant amounts of greenfield lands, away from existing settlements would be required with significant residual impacts likely on the landscape. Potential conflicts would be likely to arise between the project and ecology. The operation of an airport would be likely to generate significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage and would be likely to result in significant noise emissions that would have the potential to conflict with human health. The need for any airport and alternatives regarding location would have to be thoroughly examined at project-level environmental assessment. Consideration would have to be given to flight paths utilised by flights to and from existing airports. Notwithstanding these potential issues, mitigation has been integrated into Policy SMAP-32: "where it would contribute towards the proper planning and sustainable development of the county, comply with all environmental legislation, policies and objectives contained within this

Plan and would be consistent with higher level planning documents, including the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy”.

The development of new and existing greenways, blueways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those between County Offaly, adjoining counties and beyond 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 these projects, 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. Potential adverse effects would be mitigated both by measures which have been integrated into the Plan which provide for and contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development (including those identified at Section 9 of this report) and by measures arising from lower tier assessments (including those for the preparation of lower tier plans and projects).

8.8.9 Chapter 9: Social Inclusion, Community & Cultural Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Social Inclusion, Community & Cultural Development Policies</p> <p>General</p> <p>SICCDP-01 It is Council policy to assist, where feasible, in the provision and extension of social, community and cultural facilities and amenities within the county in a low carbon climate resilient and environmentally sustainable manner to serve individual communities throughout the county.</p> <p>SICCDP-02 It is Council policy to identify and facilitate the development of suitable sites for community facilities within the county, particularly in newly developing areas. These sites should be easily accessible (walking and cycling) and promote the use of public transport.</p> <p>SICCDP-03 It is Council policy to support the implementation of the Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan in collaboration with the Local and Economic Development Committee to reduce the number of people in or at risk of social exclusion.</p> <p>SICCDP-04 It is Council policy that proposals for new developments will have regard to the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) in relation to sustainable neighbourhoods to provide new facilities (including play facilities) for community use. Proposals should be in suitable locations and be compatible with adjoining developments. Such proposals will be subject to other policies of the Development Plan, in particular those concerning open space provision. Further, it is Council policy to encourage the provision of multi-functional buildings, which are adaptable to accommodating a range of community facilities, where appropriate. (This is particularly apparent in the case of new housing estates, whereby a crèche facility can be designed to be re-developed in subsequent years, if required, for an alternative community facility). Further, it is Council policy that the multi-use of public spaces will be encouraged.</p> <p>SICCDP-05 It is Council policy to facilitate the co-location and shared use by community groups of community facilities, amenities and schools and to ensure communities are active during the day and into the evening, to use land more efficiently and to facilitate opportunities for further inclusion of community participation.</p> <p>SICCDP-06 It is Council policy to facilitate a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.</p> <p>SICCDP-07 It is Council policy to support ‘Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020, (and any updated editions) and any key recommendations in relation to the physical environment.</p> <p>Childcare</p> <p>SICCDP-08 It is Council policy to encourage the provision of childcare facilities in residential areas, employment areas, retail centres and other areas as appropriate, when development proposals are put forward for consideration.</p> <p>SICCDP-09 It is Council policy to encourage the provision of childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments. The Planning Authority will have regard to the DEHLG’s Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 (as may be updated) in relation to the provision of childcare facilities.</p> <p>SICCDP-10 It is Council policy to assist the County Childcare Committee in identifying priority areas within the county for the provision of childcare facilities.</p> <p>Older People and People with Disabilities</p> <p>SICCDP-11 It is Council policy to support ‘the Offaly Age Friendly County Programme 2018-2021’ as implemented by the Offaly Age Friendly Alliance (and any updated editions) and any key actions in relation to the physical environment.</p> <p>SICCDP-12 It is Council policy that residential care homes for older people, retirement homes, nursing homes, independent living units, assisted living units, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation are located within defined settlement boundaries and are appropriate in scale to the size of the settlement. The provision of these accommodation types within the open countryside is considered only in such cases where it is clearly demonstrated that due to the nature of the services to be provided, the open countryside is necessary and that no suitable alternative sites are available within a nearby settlement.</p> <p>SICCDP-13 It is Council policy to ensure that all buildings, public open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part M of the Building Regulations and the requirement for Disability Access Certificates (DACs) • Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012); • Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2009); <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Outdoors - A Guide for Accessibility (2018) <p>SICCDP-14 It is Council policy to cater for all levels of disability, through the appropriate mitigation of the built environment for example, through the selection of building materials; the provision of quiet rooms and sensory gardens where appropriate; and in the design of pedestrian facilities for the visually impaired.</p> <p>SICCDP-15 It is Council Policy to promote Universal Design and well-designed lifetime adaptable and age friendly housing in accordance with best practice and the policies</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

<p>and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2009) and particularly in infill and brownfield developments walkable to existing services and facilities.</p> <p>SICCDP-16 It is Council policy to ensure that new social infrastructure developments are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by adopting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full active, valued and healthy lives.</p> <p>Young People and Children</p> <p>SICCDP-17 It is Council policy to consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.</p> <p>Open Space / Amenity Facilities</p> <p>SICCDP-18 It is Council policy to preserve the land use of existing public and private recreation areas, including sports clubs, built leisure facilities and open space areas. In exceptional circumstances, a change of use may be sought, but must demonstrate that alternative recreational provisions are provided in a suitable location. Further, it is Council policy to identify, where possible and appropriate, sites for possible future extensions of public open space areas and amenities within settlement plans.</p> <p>SICCDP-19 It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate the provision of community and recreational infrastructure as an integral component of proposed new residential schemes and in particular, the provision of playgrounds for children.</p> <p>SICCDP-20 It is Council policy to support the development of dedicated youth spaces in towns and villages and the development of multi-function spaces in Sráids and the open countryside.</p> <p>Education Facilities</p> <p>SICCDP-21 It is Council policy to liaise with and to facilitate the Department of Education and Skills in the provision of education facilities, as appropriate. This includes the identification and reservation of sufficient land to meet the need for expansion of existing schools and/or provision of new schools in accordance with the county's settlement hierarchy, requirements of individual settlements, their catchment area and the requirements of the relevant education authority, in accordance with 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities', the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2008).</p> <p>SICCDP-22 It is Council policy to ensure that no significant residential developments proceed without an assessment of existing school capacity or the provision of new school's facilities in tandem with the development.</p> <p>SICCDP-23 It is Council policy to give careful consideration to the appropriateness and location of fast food outlets in the vicinity of schools and, where considered appropriate, to restrict the opening of new fast food/takeaway outlets in close proximity to schools so as to protect the health and wellbeing of school-going children.</p> <p>Co-Working Hubs</p> <p>SICCDP-24 It is Council policy to support and facilitate the establishment of co-working/ remote working hubs and creative hubs as either standalone facilities themselves or ancillary to public buildings, libraries and community centres or in towns and village centres as appropriate.</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>SICCDP-25 It is Council policy to implement the Offaly County Library Development Plan 2010-2014 (as extended) and any subsequent Library Development Plans.</p> <p>SICCDP-26 It is Council policy to ensure that the County Library Service is strongly positioned to support: the knowledge society, social inclusion, e-Government, life-long learning initiatives, local studies and archive services, children's services, services to rural communities, the housebound and older people.</p> <p>SICCDP-27 It is Council policy to support the refurbishment and upgrade of the libraries at Banagher, Daingean, Ferbane and Kilcormac, in accordance with the Offaly County Council, Library Development Plan.</p> <p>Arts, Culture and Language</p> <p>SICCDP-28 It is Council policy to implement the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-22, Council's Arts Strategy 2018-2022 and the Offaly Culture and Creative Strategy 2018-2021.</p> <p>SICCDP-29 It is Council policy to maximise the per cent for art scheme for Offaly in relation to its major capital projects which provides opportunities for artists of all disciplines to create work for the public realm. Public capital projects, for example: housing developments, roads, water and waste water treatment schemes, as well as hospitals, schools and libraries, have a percentage of the total capital costs allocated for the creation of a work of art. It is Council policy to reflect a commitment to, and recognition of, the diversities of the scheme in line with national guidelines.</p> <p>SICCDP-30 It is Council policy to support initiatives at promoting Gaelige, the Irish language, and the need for access to social supports in terms of language, education and employment for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>SICCDP-31 It is Council policy to promote the improvement of health and wellbeing services throughout the county, in particular to encourage the integration of health and wellbeing services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.</p> <p>SICCDP-32 It is Council policy to look favourably upon the development of primary care centre, clinics and facilities for the specific needs of an ageing population, in accessible locations, particularly town centres, which comprise / provide access to a range of healthcare services including general practitioners, nurses / midwives, health care assistants, home help assistants, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and administrative personnel, as appropriate. The provision of individual healthcare facilities will also be considered, as appropriate.</p> <p>SICCDP-33 It is Council policy to support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities including the development of both the system of hospital care and the provision of community-based primary care facilities.</p> <p>SICCDP-34 It is Council policy to ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.</p> <p>SICCDP-35 It is Council policy to support the key priorities of the Healthy Offaly Plan 2018-2020 (as updated in the future) to promote health and well-being.</p> <p>SICCDP-36 It is Council policy to support the designation of the Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore as a major trauma centre, its continued development as a 'teaching' hospital and the potential of a 'regional' hospice at this location.</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>Burial Grounds/Crematoriums SICCDP-37 It is Council policy to protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the county and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles. SICCDP-38 It is Council policy to facilitate the development of new or extended burial grounds and crematoria by the zoning of land at suitable locations and providing local authority burial grounds subject to appropriate safeguards with regard to environmental, noise and traffic impacts. SICCDP-39 It is Council policy to consider handing Council graveyards back to communities to allow them to be cared for by the community, as appropriate. SICCDP-40 It is Council policy to implement the provisions of the Offaly County Council Byelaws 2015 in relation to the use, protection and management of cemeteries provided by and under the control of Offaly County Council.</p> <p>Places of Worship SICCDP-41 It is Council policy to support and facilitate the development of places of worship and multi-faith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres.</p> <p>Traditional Local Services SICCDP-42 It is Council policy to support and encourage traditional local services such as small shops, post offices, and licensed premises, acknowledging their important role in communities and smaller settlements, particularly villages and Sráids throughout the county.</p> <p>Social Inclusion, Community and Cultural Development Objectives</p> <p>Education SICCDO-01 It is an objective of the Council that the provision of new educational facilities are located within existing settlements and thereby out-of-town locations are considered only in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Open Spaces / Amenity SICCDO-02 It is an objective of the Council to develop open spaces throughout the county which will encourage a range of recreational and amenity activities that will cater for both active and passive needs.</p> <p>Play Facilities SICCDO-03 It is an objective of the Council to develop a partnership approach in funding and developing children's play opportunities throughout the county, in accordance with 'Ready Steady Play,' A National Play Policy and Offaly County Council and Offaly Local Development Committee, Joint Playground Policy 2009-2013' as extended and any subsequent policies.</p> <p>Library Facilities SICCDO-04 It is an objective of the Council to support the refurbishment of libraries at Banagher, Daingean, Ferbane and Kilcormac, in accordance with the Offaly County Library Development Plan, as resources allow.</p> <p>SICCDO-05 It is an objective of the Council to develop a new purpose built modern community library and arts space at JKL Street Edenderry.</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Services SICCDO-06 It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of a modern and effective fire and rescue services for the county.</p>				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Social Inclusion, Community & Cultural Development 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc., including the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that requires, for example, local authorities to "...seek to support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve" (Regional Planning Objective 9.14).</p> <p>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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SICCDP-01 "provision and extension of social, community and cultural facilities and amenities within the county in a low carbon climate resilient and environmentally sustainable manner to serve individual communities throughout the county" • SICCDP-02 "sites should be easily accessible (walking and cycling) and promote the use of public transport" • SICCDP-38 "appropriate safeguards with regard to environmental, noise and traffic impacts" 				

8.8.10 Chapter 10: Built Heritage

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Built Heritage Policies</p> <p>Protected Structures</p> <p>BHP-01 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>BHP-02 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>BHP-03 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>BHP-04 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>BHP-05 It is Council policy to actively encourage uses that are compatible with the character of protected structures.</p> <p>BHP-06 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>BHP-07 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>BHP-08 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>BHP-09 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>BHP-10 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>BHP-11 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>Architectural Conservation Areas</p> <p>BHP-12 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>BHP-13 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>BHP-14 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>Vernacular Buildings</p> <p>BHP-15 It is Council policy to encourage the protection, retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular heritage of Offaly.</p> <p>BHP-16 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>BHP-17 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>BHP-18 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>BHP-19 It is Council policy to communicate and work with owners of thatch buildings regarding the availability of conservation grants and funding.</p> <p>BHP-20 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>BHP-21 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. <p>Industrial Heritage</p> <p>BHP-22 It is Council policy to protect the industrial heritage of Offaly, including mills, historic industrial buildings, canals and historic bridges.</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<p>BHP-23 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>BHP-24 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>BHP-25 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>BHP-26 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>BHP-27 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>BHP-28 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>BHP-29 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>BHP-30 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>BHP-31 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>Protected Species</p> <p>BHP-32 It is Council policy to protect habitats and species when considering proposed works to buildings and structures which are likely to impact on protected ecological sites and protected species.</p> <p>Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>BHP-33 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>BHP-34 It is Council policy to seek to promote awareness of and access to archaeological sites in the county where appropriate.</p> <p>BHP-35 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>BHP-36 It is Council policy to facilitate the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the county.</p> <p>BHP-37 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>BHP-38 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>BHP-39 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>BHP-40 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>Monastic Sites</p> <p>BHP-41 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> <p>BHP-42 It is Council policy to investigate the potential of Durrow Demesne as a public amenity and tourism asset.</p> <p>BHP-43 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>BHP-44 It is Council policy to preserve, protect and, where necessary, enhance mass rocks and holy wells in the County.</p> <p>Historic Military Fortifications and Castle Sites</p> <p>BHP-45 It is Council policy to support and promote the protection and appropriate management of historic military fortifications and castle sites in the county.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>BHP-46 It is Council policy to support the progression and delivery of projects that repair and conserve historic structures under the Historic Structures Fund, the Built Heritage Investment Scheme or other funding schemes as applicable.</p> <p>Community Archaeology</p> <p>BHP-47 It is the policy of the Council to support the concept of Community Archaeology and greater collaboration in promoting awareness, knowledge and understanding of</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>local archaeological resources in County Offaly.</p> <p>Built Heritage Objectives</p> <p>Protected Structures</p> <p>BHO-01 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>BHO-02 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>BHO-03 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>BHO-04 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>Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>BHO-05 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>BHO-06 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>				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Built Heritage 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-served and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, 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, access and visitor accommodation.</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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>The focus of most of the provisions in this Chapter is the protection and management of the County's built heritage - including archaeological and architectural heritage.</p>				

