

# Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan SEA Environmental Report

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## Strategic Assessment **Built Environment**

Client:

Fáilte Ireland

Date:

29 April 2024

## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

### 7052\_RP01\_SEA Environmental Report

Project No. 7052  
Client: Fáilte Ireland  
Project Name: Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan  
Report Name: SEA Environmental Report  
Document No. RP01  
Issue No. 04  
Date: 29/04/2024

This document has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Status	Date	Prepared	Checked
01	Draft	26 Jan 2024	NK	TB
02	Final Draft	06 March 2024	NK	TB
03	Final	08 March 2024	NK	TB
04	Final Plan	29 April 2024	NK	TB



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## Glossary

### Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment 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 or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 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 so that they come into contact with human beings.

### 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.

### Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act and 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 former Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

#### **SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)**

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.

#### **SEA 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. SEA scoping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

#### **Strategic Actions**

Strategic actions include: Policies / Strategies, which may be considered as inspiration and guidance for action and which set the framework for Plans and programmes; Plans, sets of coordinated and timed objectives for the implementation of the policy; and Programmes, sets of projects in a particular area.

#### **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 Masterplan 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

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

This is the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'KDEDP').

This Environmental Report, which should be read in conjunction with the KDEDP, has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, environmental, planning and landscape consultants, on behalf of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

## 1.2 Destination & Experience Development Plans

A Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five year commercial destination and experience development plan prepared for an area.

The role of the KDEDP is to support the development of unique and compelling destination experiences focused on a number of immediate and strategic destination opportunities and catalyst projects in Kilkenny City and County. The KDEDP has been prepared through a consultative process involving tourism industry representatives, members of the local community and Kilkenny County Council.

## 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) stems from *Directive 2001/42/EC*<sup>1</sup> (the 'SEA Directive') of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Article 1 of the Directive states that:

*"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."*

In effect, SEA comprises a systematic assessment process of predicting and evaluating the 'likely significant environmental effects' of implementing a proposed plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The overall aim of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through two Statutory Instruments (S.I.):

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 *The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004*, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 *The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*; and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004*, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 *The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*.

The former regulations, (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011), relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for "agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and

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<sup>1</sup>SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

*country planning or land use*", and these provisions are applicable to the KDEDP as a tourism sector plan.

The latter regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *"a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme"*, and are not applicable to the KDEDP.

#### **1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan**

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes:

- a) *which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive<sup>2</sup>, or*
- b) *which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)<sup>3</sup> i.e. requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken on the plan or programme.*

The Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory tourism sector plan that does not set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when consent of other projects is being granted. Therefore, SEA of the KDEDP is not required under Article 3(2)(a) above of the SEA Directive.

The Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a "plan" contained within the *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended)* and therefore, must be screened for the requirement to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC). The Screening for AA (BSM, 2024) has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity of European sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects are avoided are required. Therefore, in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) above and guidance provided in SEA Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>4</sup>, a SEA of the KDEDP has been undertaken.

This Environmental Report provides the findings of the SEA and takes account of recommendations contained in submissions from the Environmental Authorities. On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared, summarising, *inter alia*, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, *on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*

<sup>3</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>



## 2 Outline Description of the Plan

### 2.1 Introduction

Kilkenny is a year round international destination recognised for a creative city experience blending medieval with contemporary. A revitalised Medieval Mile is at the core of the Kilkenny City visitor experience motivating visitors to explore the wider city by linking Kilkenny Castle with iconic attractions who captivate audiences through their new experiential approach.

The City and County are animated by vibrant festivals and events hosted in a mix of venues that reflect the creativity of the destination. Kilkenny is globally recognised as Ireland’s home for design, craft and creative experiences. A growing number of county wide cultural, heritage and outdoor experiences are easily accessed by walking and cycling trails connecting visitors to the city with our vibrant rural communities. The communities are connected and engaged with the South East Greenway. Kilkenny is established as a centre of excellence for river based activities supported by an enhanced outdoor proposition delivered through woodlands, trails and activity centres.