8.8.11 Chapter 11: Water Services & Environment

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Water Services Policies</p> <p>General</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>	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<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 potential impacts on groundwater quality.</p> <p>Water Supply</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>WSP-12 It is Council policy to monitor and regulate Group Water Schemes in accordance with national policy and regulations.</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>WSP-20 It is Council policy to have regard to the policies and objectives contained in Irish Water's National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan.</p> <p>WSP-21 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not normally be permitted.</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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>Water Services Objectives</p> <p>General</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

<p>benefit from this project to County Offaly, in particular with respect to economic development potential and security of supply.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 for protection remaining with the householder.</p> <p>Waste Water</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>Environment Policies</p> <p>Water Quality</p> <p>ENVP-01 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.</p> <p>ENVP-02 It is Council policy to manage, protect and enhance surface water and ground water quality to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>ENVP-03 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.</p> <p>ENVP-04 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.</p> <p>ENVP-05 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.</p> <p>ENVP-06 It is Council policy to promote and comply with the environmental standards and objectives established for:</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>ENVP-07 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.</p> <p>ENVP-08 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.</p> <p>ENVP-09 It is Council policy to facilitate the provision of adequate waste recovery and disposal facilities for the county.</p> <p>ENVP-10 It is Council policy to 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>ENVP-11 It is Council policy to ensure that all waste disposal shall be undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency and relevant Waste Management Legislation.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Radon</p> <p>ENVP-15 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>Major Accidents Directive – Seveso III</p> <p>ENVP-16 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</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

<p>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>Air Quality</p> <p>ENVP-17 It is Council policy to manage air quality in accordance with relevant legislation and policy.</p> <p>ENVP-18 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>ENVP-19 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>Noise</p> <p>ENVP-20 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>ENVP-21 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>ENVP-22 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> <p>Light Pollution</p> <p>ENVP-23 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>Human Health</p> <p>ENVP-24 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>Hazardous Waste</p> <p>ENVP-25 It is Council policy to ensure that hazardous waste is addressed through an integrated approach of prevention, collection, and recycling and encourage the development of industry-led producer responsibility schemes for key waste streams.</p> <p>Environment Objectives</p> <p>Water Quality</p> <p>ENVO-01 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.</p> <p>ENVO-02 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'.</p> <p>ENVO-03 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.</p> <p>ENVO-04 It is an objective of the Council to comply with the Blue Dot Catchments Programme.</p> <p>Waste Management</p> <p>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>ENVO-06 It is an objective of the Council to use statutory powers to prohibit the illegal deposit and disposal and collection of waste materials, refuse and litter, and to authorise and regulate, waste disposal within the county in an environmentally sustainable manner.</p> <p>ENVO-07 It is an objective of the Council to implement the legislative provisions in relation to historic landfill sites in the county and to undertake risk assessments where required and any subsequent remedial measures where necessary.</p> <p>ENVO-08 It is an objective of the Council to promote the inclusion of adequate and easily accessible storage space that supports the separate collection of dry recyclables and food, as appropriate, within developments.</p> <p>Air Quality</p> <p>ENVO-09 It is an objective of the Council to reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for the county.</p> <p>ENVO-10 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>ENVO-11 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>ENVO-12 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>Light Pollution ENVO-13 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>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Water Services & Environment 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other higher-level planning and sectoral 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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>Provisions relating to water resources and services would, by protecting water resources, appropriately treating waste water and providing safe drinking 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>Policy WSP-18 provides for proposed waste water treatment systems for development in unserviced areas to comply with the relevant EPA Codes of Practice while Objective WSO-07 supports the servicing of small towns and villages through the serviced sites initiative to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside.</p> <p>The focus of most of the provisions in this Chapter is the protection and management of the County's environment, including through the provision of adequate and appropriate water services infrastructure.</p>				

8.8.12 Chapter 12: Land Use Zoning Objectives

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Land Use Zoning Objective – Strategic Residential Reserve LUZO-05 Provide lands for development at some time in the future but it will not be considered for development purposes during the current plan period.Land Use Zoning Objective – Enterprise and Employment LUZO-06 Provide for enterprise and employment development. Land Use Zoning Objective – Industrial and Warehousing LUZO-07 Provide for industrial and warehousing development in suitable and accessible locations. Land Use Zoning Objective – Business/Technology Park LUZO-08 Provide for technology based light industry, research and development and compatible offices in a high quality built and landscaped environment. Land Use Zoning Objective – Community Services/Facilities LUZO-09 Provide necessary community, social, health, public administration and educational services and facilities. Land Use Zoning Objective – Open Space, Amenity and Recreation LUZO-10 Protect and improve the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity value of public open space, amenity and recreation. Land Use Zoning Objective – Neighbourhood Centre LUZO-11 Provide neighbourhood centre facilities. Land Use Zoning Objective – Established/Non-Conforming uses LUZO-12 Generally support reasonable extensions and improvements to premises that accommodate established/non-conforming uses, where it is considered by the Planning Authority that the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and would be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	

<p>Land Use Zoning Objective – Ancillary Uses LUZO-13 Ensure that developments ancillary to the parent use of a site are considered on their merits irrespective of what category the ancillary development is listed under in the zoning matrix of this County Development Plan. Land Use Zoning Objective – Constrained Land Uses LUZO-14 Facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as ‘Constrained Land Use’ on Settlement Plan zoning maps. Land Use Zoning Objective – Strategic Employment Zones (particular to Tullamore) LUZO-15 Support the development of Strategic Employment Zones in Tullamore at: (a) Ardan Road to cater for the expansion of Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore and its continued development as a Teaching/University Hospital, and/or a Med or Bio Technology Park with linkages to the Hospital; and (b) Ballyduff for a Business and Technology Park. LUZO-16 Planning applications for Strategic Employment Zones shall be brought forward in the context of a masterplan for the subject lands as detailed in Development Management Standard 72. The design and siting of individual units within Strategic Employment Zones shall comply with the principles of any Design Statement prepared as part of the masterplan for the overall site. Land Use Zoning Objective – Strategic Community Services/Facilities (particular to Tullamore) LUZO-17 To provide lands for development at some time in the future to serve the needs of ‘strategic residential reserve’ development but will not be considered for development purposes during the current plan period.</p>				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan’s Land Use Zoning Objectives 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 8.7 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Where alternatives in relation to the application of land use zoning were identified by the Planning Team as being available (for Tullamore, Birr, Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Ferbane, Kilcormac, Ballinagar, Ballycumber, Belmont, Cloghan, Clonbullogue, Coolderry, Geashill, Killeigh, Kinnitty, Moneygall, Mucklagh, Pollagh/ Lemanaghan, Rhode, Riverstown, Shannonbridge, Shinrone and Walsh Island), these were assessed by the SEA process and informed the selection of the Plan (see Sections 6 and 7 of this report).</p> <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County’s towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County’s towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County’s sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions (including those within the “Settlement Plans”) and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc.</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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>LUZO-14 “Facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as ‘Constrained Land Use’ on Settlement Plan zoning maps”, along with other flood risk management related provisions from other Plan Chapters (including Chapter 3 and 13) integrates a key recommendation of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment into the Plan.</p>				

8.8.13 Chapter 13: Development Management Standards

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>The general development management principles and standards that will be applied by the Council to ensure that future development is in accordance with the policies and objectives set out elsewhere in this County Development Plan. Topics covered by this Chapter include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Principles • Preplanning Consultations • Enforcement • Failure to Comply with Previous Permissions • Non-Conforming Uses/Established Uses • Development Contributions • Bonds 	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments Required for Certain Projects (including Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment) • Residential (Towns and Villages) • Residential (Sraids) • Residential (Open Countryside) • Other Residential Development (Rural and Urban) • Commercial Developments • Employment Uses • Community Infrastructure, Facilities and Services • Tourism and Recreation • Signage • Built Heritage • Transport and Infrastructure • Peatland Development • Energy and Communications • Extractive Industries • Waste Management • Agricultural Development • Seveso Sites 				
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of this Chapter 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 8.7 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 County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The standards in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc.</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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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>Chapter 13 integrates recommendations from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that has informed this SEA. Other environmental considerations have been integrated into various Development Management Standards, including those under the headings of Built Heritage, Peatland Development, Energy and Communications, Extractive Industries, Waste Management, Agricultural Development and Seveso Sites.</p>				

8.8.14 Settlement and Sráid Plans

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	Mitigated Conflicts	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
The Plan includes Settlement Plans for Tullamore, Birr, Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Fermoy, Kilmac, Ballinagar, Ballycumber, Belmont, Bracknagh, Cloghan, Clonbullogue, Cloneygowan, Coolderry, Geashill, Killeigh, Kinnitty, Moneygall, Mountbolus, Mucklagh, Pollagh/ Lemanaghan, Rahan, Rhode, Riverstown, Shannon Harbour, Shannonbridge, Shinrone and Walsh Island. For full detail on zonings and settlement provisions please refer to the main Plan document. The Plan also provides for 27 (no.) Sráids (the smallest type of settlement in the hierarchy).	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Settlement and Sráid Plans 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 8.7 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Environmental considerations were integrated into the zoning for the County's settlements 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 and Eastern and Midland RSES. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that avoids inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk. Various provisions have been inserted into the Plan which provide for flood risk management at project level. Also taken into account were environmental sensitivities relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water, as well as the overlay mapping of environmental sensitivities.</p> <p>Where alternatives in relation to the application of land use zoning were identified by the Planning Team as being available (for Tullamore, Birr, Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Fermoy, Kilmac, Ballinagar, Ballycumber, Belmont, Cloghan, Clonbullogue, Coolderry, Geashill, Killeigh, Kinnitty, Moneygall, Mucklagh, Pollagh/ Lemanaghan, Rhode, Riverstown, Shannonbridge, Shinrone and Walsh Island), these were assessed by the SEA process and informed the selection of the Plan (see Sections 6 and 7 of this report). Furthermore, consideration of Sráids was also provided as part of the consideration of alternatives by the SEA (Tier 3(ii)): Alternatives for consideration of Sráids in Rural Areas).</p> <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and focus on directing: compact, sustainable development within the existing envelopes of the County's towns and villages; and sustainable development elsewhere, including in rural areas. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the County will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the County's towns and villages to become more desirable places to live – so that they maintain populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the County's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions in this Chapter of the Plan would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the County, 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 SEA recommendations into the Plan, Offaly County Council is 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. 				

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 Council through the SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) processes. By integrating all related recommendations into the Plan, the Council 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 the:

- Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development;
- Considering alternatives for the Plan;
- Integration of environmental considerations into zoning provisions of the Plan; and
- Integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA provisions into the text of the Plan.

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

Far in advance of both the submission of the pre-Draft Plan to the Elected Members for approval and the placing of the Draft Plan on public display, Offaly County Council undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

The findings of this strategic work have been integrated into the Plan and will contribute towards both environmental protection and management and sustainable development within the County.

Strategic work undertaken by the Council includes background work in relation to Plan Strategies and other provisions for a variety of sectors including:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- Appropriate Assessment;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Record of Protected Structures;
- Core Strategy;
- Housing Strategy including a Housing Need Demand Assessment;
- Economic Development;
- Wind Energy Strategy;
- Climate Action; and
- Transport.

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, the Council considered a number of alternatives for the Plan.

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

9.4 Integration of environmental considerations into Zoning of the Plan

Environmental considerations were 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 and Eastern and Midland RSES.

The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that avoids inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk. Various provisions have been inserted into the Plan which provide for flood risk management at project level.

Also taken into account were environmental sensitivities relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water, as well as the overlay mapping of environmental sensitivities.

9.5 Integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA 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.

Table 9.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
All	Various	<p>Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan</p> <p>The following environmental assessments have been undertaken in parallel with the preparation of the Plan. An iterative process has been followed whereby each revisions of the Plan has been informed by the assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report and Natura Impact Report (NIR)</i> AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a plan or project on European Sites designated for habitats or species. AA is required by the EU Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish law through the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The screening report determined that the implementation of this County Development Plan was likely to have a significant effect on European Sites. Accordingly, a NIR was compiled. The findings of the AA are included in the NIR that accompanies the Plan. That report provides a clear understanding of the likely consequences of the Plan on European Sites. All AA recommendations have been integrated into the Plan. The emerging 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.⁸⁴ • <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</i> SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it, in this case the County Development Plan. SEA is required by the EU SEA Directive as transposed into Irish law through the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) as amended. The findings of the SEA are included in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanies the Plan. That report provides a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan. All SEA recommendations have been integrated into the Plan. • <i>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)</i> SFRA is an assessment of flood risk and includes mapped boundaries for Flood Risk Zones, taking into account factors including Catchment Flood Risk Management Plan data, site walkovers and flood risk indicators. SFRA is required 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. All SFRA recommendations have been integrated into the Plan. <p>In addition to the above assessments, an Ecosystems Services Approach was taken in the preparation of the Plan (see Chapter 2 Core Strategy sub-section 2.1.5).</p>	Integrated into Chapter 1 Introduction
All	Various	<p>Ecosystems Services</p> <p>In preparing this Plan and developing policies and objectives, the Council have followed these Ecosystem Services⁸⁵ Approach principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function (including in Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy). 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). 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>The Council will promote an Ecosystem Services Approach, following the above principles, in its decision-making processes, including those relating to the</p>	Integrated into Chapter 2 Core Strategy

⁸⁴ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- no alternative solution available,
- imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the Plan to proceed; and
- adequate compensatory measures in place.

⁸⁵ 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.

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		preparation of statutory land use plans. In recognition of the need to manage natural capital ⁸⁶ , 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.	
All	Various	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.	Integrated into Chapter 1 Introduction
All	Various	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: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection <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. Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection <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. 	Integrated into Chapter 8.6.4 Corridor & Route Selection Process
All	Various	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: <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 Details of appropriate mitigation measures for lighting specifically designed to minimise impacts to biodiversity, including bats.	Integrated into Chapter 11.5.2 Waste Management

⁸⁶ Renewable and non-renewable resources (for example, plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals).

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
All	Various	<p>DMS-107 Undergrounding of Services 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. 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. 	DMO-107
All	Various	<p>Reasonable Alternatives and Existing Infrastructural Assets 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.</p>	CAEP-23
All	Various	<p>Environmental considerations and Limitations in the types of uses 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>	Chapter 12.1
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 	<p>Designated and Non-Designated Sites It is Council policy to protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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). 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 	BLP-01 BLP-02 BLP-03 BLP-04 BLP-05 BLP-06 BLP-07 BLO-02 BLO-03 BLO-04 BLO-05 BLO-06

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
	<p>and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. 	<p>and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</p> <p>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> <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; Ferbane Bog; Mongan Bog; 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</p>	<p></p> <p>BLP-14 BLP-15 BLP-16 BLP-17 BLP-18 BLO-10 BLO-11</p> <p>BLP-19 BLP-20 BLP-21 BLP-22 BLP-23 BLO-12 BLO-13</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<p>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>BLP-24 BLP-25 BLP-26 BLO-12 BLO-14 BLO-15 BLO-16 BLO-17 BLO-18</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 network as an essential part of the design process.</p>	<p>BLO-19</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>BLP-32</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>BLP-34 BLO-20 BLO-21</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<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 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. 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 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>	<p>ENVP-23 ENVO-13</p> <p>TRP-09</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 see measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Human Health 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 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 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 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. 	<p>ENVP-24</p> <p>ENVP-16</p> <p>ENVP-15</p> <p>CAEP-38</p>
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a 	<p>Also see measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation 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>Integrated into Chapter 11.5.3 Waste Management</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
	<p>result of development on contaminated lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<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>	<p>BLP-09 BLP-10 BLP-11 BLP-12 BLP-13 BLO-07 BLO-08 BLO-09</p>
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 see measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>Water Quality/Status</p> <p>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.</p> <p>It is Council policy to manage, protect and enhance surface water and ground water quality to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote and comply with the environmental standards and objectives established for:</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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'.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>ENVP-01 ENVP-02 ENVP-03 ENVP-04 ENVP-05 ENVP-06 ENVP-07 ENVP-08 ENVO-01 ENVO-02 ENVO-03 ENVO-04 CAEP-30 REDP-05</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<p>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.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to comply with the Blue Dot Catchments Programme.</p> <p>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.</p>	
		<p>Sustainable urban drainage systems and Surface Water</p> <p>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.</p>	CAEP-67
		<p>Flood Risk Management</p> <p>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 PI2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>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 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</p>	<p>CAEP-53 CAEP-54 CAEP-55 CAEP-56 CAEP-57 CAEP-58 CAEP-59 CAEP-60 CAEP-61 CAEP-62 CAEP-63 CAEO-11 CAEO-12 LUZO-14 Section 12.6.1 Constrained Land Uses DM Section 13.8.3 Flood Risk Assessment DMO-106 Flood Risk Assessments</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<p>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><i>12.6.1 Constrained Land Uses</i></p> <p>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</p> <p>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. <p>DMO-106 Flood Risk Assessments</p>	
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 	<p>Also refer to the overall approach to land use zoning and sustainability provided by the Plan. Various other Plan provisions including those under headings such as Peatlands, Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility and Integrated Transport and Landuse Planning, Reasonable Alternatives & Existing Infrastructural Assets, Renewable Energy and Low Carbon District Heating.</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>ENVP-17 ENVP-18 ENVP-19 ENVO-09 ENVO-10 ENVO-11 ENVO-12</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
	<p>emissions, including those from cars, and air quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Noise 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. 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. 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> <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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>	<p>ENVP-20 ENVP-21 ENVP-22</p> <p>CAEP-07 CAEP-08 CAEP-09 CAEP-10 CAEP-11 CAEP-12 CAEP-13 CAEP-14 CAEP-15 CAEO-01 CAEO-02</p> <p>CAEP-21 CAEP-22</p> <p>CAEP-64</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
	<p>and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>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 potential impacts on groundwater quality.</p> <p>Water Supply</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>WSP-12 It is Council policy to monitor and regulate Group Water Schemes in accordance with national policy and regulations.</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>WSP-20 It is Council policy to have regard to the policies and objectives contained in Irish Water's National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan.</p> <p>WSP-21 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not normally be permitted.</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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</p>	<p>WSP-20 WSP-21 WSP-22 WSP-23 WSP-24 WSP-25 WSO-02 WSO-03 WSO-04 WSO-05 WSO-06 WSO-07 WSO-08 WSO-09</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
	inorganic particulate matter.	<p>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 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 	Integrated into Chapter 11.5.2 Waste Management ENVP-12 ENVP-13 ENVP-14 ENVO-05

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<p>shall be roofed to exclude rainwater;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the need arise.</p>	DMS-82 Tourist Facilities
Cultural Heritage	Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities.	<p>Protected Structures 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</p>	BHP-01 BHP-02 BHP-03 BHP-04 BHP-05 BHP-06 BHP-07 BHP-08 BHP-09 BHP-10 BHP-11 BHO-01 BHO-02

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<p>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>BHP-12 BHP-13 BHP-14 BHO-03</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. <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>BHP-15 BHP-16 BHP-17 BHP-18 BHP-19 BHP-20 BHP-21 BHO-04</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</p>	<p>BHP-22 BHP-23 BHP-24 BHP-25 BHP-26 BHP-27</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		towpaths, applicants must demonstrate compliance with Policy SSP-27 as towpaths are located within Natural Heritage Areas and Areas of High Amenity.	
		<p>Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes 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</p>	BHP-28 BHP-29 BHP-30
		<p>Houses, Gardens and Demesnes. Houses, Gardens and Demesnes. 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>	BHP-31
		<p>Archaeological Heritage 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>	BHP-33 BHP-34 BHP-35 BHP-36 BHP-37 BHP-38 BHP-39 BHP-40 BHO-05
		<p>Monastic Sites 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> <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 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</p>	BHP-41 BHP-42 BHP-43 BHP-44 BHO-06

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		designating the Monastic Sites at Clonmacnoise and Durrow as prospective UNESCO World Heritage Sites.	
Landscape	Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape.	<p>Wind Farms 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 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 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. 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. It is Council policy to ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses. 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. 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. Landscape It is an objective of the Council to prepare a County Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and following the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment. 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. 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 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. 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 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</p>	<p>CAEP-38</p> <p>REDP-19</p> <p>BLP-38 BLP-39 BLP-40 BLP-41 BLP-42 BLO-23 BLO-24 BLO-25</p> <p>BLP-43 BLO-26</p> <p>BLP-35 BLP-36 BLP-37 BLO-22</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Recommendation integrated into the Plan included within	Plan Reference
		<p>(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 Development Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), the measures identified in that RSES SEA 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 programmes.

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 and the Eastern and Midland RSES, is subject to its own SEA (and associated monitoring) requirements. At lower tiers of the hierarchy, Local Area Plans and individual projects will be subject to their own monitoring requirements as relevant.

In implementing the Monitoring Programme the Council 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 Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁸⁸ 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.

⁸⁸ 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. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 10.1. The Council is 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 • 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 • SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. • Status of water quality in the County's water bodies • Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape” 	<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, the Biodiversity Plan for Offaly as incorporated into the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21 • 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 Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years). • Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years) • Internal monitoring of preparation of local land use plans • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). • Consultations with the NPWS (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4) 	<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 DCHG (and the DHPLG for water) 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 water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHPLG Water Section, the Regional Assembly, the EPA Catchment Unit and, as relevant, Irish Water 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.
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 Chapter 5 “Economic Development Strategy” • Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan • Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures • Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<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 Chapter 5 “Economic Development Strategy” • No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan • Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures. • Implementation of Green Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives • Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA • CSO data • Internal monitoring of preparation of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where planning applications in key growth towns are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the waste water treatment plant or failure of the waste water treatment plant to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will contribute towards a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Irish Water to achieve the necessary capacity. • Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHPLG, DCCAE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield • Volume of contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill • Number of AA determinations and environmental assessments undertaken to support applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. • Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill as per the NPF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) 	<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 Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

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 • Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 second cycle of the River Basin Management Plan by 2021 (and subsequent iterations as relevant) • 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"> • EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHPLG Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Irish Water 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 in key growth towns are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the Waste water treatment Plant or failure of the plant to meet Emission Limit Values, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly will coordinate a response between the relevant local authority, EPA and Irish Water to achieve the necessary capacity. • The Council will engage, as relevant, with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and the OPW with respect to planning applications for development in areas of elevated flood risk.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed delivery of Irish Water infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Irish Water 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 • Proportion of population within who report regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To map brownfield and infill land parcels across the County. • 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 • Increased budget spends on water and waste water infrastructure • By 2020 all citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) • CSO data • Consultations with Irish Water (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4) • Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in conjunction with Local Authorities • Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment • Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where planning applications in key growth towns are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the waste water treatment plant or failure of the waste water treatment plant to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will coordinate a response between the Regional Assembly, EPA and Irish Water to achieve the necessary capacity. • Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHPLG and NTA to develop a tailored response.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

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 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74% • NO_x, SO_x, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels. • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NO_x and particulate matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO data • Data from the National Travel Survey • EPA Air Quality Monitoring • Consultations with Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, Transport Trends and Department of Communication Climate Action and Environment (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHPLG, DCCAE 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 as provided for by Plan provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy" • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels • Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures climate reduction targets as provided for by Plan provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy" • Increase in the proportion of people resident in the County reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures • Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the County using private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels • Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 • 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 2020 • Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors • 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"> • EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting • Climate Action Regional Office • Consultations with Department of Communication Climate Action and Environment (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4) • CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and develop solutions • Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHPLG and NTA to develop a tailored response

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

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 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 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 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"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) Consultation with Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor pressure is causing negative effects on key tourist features, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation
Landscape	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of 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"> 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 To seek to align with the National Landscape Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council 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	Summary of lower level objectives, actions 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 an 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. 	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. 	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. 	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. 	<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). 	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

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> 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. 	<p>their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and - preventing further such pollution. 	<p>Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme is designed to prevent pollution of surface waters and ground water from agricultural sources and to protect and improve water quality. Ireland's third NAP came into operation in 2014. Each Member State's NAP must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limit on the amount of livestock manure applied to the land each year set periods when land spreading is prohibited due to risk set capacity levels for the storage of livestock manure 	<p>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>EU Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive (2008/1/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this Directive is to achieve integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from the activities listed in Annex I. It lays down measures designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions in the air, water and land from the abovementioned activities, including measures concerning waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole, without prejudice to Directive 85/337/EEC and other relevant Community provisions. 	<p>The IPPC Directive is based on several principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an integrated approach best available techniques, flexibility; and public participation 	<p>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>EU Plant Protection (products) Directive 2009/127/EC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Directive aims at reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment by introducing different targets, tools and measures such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or National Action Plans (NAPs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework 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. 	<p>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>EU Renewables Directive (2009/28/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Renewable Energy Directive establishes an overall policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources in the EU. It requires the EU to fulfil at least 20% of its total energy needs with renewables by 2020 – to be achieved through the attainment of individual national targets. All EU countries must also ensure that at least 10% of their transport fuels come from renewable sources by 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Directive promotes cooperation amongst EU countries (and with countries outside the EU) to help them meet their renewable energy targets. The Directive specifies national renewable energy targets for each country, taking into account its starting point and overall potential for renewables. EU countries set out how they plan to meet these targets and the general course of their renewable energy policy in national renewable energy action plans. Progress towards national targets is measured every two years when EU countries publish national renewable energy progress reports. 	<p>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>Indirect Land Use Change Directive (2012/0288(COD))</p>	<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. 	<p>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>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (2014/94/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Directive establishes a common framework of measures for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in the Union in order to minimise dependence on oil and to mitigate the environmental impact of transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Directive sets out minimum requirements for the building-up of alternative fuels infrastructure, including recharging points for electric vehicles and refuelling points for natural gas (LNG and CNG) and hydrogen, to be implemented by means of Member States' national policy frameworks, as well as common technical specifications for such recharging and refuelling points, and user information requirements. 	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 (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. 	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 Seveso Directive (2012/18/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>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. 	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 Biodiversity Strategy to 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to halt or reverse biodiversity loss and speed up the EU's transition towards a resource efficient and green economy. Halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines six targets and twenty actions to aid European Union in halting the loss to biodiversity and eco-system services. The six targets cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity Maintaining, enhancing and protecting for ecosystems, and green infrastructure Ensuring sustainable agriculture, and forestry Sustainable management of fish stocks Reducing invasive alien species Addressing the global need to contribute towards averting global biodiversity loss 	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	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. 	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	The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	<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 compliment the 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
(ECCP II), Paris climate conference (COP21) 2015 (Paris Agreement)	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>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 2020 Climate and Energy Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Binding legislation which aims to ensure the European Union meets its climate and energy targets for 2020. Aims to achieve a 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels. Aims to raise the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20%. Achieve a 20% improvement in the EU's energy efficiency. 	<p>Four pieces of complimentary legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) to include a cap on emission allowances in addition to existing system of national caps. Member States have agreed national targets for non-EU ETS emissions from countries outside the EU. Meet the national renewable energy targets of 16% for Ireland by 2020. Preparing a legal framework for technologies in carbon capture and storage. 	<p>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 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 2030 Framework for climate and energy, including EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period between 2020 and 2030 that has been agreed by European countries. Targets include a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels, at least a 27% share of renewable energy consumption and at least 27% energy savings compared with the business-as-usual scenario. 	<p>To meet the targets, the European Commission has proposed the following policies for 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reformed EU emissions trading scheme (ETS). New indicators for the competitiveness and security of the energy system, such as price differences with major trading partners, diversification of supply, and interconnection capacity between EU countries. First ideas for a new governance system based on national plans for competitive, secure, and sustainable energy. These plans will follow a common EU approach. They will ensure stronger investor certainty, greater transparency, enhanced policy coherence and improved coordination across the EU. 	<p>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>
The Clean Air for Europe Directive (2008/50/EC) (EU Air Framework Directive) Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CAFE Directive merges existing legislation into a single directive (except for the fourth daughter directive). Sets new air quality objectives for PM_{2.5} (fine particles) including the limit value and exposure related objectives. Accounts for the possibility to discount natural sources of pollution when assessing compliance against limit values. Allows the possibility for time extensions of three years (PM₁₀) or up to five years (NO₂, benzene) for complying with limit values, based on conditions and the assessment by the European Commission. The Fourth Daughter Directive lists pollutants, target values and monitoring requirements for the following: arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets objectives for ambient air quality designed to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole. Aims to assess the ambient air quality in Member States on the basis of common methods and criteria. Obtains information on ambient air quality in order to help combat air pollution and nuisance and to monitor long-term trends and improvements resulting from national and community measures. Ensures that such information on ambient air quality is made available to the public. Aims to maintain air quality where it is good and improving it in other cases. Aims to promote increased cooperation between the Member States in reducing air pollution. 	<p>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>
Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:</p> <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. <p>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.</p>	<p>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>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
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. 	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. 	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. 	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. 	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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban waste water entering collecting systems shall before discharge, be subject to secondary treatment. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<p>discharge of waste water from certain industrial sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective of the Directive is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of waste water discharges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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>Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC, Directive 2009/31/EC and Directive 2013/30/EU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a framework of environmental liability based on the 'polluter-pays' principle, to prevent and remedy environmental damage. 	<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. 	<p>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>European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta 1992)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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>Convention of the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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>Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005)</p>	<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. 	<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 	<p>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</p>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>use have human development and quality of life as their goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	environmental protection and management.
European Landscape Convention 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques, together with the practices followed in town and country planning, transport, networks, tourism and recreation, and at a more general level, changes in the world economy, have in many cases accelerated the transformation of landscapes. The Convention expresses a concern to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment. It aims to respond to the public's wish to enjoy high quality landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote protection, management and planning of landscapes. Organise European co-operation on landscape issues. 	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)	<p>It identifies three key objectives:</p> <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. 	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)	<p>The convention has three main aims:</p> <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 	<p>The Parties under the convention recognise the intrinsic value of nature, which needs to be preserved and passed to future generations, they also:</p> <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. 	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)	<p>The overall goals of the project are twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase national capacity to co-ordinate ministerial views, participate in the UNFCCC process, and negotiate positions within the timeframe of the Bali Action Plan; and To assess investment and financial flows to address climate change for up to three key sectors and/or economic activities. 	<p>The Bali Action Plan is centred on four main building Blocks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigation adaptation technology financing 	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.
Cancun Agreements (2010)	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation Transparency of actions Technology Finance Adaptation 	<p>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.</p>	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forests Capacity building 		
Doha Climate Gateway (2012)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 18 meeting in Doha in 2012 which paved the way for a new agreement in Paris in 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015 (to come into effect in 2020); Complete the work under Bali Action Plan and to focus on new completing new targets; Strengthen the aim to cut greenhouse gases and help vulnerable countries to adapt; Amend Kyoto Protocol to include a new commitment period for cutting down the greenhouse gases emissions; and Provide the financial and technology support and new institutions to allow clean energy investment and sustainable growth in developing countries. 	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 Common Agricultural Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve agricultural productivity, so that consumers have a stable supply of affordable food; and To ensure that EU farmers can make a reasonable living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring viable food production that will contribute to feeding the world's population, which is expected to rise considerably in the future; Climate change and sustainable management of natural resources; Looking after the countryside across the EU and keeping the rural economy alive. 	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 REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to improve the protection of human health and the environment through the better and earlier identification of the intrinsic properties of chemical substances. 	<p>The aims are achieved by applying REACH, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation; and Restriction of chemicals. <p>REACH also aims to enhance innovation and competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry.</p>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 To target additional POPs 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 	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.
Ramsar Convention	The Convention's mission is "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".	<p>Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to:</p> <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. 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
European 2020 Strategy for Growth	<p>Europe 2020 sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century and puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; • Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy; • Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion. 	<p>In order to reach these priorities, the Commission proposes five quantitative targets to fulfil by 2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed; 2. 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D; 3. the "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right); 4. the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree; 5. 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty. 	<p>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 Level			
Ireland 2040 - Our Plan, the National Planning Framework, (replacing the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020) and the National Development Plan (2018-2027)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Planning Framework is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for people, and to protect and enhance the environment - from villages to cities, and everything around and in between. • The National Development Plan sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades, to cater for an expected population increase of over 1 million people. 	<p>National Strategic Outcomes as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. Sustainable Mobility 5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills 6. High-Quality International Connectivity 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage 8. Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services 	<p>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>
Planning, Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040 [in preparation]	<p>The PLUTO will take account of forecasted future economic and demographic scenarios, affordability considerations and relevant Government policies and will:</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>In preparation</p>	<p>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>
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core principal objectives of this Act are to amend the Planning Acts of 2000 – 2009 with specific regard given to supporting economic renewal and sustainable development. 	<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. 	<p>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 Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). 	<p>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>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011, as amended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	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 (S.I. No. 366 of 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	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 (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 31 of 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These Regulations, which give effect to Ireland's 3rd Nitrates Action Programme, provide statutory support for good agricultural practice to protect waters against pollution from agricultural sources 	<p>The Regulations include measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periods when land application of fertilisers is prohibited Limits on the land application of fertilisers Storage requirements for livestock manure; and Monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures in terms of agricultural practice and impact on water quality. 	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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:</p> <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, 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	
<p>The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan (2018 – 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Implementation Plan 2018 - 2020 is in direct response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a whole-of-government approach to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Plan provides a 'SDG Matrix' which identifies the responsible Government Departments for each of the 169 targets. It also includes a 'SDG Policy Map' indicating the relevant national policies for each of the targets. 	<p>The Plan identifies four strategic priorities to guide implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness: raise public awareness of the SDGs; Participation: provide stakeholders opportunities to engage and contribute to follow-up and review processes, and further develop national implementation of the Goals; Support: encourage and support efforts of communities and organisations to contribute towards meeting the SDGs, and foster public participation; and Policy alignment: develop alignment of national policy with the SDGs and identify opportunities for policy coherence. 	<p>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>Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan (2016-2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> €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. 	<p>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>European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-Fisheries) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 290 of 2013)</p>	<p>These regulations have been drafted to implement the responsibilities of the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine in relation to sea fisheries in Natura 2000 sites, in accordance with the Habitats and Birds Directives as transposed by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011).</p>	<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. 	<p>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>Ireland's National Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010 (Irish Government submission to the European Commission)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) sets out the Government's strategic approach and concrete measures to deliver on Ireland's 16% target under Directive 2009/28/EC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NREAP sets out the Member State's national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources to be consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020, and demonstrates how the Member State will meet its overall national target established under the Directive. 	<p>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>Strategy for Renewable Energy (2012-2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government's overarching strategic objective is to make renewable energy an increasingly significant component of Ireland's energy supply by 2020, so that at a minimum it will achieve its legally binding 2020 target in the most cost-efficient manner for consumers. Of critical importance is the role which the renewable energy sector plays in job creation and economic activity as part of the Government's action plan for jobs. 	<p>This document sets out five strategic goals, reflecting the key dimensions of the renewable energy challenge to 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing on and offshore wind, Building a sustainable bioenergy sector, Fostering R&D in renewables such as wave & tidal, Growing sustainable transport; and Building out robust and efficient networks. 	<p>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>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
National Climate Mitigation Plan 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the deep decarbonisation required in Ireland by mid-century in line with the Government's policy objectives. 	<p>The National Mitigation Plan focuses on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Action Policy Framework Decarbonising Electricity Generation Decarbonising the Built Environment Decarbonising Transport An Approach to Carbon Neutrality for Agriculture, Forest and Land Use Sectors 	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 Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Policy Position provides a high-level policy direction for the adoption and implementation by Government of plans to enable the State to move to a low carbon economy by 2050. Statutory authority for the plans is set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. 	<p>National climate policy in Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises the threat of climate change for humanity; Anticipates and supports mobilisation of a comprehensive international response to climate change, and global transition to a low-carbon future; Recognises the challenges and opportunities of the broad transition agenda for society; and Aims, as a fundamental national objective, to achieve transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. 	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 [in preparation]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clean Air Strategy will provide 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 will provide 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 will consider 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 will be a strong theme of the Strategy. 	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.
EirGrid's Grid25 Strategy and associated Grid25 Implementation Programme 2017-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EirGrid's mission is to develop, maintain and operate a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient transmission system for Ireland; <i>"Our vision is of a grid developed to match future needs, so it can safely and reliably carry power all over the country to the major towns and cities and onwards to every home, farm and business where the electricity is consumed and so it can meet the needs of consumers and generators in a sustainable way."</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to uprate the electricity transmission grid by 2025, continues to be implemented so as to increase the capacity of the grid, to satisfy future demand, and to help Ireland meet its target of 40 per cent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. 	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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	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 [in preparation]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>The key objectives of the plan 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 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, develop and assess options to help meet potential shortfalls in water supplies Assess the water resources available at a national level including lakes, rivers and groundwater 	
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development (2014-2020)	<p>Vision: <i>“Aquaculture in RC is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable, with a developed infrastructure, strong human potentials and an organized market. The consumption of aquaculture products is equal or above EU average, while the technological development of the sector is among the best in the EU.”</i></p>	<p>General development and growth objectives of marine and freshwater aquaculture (2014 – 2020):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the social, business and administrative environment for aquaculture development Increase in the total production to 24,050 tonnes while adhering to the principles of economic, social and ecological sustainability Improvement of the perception and increase in the national consumption of National products 	<p>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>
Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>This Strategy therefore addresses issues including:</p> <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. 	<p>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>
Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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 Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 and National Landscape Character Assessment (pending preparation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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> 	<p>The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to:</p> <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. 	<p>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 Hazardous Waste Management Plan (EPA) 2014-2020	<p>This Plan sets out the priorities to be pursued over the next six years and beyond to improve the management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous plan and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous plan was published. Section 26 of the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended, sets out the overarching objectives for the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan. In this context, the following objectives are</p>	<p>The revised Plan makes 27 recommendations under the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention Collection Self-sufficiency Regulation Legacy issues North-south cooperation Guidance and awareness 	<p>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>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<p>included as priorities for the revised Plan period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent and reduce the generation of hazardous waste by industry and society generally; • To maximise the collection of hazardous waste with a view to reducing the environmental and health impacts of any unregulated waste; • To strive for increased self-sufficiency in the management of hazardous waste and to minimise hazardous waste export; • To minimise the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of hazardous waste generation and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation 	
<p>Ministerial Guidelines such as Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>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>HSE Healthy Ireland Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision is: <i>“A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility.”</i> 	<p>These four goals are interlinked, interdependent and mutually supportive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life • Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities • Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing • Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland 	<p>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>Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012</p>	<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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out the challenges facing us and how we might address them in making sure that quality of life and general wellbeing can be improved and sustained in the decades to come. 	<p>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>Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines a policy for how a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. • Sets out five key goals: <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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others lower level aims include: <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 	<p>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>Investing in our Future: A Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT) – Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>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>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the extent within the Authority' remit, support for the operation of the existing rail network within the GDA. 	
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 	<p>The underpinning Strategic Goals are:</p> <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 	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) 2018 and associated regional, local and sectoral adaptation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	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.
Governments White Paper 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future' (2015 – 2030)	The White Paper sets out a vision and a framework to guide Irish energy policy between now and 2030. A complete energy policy update informed by the vision to transform Ireland into a low carbon society and economy by 2050.	<p>2030 will represent a significant milestone, meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced GHG emissions from the energy sector by between 80% and 95% Ensuring that secure supplies of competitive and affordable energy remain available to citizens and businesses. 	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 (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out the Member State's national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources to be consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020, and demonstrates how the Member State will meet its overall national target established under the Directive. 	Including Ireland's 16% target of gross final consumption to come from renewables by 2020.	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 Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland (2009 – 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the second National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan reviews the original 90 actions outlined in the first Plan and updates/renews/removes them as appropriate. 	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna. 	<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 	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.
Actions for Biodiversity (2017-2021) Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out strategic objectives, targets and actions to conserve and restore Ireland's biodiversity and to prevent and reduce the loss of biodiversity in Ireland and globally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To mainstream biodiversity in the decision-making process across all sectors. To substantially strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity. To increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystems services. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside. 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment. To expand and improve on the management of protected areas and legally protected species. To substantially strengthen the effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services. 	
National Broadband Plan (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. 	<p>The Plan sets out:</p> <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. 	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 Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (SI 722 of 2003)</p> <p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (SI 350 of 2014)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface waters) Regulations of 2009 (SI 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. 	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 Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations of 2010 (SI 9 of 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transpose the requirements of the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC into Irish Legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for groundwater bodies of groundwater against pollution and deterioration in quality. Sets groundwater quality standards. Outlines threshold values for the classification and protection of groundwater. 	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 Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	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 Services Act 2007</p> <p>Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012</p> <p>Water Services Act (No. 2) 2013</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. Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of 	<p>Key strategic objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Irish Water 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 	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

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<p>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>locations where services need to be enhanced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Promoting water conservation through Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan, the Rural Water Programme and other measures. Monitoring the on-going implementation of septic tanks inspection regime and the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems. Ensuring a fair funding model to deliver water services. Overseeing the establishment of an economic regulation function under the CER. 	<p>environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan 2015 and associated Proposed Capital Investment Plan (2014-2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Six strategic objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet Customer Expectations. Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water Supply. Provide Effective Management of Waste water. Protect and Enhance the Environment. Support Social and Economic Growth. Invest in the Future. 	<p>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>Raised Bog SAC Management Plan and Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to meet nature conservation obligations while having regard to national and local economic, social and cultural needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the implications of management choices for water levels, quantity and quality are fully explored, understood and factored into policy making and land use planning. Review the current raised bog NHA network in terms of its contribution to the national conservation objective for raised bog habitats and determine the most suitable sites to replace the losses of active raised bog habitat and high bog areas within the SAC network and to enhance the national network of NHAs. 	<p>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>Food Harvest 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Harvest 2020 is a roadmap for the Irish food industry, as it seeks to innovate and expand in response to increased global demand for quality foods. It sets out a vision for the potential growth in agricultural output after the removal of milk quotas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks for the improvement of all agricultural sectors at all levels in terms of sustainability, environmental consideration and marketing development. 	<p>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>Agri-vision 2015 Action Plan</p>	<p>Outlines the vision for agricultural industry to improve competitiveness and response to market demand while respecting and enhancing the environment</p>	<p>not applicable</p>	<p>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>Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) Agri-Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS) Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-environmental funding schemes aimed at rural development for the environmental enhancement and protection. GLAS is the new replacement for REPS and AEOS which are both expiring. 	<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. 	<p>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>National Rural Development Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<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 	<p>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</p>

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	quality of life in rural areas	the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Forestry Programme (2014-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represents Ireland's proposals for 100% State aid funding for a new Forestry Programme for the period 2014 – 2020. 	Measures include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afforestation and Creation of Woodland NeighbourWood Scheme Forest Roads Reconstitution Scheme Woodland Improvement Scheme Native Woodland Conservation Scheme Knowledge Transfer and Information Actions Producer Groups Innovative Forest Technology Forest Genetic Reproductive Material Forest Management Plans 	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.
River Basin Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Basin Management Plans set out the measures planned to maintain and improve the status of waters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to protect and enhance all water bodies in the RBD and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive. Identify and manages water bodies in the RBD. Establish a programme of measures for monitoring and improving water quality in the RBD. Involve the public through consultations. 	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. To provide a framework for determining and ensuring the most appropriate future use of cutover and cutaway bogs. To ensure that specific actions necessary for the achievement of its objectives are clearly identified and delivered by those involved in or responsible for peatlands management or for decisions affecting their management.	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	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 sets out a vision as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Three high level goals, of equal importance, based on the concept of sustainable development are identified: <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. 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
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.	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 	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.
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. 	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>This policy set out to achieve five key goals in transport:</p> <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 <p>These goals remain the cornerstone of transport policy and are fully aligned to the objectives of this National Policy Framework.</p>	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 	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	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. 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Draft Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework (DCCAE)	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. Methodology: Development of the Policy and Development Framework is to be informed by the carrying out of an SEA, including widespread consultation with stakeholders and public, and with AA under the Habitats Directive.	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	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 Midlands Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy,	The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Eastern and Midlands Region in order to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework.	The Eastern and Midlands Regional Economic and Spatial 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.	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. 	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. 	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 Protection Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	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 the Offaly LECP 2016-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overarching vision for each LECP is: “to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	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

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
		community development stakeholders.	objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Land Use Plans including those in force in County Offaly (Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, extended until 2020, Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010, extended until 2020), and those in force in other adjoining planning authorities (including development plans for Counties Meath, Westmeath, Roscommon, Galway, Tipperary, Laois and Kildare and local plans for Portarlington, Monasterevin, Rathangan, Moate, Cloughjordan, Roscrea and Mountmellick)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline planning objectives for land use development (including transport and tourism objectives). 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. 	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.
Offaly Tourism Statement of Strategy 2017-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vision: to maximise sustainable tourism product development opportunities and to develop Offaly as a quality tourism destination steeped in treasures of culture and heritage and renowned for open spaces and welcoming people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Vision will be delivered through, inter alia, measures relating to product development and marketing and promotion. 	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.
Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to highlight the importance of heritage at a strategic level. Aim to protect, conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services across all spectrums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and promote heritage as well as increase awareness. Aim to conserve and protect heritage. Outline the status of biodiversity and identifies species of importance. Outline objectives and targets to be met to maintain and improve biodiversity. Aims to increase awareness. 	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.
Eastern & Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021	These plans give effect to national and EU waste policy, and address waste prevention and management (including generation, collection and treatment) over the period 2015-2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To manage wastes in a safe and compliant manner, a clear strategy, policies and actions are required. 	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.
Offaly Noise Action Plan 2018-2023	Noise Action Plans are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, Statutory Instrument 140 of 2006. These Regulations give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. This Directive sets out a process for managing environmental noise in a consistent manner across the EU and the Noise Regulations set out the approach to meeting the requirements of the Directive in Ireland.	<p>The main purpose of Noise Action Plans is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects and the measures which may be considered to address noise problems Address strategic noise issues by requiring competent authorities to draw up action plans to manage noise issues and their effects Reduce noise, where possible, and maintain the environmental acoustic quality where it is good 	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.
Offaly Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024	Respond to the impact that climate change is having, and will continue to have. Attempt to climate change adaptation and mitigation.	<p>These Plans include actions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy and Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature-Based Solutions and Resource Management 	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.

SEA Environmental Report for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

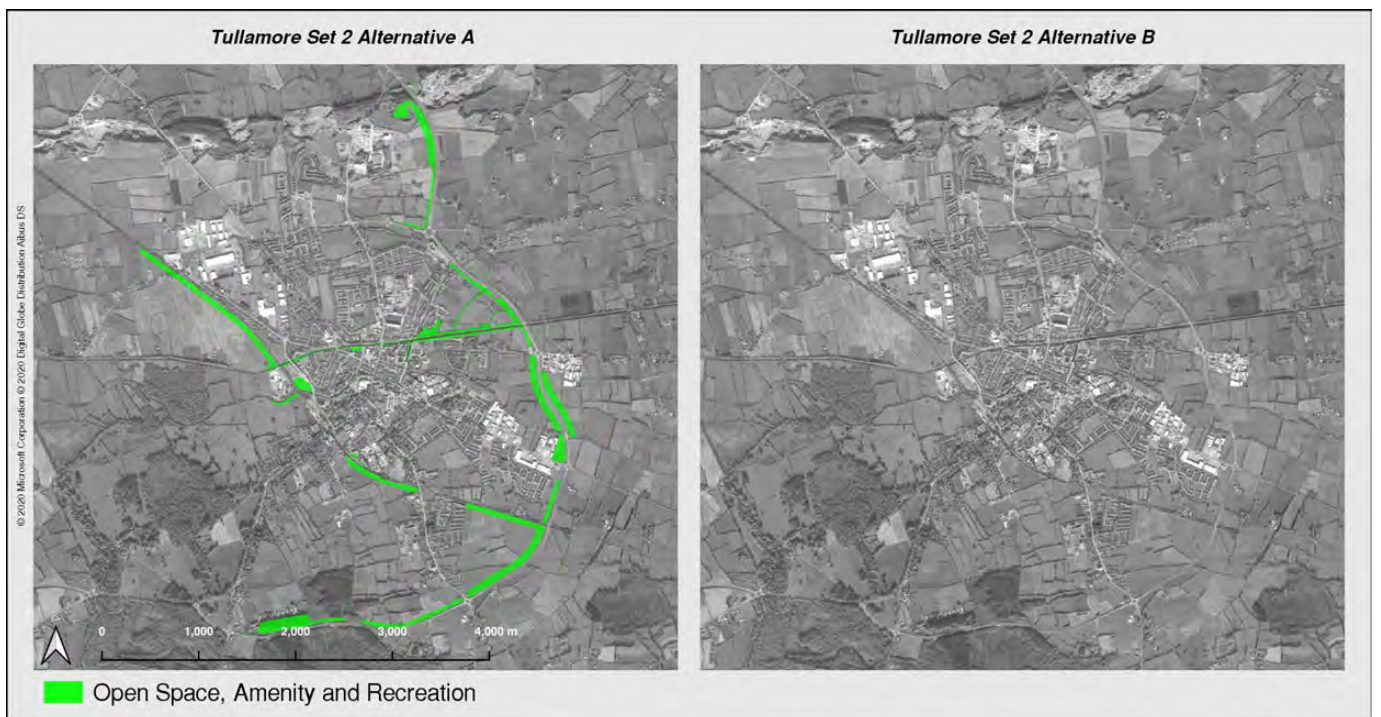
Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
<p>Fáilte Ireland Tourism plans, strategies, including those relating to the Ireland's Ancient East and Hidden Heartlands brands</p>	<p>Fáilte Ireland's work includes preparing various plans and strategies for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and other 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Various existing, planned and emerging projects provided for by the above plans and programmes</p>	<p>These projects have been provided for by higher-level plans and programmes.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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>

Appendix II Indicative Mapping of Land Use Zoning Alternatives

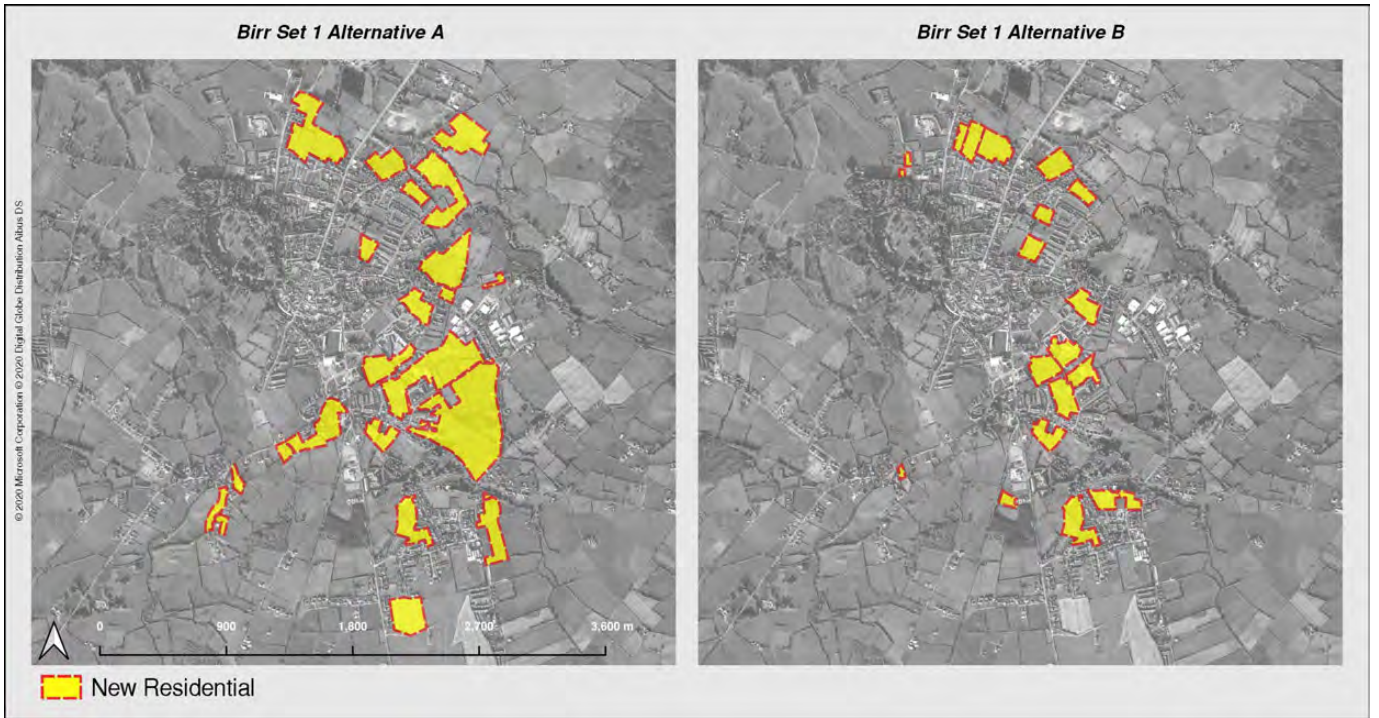
Tullamore Set 1 of 2



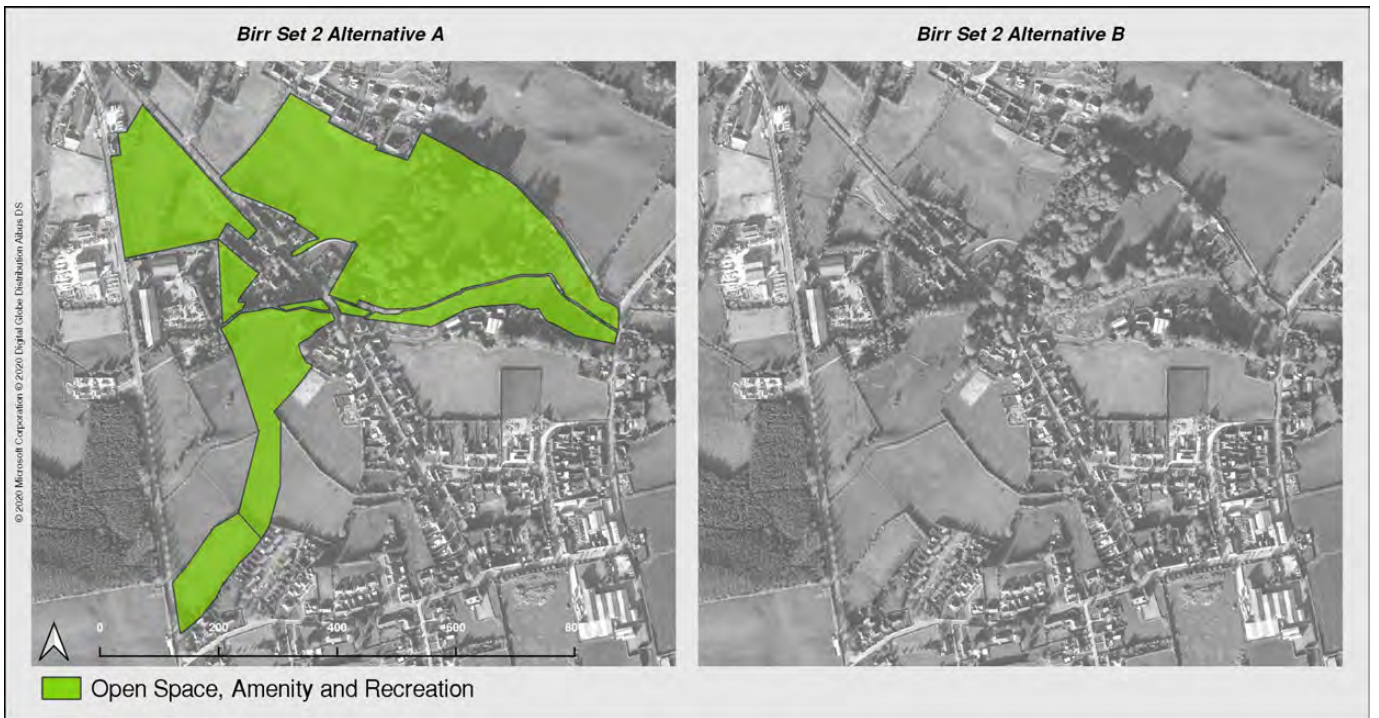
Tullamore Set 2 of 2



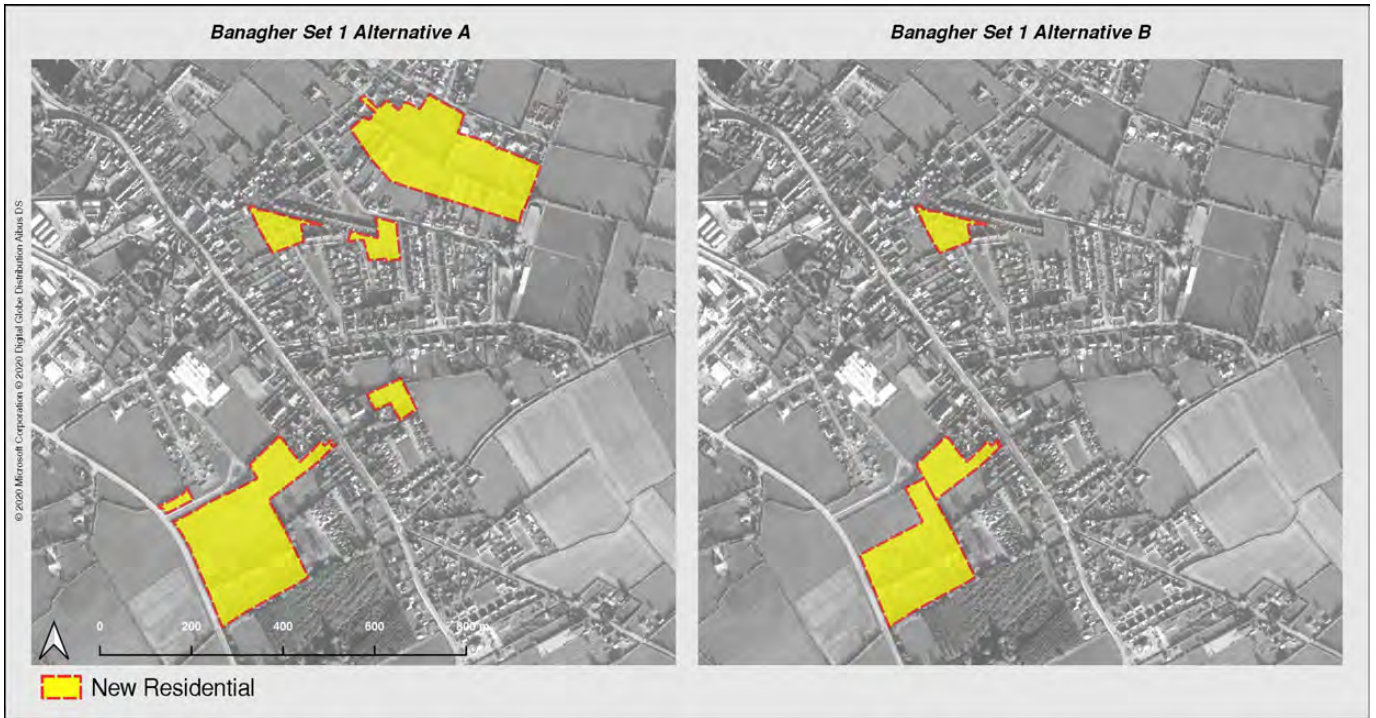
Birr, including Crinkill Set 1 of 2



Birr, including Crinkill Set 2 of 2



Banagher Set 1 of 1



Clara Set 1 of 1



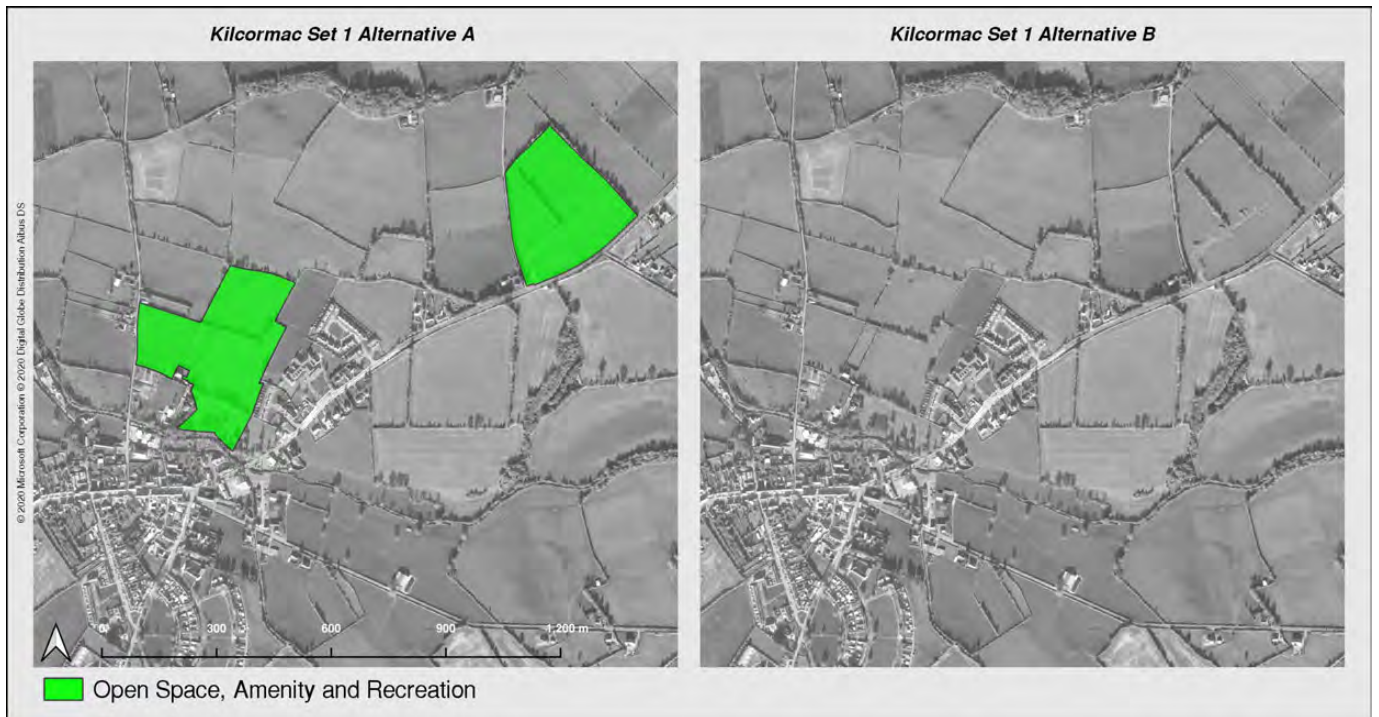
Daingean Set 1 of 1



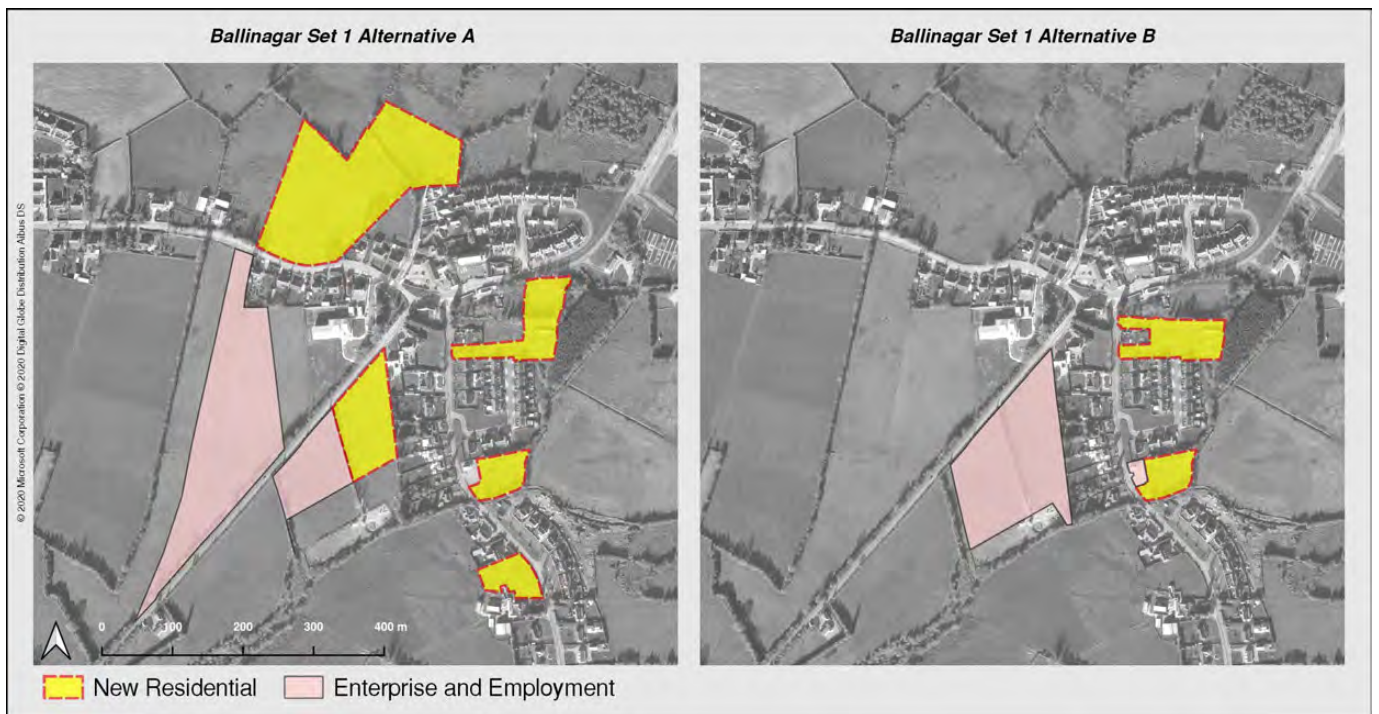
Ferbane Set 1 of 1



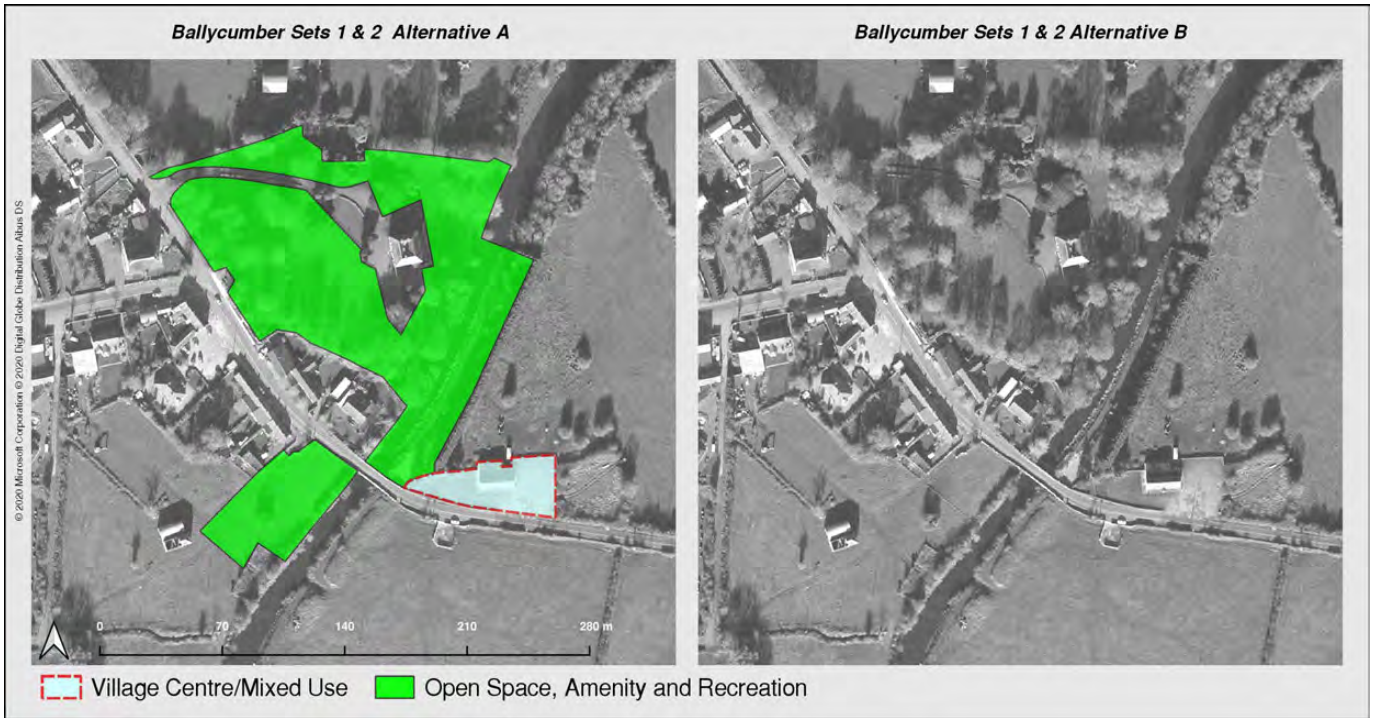
Kilcormac Set 1 of 1



Ballinagar Set 1 of 1



Ballycumber Sets 1 & 2



Belmont Set 1 of 1



Cloghan Set 1 of 1



Clonbullogue Set 1 of 1



Colderry Set 1 of 1



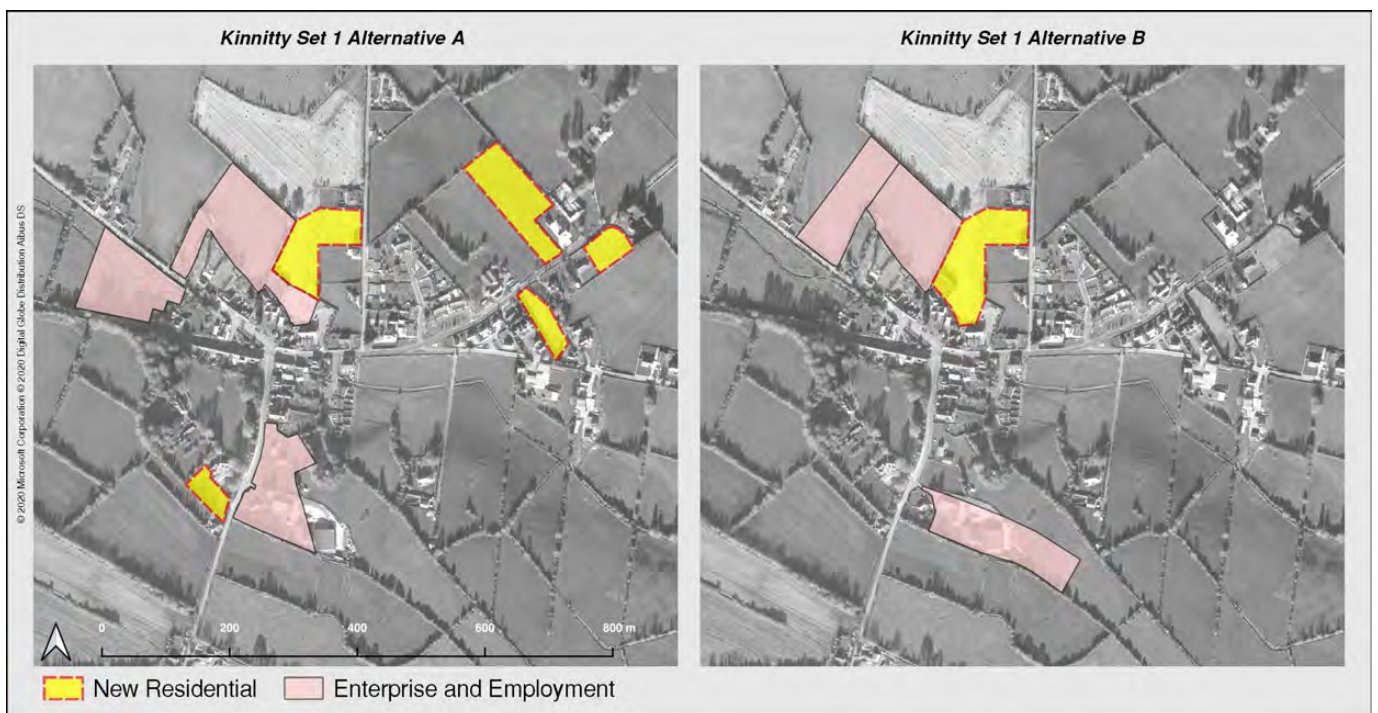
Geashill Set 1 of 1



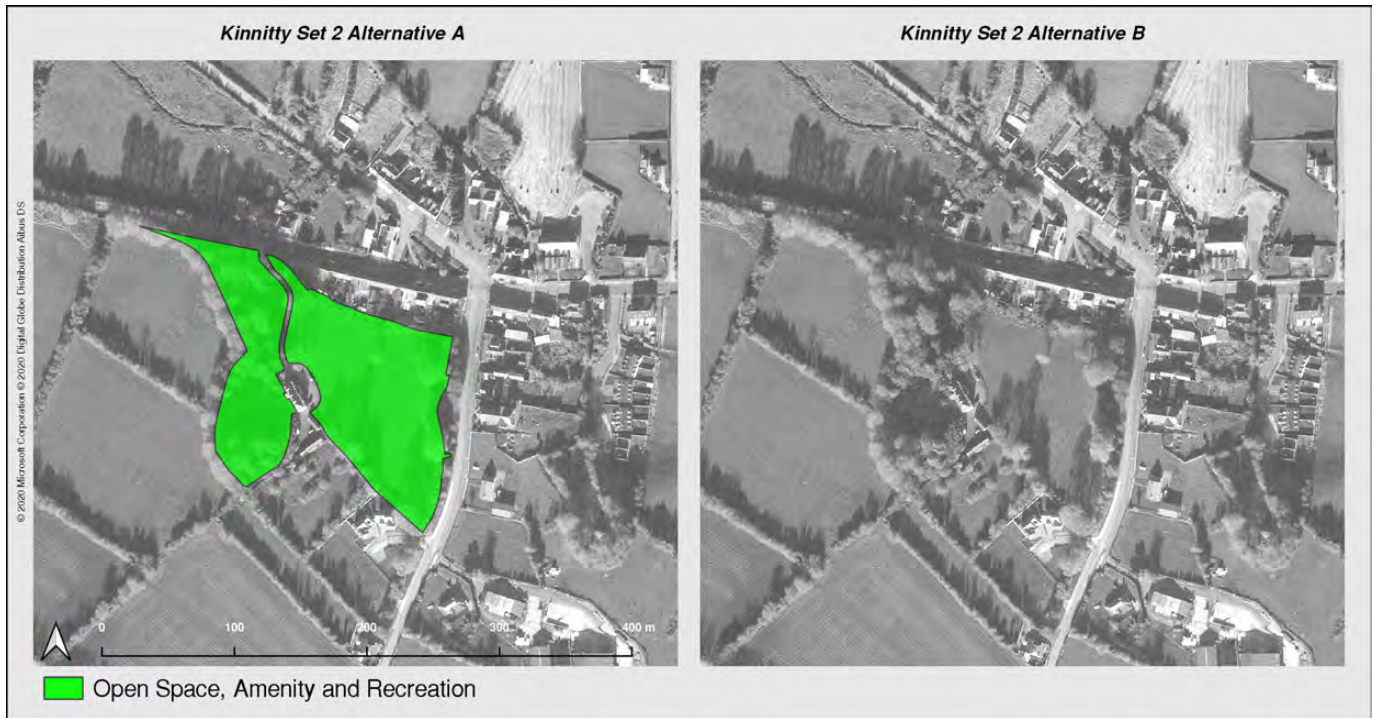
Killeigh Set 1 of 1



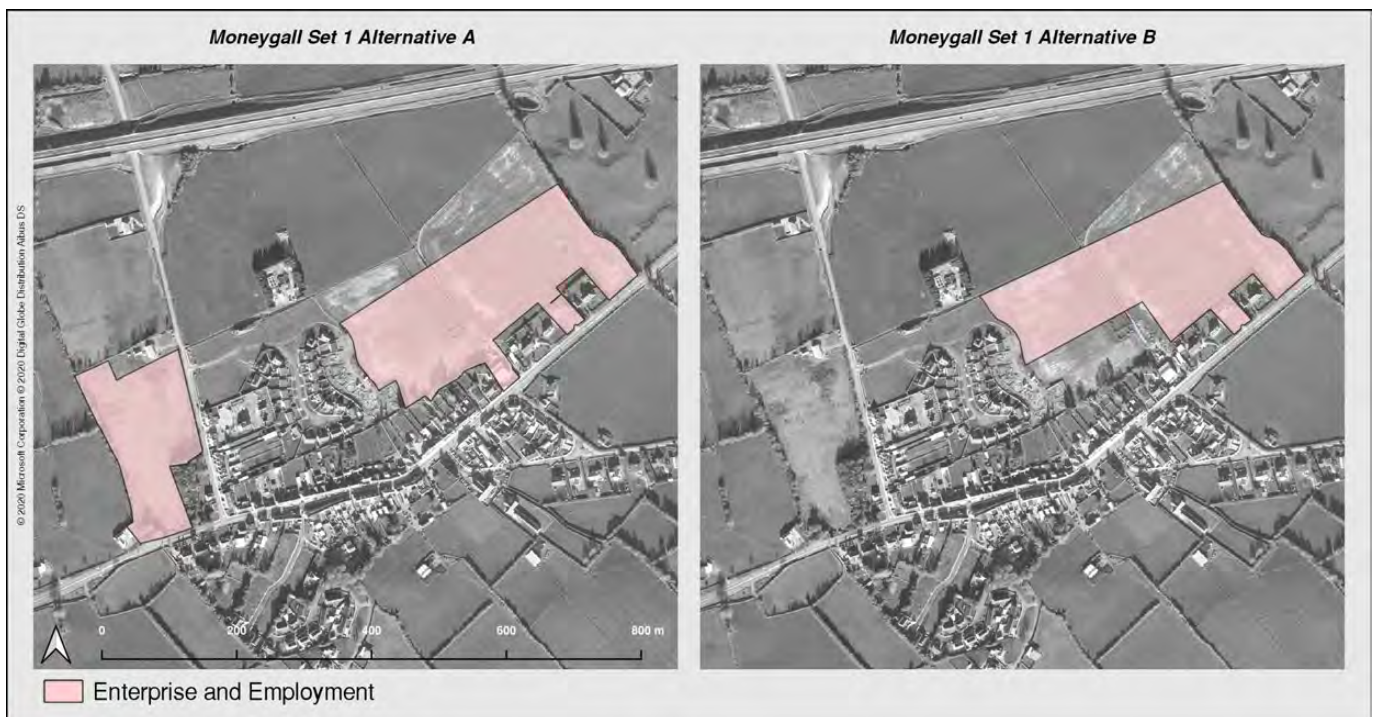
Kinnitty Set 1 of 2



Kinnitty Set 2 of 2



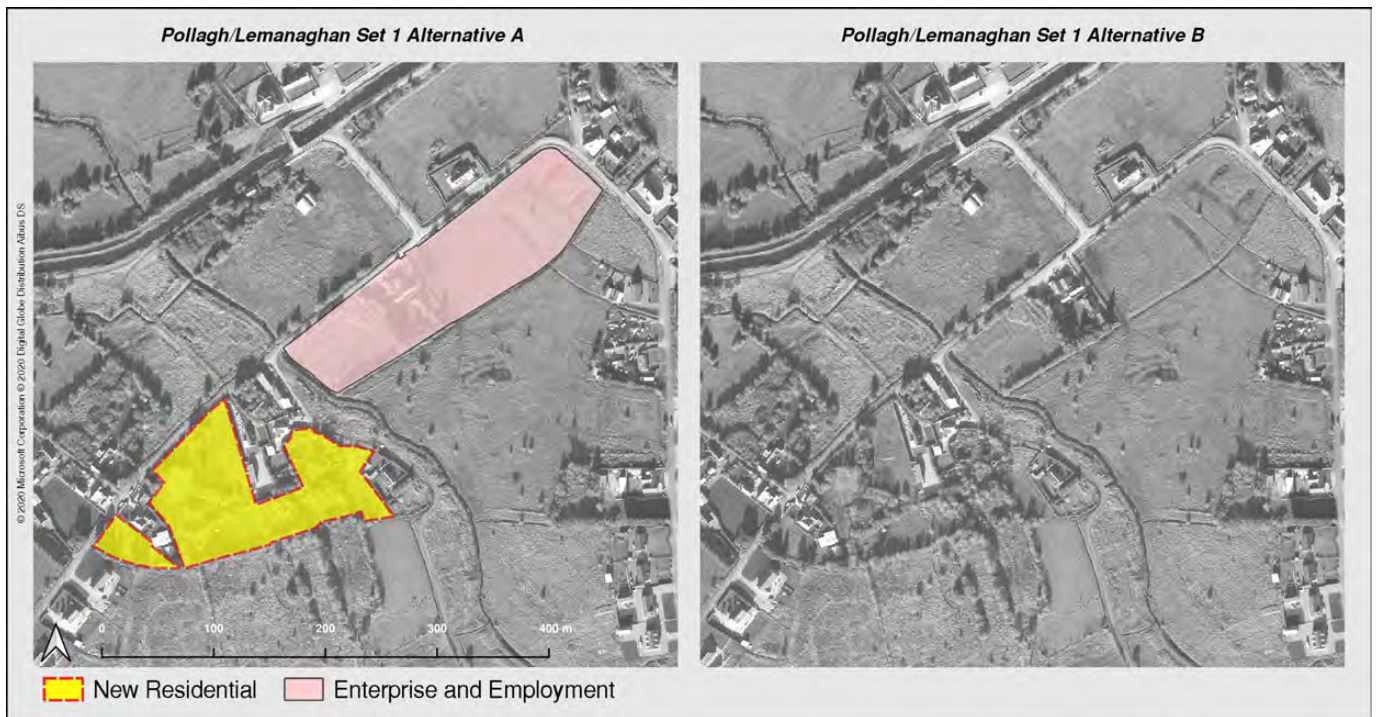
Moneygall Set 1 of 1



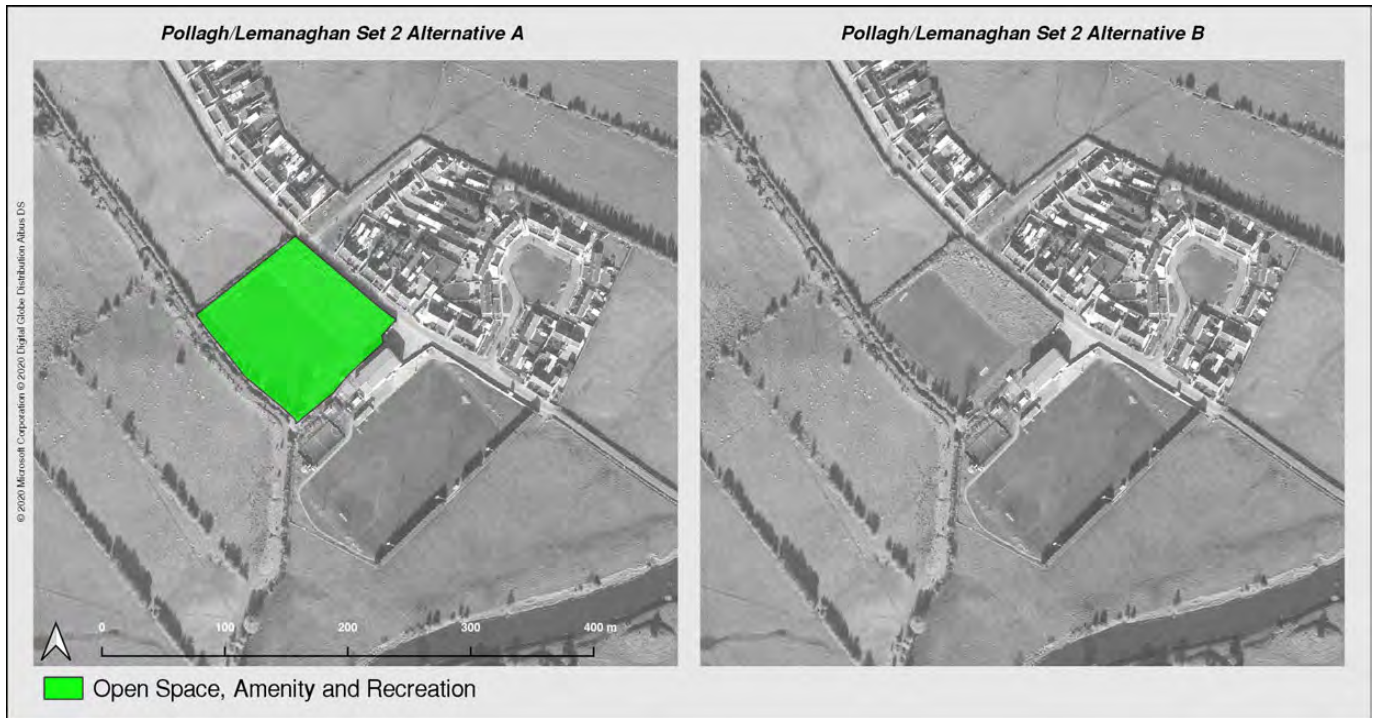
Mucklagh Set 1 of 1



Pollagh/Lemanaghan Set 1 of 1



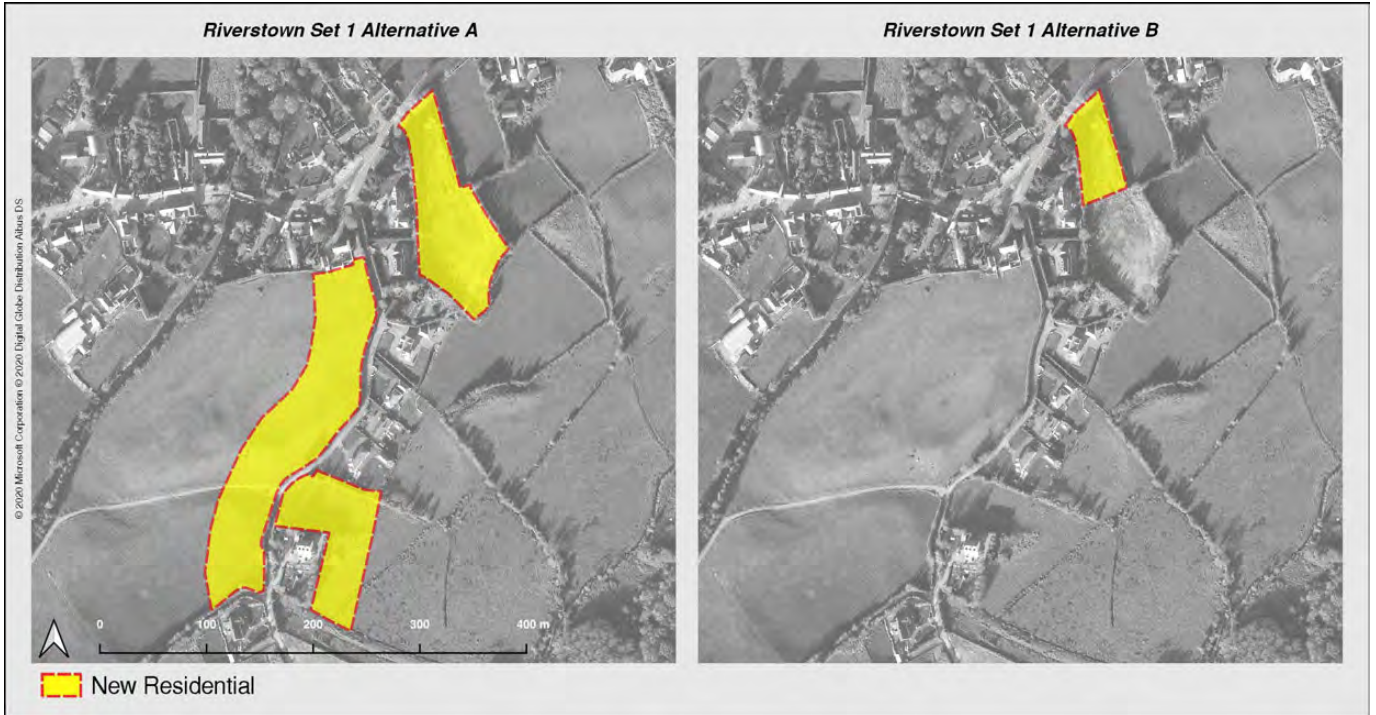
Pollagh/Lemanaghan Set 2 of 2



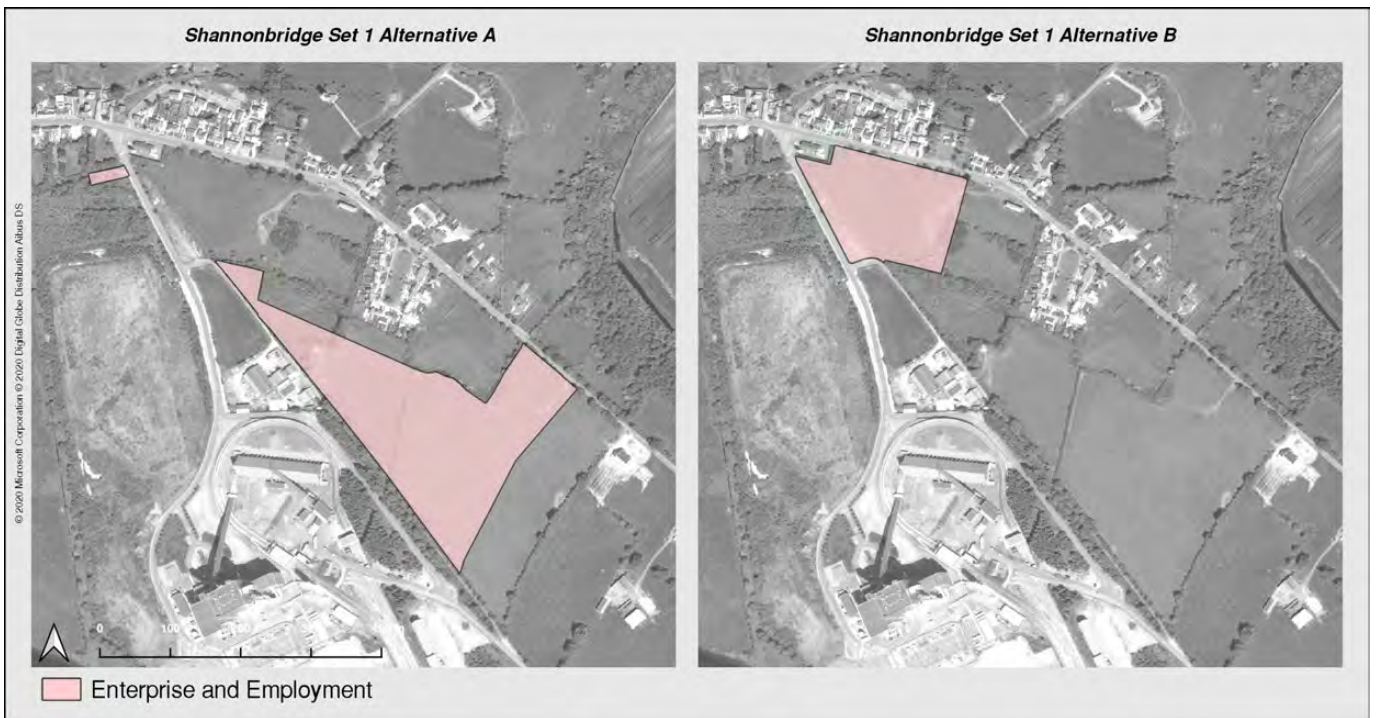
Rhode Set 1 of 1



Riverstown Set 1 of 1



Shannonbridge Set 1 of 1



Shinrone Set 1 of 1



Walsh Island Set 1 of 1