In this context the Kilkenny DEDP is a five-year plan designed to be a roadmap for enhancing the existing Kilkenny visitor proposition to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers and spend, and increasing dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination. It has been created through a programme of research and consultation guided by the V.I.C.E. (Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment) model for sustainable tourism development. It represents an operational plan providing a commercial destination development focus building on existing project plans and integrating all related activity for a co-ordinated programme of activity. This includes projects that are currently being implemented, projects featured in existing plans and new concepts to grow the destination’s capacity for new visitor experience development.

### 2.2 Vision

The Kilkenny Vision 2033 statement is for Kilkenny to be:

*“Kilkenny is a leading year round destination by 2033, providing an exceptional experience blending medieval with contemporary and the great outdoors. A revitalised Medieval Mile is at the core of the Kilkenny City visitor experience linking Kilkenny Castle with iconic attractions who captivate audiences through a new experiential approach. A best in class city experience links seamlessly with the outdoor experiences across the county brought alive through our river based activities, woodlands, trails and activity centres. The destination is globally recognised as a Ireland’s home for design, craft and creative experiences. Visitors are attracted by a year round programme of culture, festivals and events, reflecting Kilkenny’s association as a vibrant and fun city experience.”*

### 2.3 Strategic Objectives

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives

**Strategic Objective 1: Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland’s Ancient East**

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 1.1 Develop the Medieval Mile to become a key attractor for Kilkenny City and the catalyst for visitor attraction and destination experience innovation delivered by a Kilkenny visitor attractions network committed to experience innovation.

- 1.2 Harness Visit Kilkenny, Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland's marketing campaigns to drive awareness in the international and domestic markets.
- 1.3 Maximise the international appeal of Kilkenny Castle and its potential to orientate visitors to other attractions and city wide locations.
- 1.4 Realise the tourism potential of the Abbey Quarter and how it is integrated into the Kilkenny cultural and creative experience.
- 1.5 Develop County Kilkenny into river activity centre of excellence using the Three Sister Rivers to introduce visitors to a mix of urban and rural outdoor activity experiences linked to local communities across the city and county.
- 1.6 Develop Kilkenny into a world class design, craft and creative destination building on its designation as a World Craft Council Craft City and Region.

**Strategic Objective 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.**

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- 2.1 Maximise the investment in the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny to become a signature experience within Kilkenny City and enhance their role in developing a new experiential Medieval Mile approach.
- 2.2 Enhance the visitor experience within the network of county wide heritage experiences working with OPW to encourage visitor dispersal to county sites.
- 2.3 Develop the visitor experience and site capacity at Woodstock House and Gardens to become a signature attraction within the county.
- 2.4 Maximise investment in the Kilkenny riverside activity facilities to become a catalyst for river tourism and linkages to river activity hubs across the county
- 2.5 Expand the range of things to do for families through new product development or enhancing existing experiences linked to existing or potential new activity hubs.
- 2.6 Maximise the heritage of craft and artisan producers by creating year round opportunities to meet the makers and build on the investment in crafts hubs in the county. Examine the opportunity to reinvigorate the Castle Yard into a vibrant craft and creatives centre.
- 2.7 Augment the creative experience base through the development of a new city based international attraction focused on animation.
- 2.8 Grow the number and range of rural food experiences to grow the reach of Taste Kilkenny between the city and county. Build on the unique brewing and distilling heritage of Kilkenny City to create a unique portfolio of experiences contributing to the overall food and drink heritage of the area.
- 2.9 Support the city of Kilkennys night time economy initiatives including the use of visitor attractions and public spaces as venues for innovative events and installations.
- 2.10 Develop a new strategy for festivals and cultural events in Kilkenny to enhance and grow the existing calendar of events and the creation of one major creative / cultural event of scale.
- 2.11 Grow the accommodation base across the city and county.

**Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the region is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.**

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- 3.1 Develop the trails linkages between rural communities and Kilkenny city to create the infrastructure that will encourage the visitor to explore the county through slow tourism activity e.g. Kilkenny to Inistioge and links to the South East Greenway
- 3.2 Optimise new technologies to disperse visitors across the destination reflecting Kilkenny's creative and innovation profile.
- 3.3 Examine the opportunity to link Kilkenny with the Dublin to Cork / Waterford Greenway to become part of the wider regional and national trail network.
- 3.4 Examine the requirements to enhance the Kilkenny cycling infrastructure and the development of a network of safe and accessible cycling trails across the county.
- 3.5 Enhance the capacity of existing trails such as the Kilkenny Trails, Butler Trail, Lingaun Valley Trail and opportunities such as the William Marshall story to orientate the visitor around the destination.
- 3.6 Develop the transport links between the city and county, building on existing pilot programmes linked to the rural Kilkenny experience.
- 3.7 Examine new opportunities for innovative visitor orientation and way finding that builds on the destination's creative and craft heritage adopting a destination theme to link the city to the county e.g. placemaking and signage innovation.
- 3.8 Develop a series of regional connection projects with neighbouring counties destinations through product linkages e.g. Castles, Food, Gardens, Adventure, Craft and Culture.

**Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.**

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- 4.1 Provide the tourism industry training to grow their capacity and capabilities to increase their international sales linked to existing and emerging destination development opportunities.
- 4.2 Grow the digital capacity of the tourism industry in Kilkenny.
- 4.3 Develop an experience development training and capacity programme to enable the crafts and creative community realise economic opportunities through tourism.
- 4.4 Support the development of community experiences and create new level of capacity to ensure rural communities can realise the benefits of tourism.
- 4.5 Encourage participation in key strategic programmes across state agencies to ensure tourism grows as an attractive employment option.
- 4.6 Support Kilkenny tourism businesses to build expertise and knowledge to allow them to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of their business.
- 4.7 Develop the capacity and capabilities of the tourism industry to deliver an enhanced range of family experiences contributing to the development of Kilkenny as a family destination.

Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.

#### Strategic Objectives:

- 5.1 Adopt sustainability as a core destination message and promote an enhanced sustainability focus through our environment, heritage, culture and community experiences.
- 5.2 Achieve low carbon and sustainable growth in the development of urban and rural visitor experiences to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.
- 5.3 Collectively work towards reducing the carbon footprint of tourism.
- 5.4 Ensure tourism is integrated into future urban and rural regeneration activity in developing the city and county as a great place to live, work and visit.
- 5.5 Create awareness of the importance of the Kilkenny Tourism structure to support a cohesive promotion and development approach in Kilkenny.
- 5.6 Develop the capacity of the Kilkenny Tourism Network to deliver on the tourism vision for the destination through collaboration and new ways of working together, cross promotion and collaboration in the delivery of new visitor experiences.
- 5.7 Develop a series of tourism clusters aligned with the experience development focus within the Kilkenny DEDP.
- 5.8 Work in partnership with the OPW to enhance the visitor experience across key visitor sites.
- 5.9 Work with the Kilkenny Visitor attractions network and experience providers to deliver accessible tourism experiences.
- 5.10 Examine local community experience development opportunities through sport tourism events and the local culture of sport and Gaelic games.

## 2.4 Destination Catalyst Projects Overview

To achieve the above strategic objectives, the KDEDP focuses on five catalyst and seven enabling projects that each include a number of sub-elements that contribute to the overarching objectives of developing the Kilkenny City urban tourism experience, growing the appeal of the wider county and maximising the outdoors as part of the destination experience. The catalyst projects and their key objectives are as follows:

**Re-imagined Medieval Mile** - *Develop the Medieval Mile opportunity to motivate visitors to explore more of the city and maximise investments in attractions such as the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny and other attractions.*

**Creative City Experience** - *Examine the feasibility of a world class animation experience in Kilkenny City and the further development of a creative tourism theme in Kilkenny City and County linking our creative experiences.*

**River Tourism Centre of Excellence** - *Establish Kilkenny as a destination recognised for best in class river tourism experiences as part of strengthening the destinations association with outdoor activities.*

**Kilkenny Attractions Experience** - *Enhance the quality and range of visitor experiences delivered across the network of Kilkenny Visitor Attractions.*

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

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**Trails and Adventure** - *Develop the trails linkages between rural communities and Kilkenny city to create the infrastructure that will encourage visitors to explore the county through slow tourism activity*

The complete list of catalyst project and enabling projects is provided and are assessed in **Appendix 8.1**.

## 3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

*Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>5</sup> on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the ‘SEA Directive’) requires EU Member States to assess the ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

*“The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”*

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

- Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011); and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for *“agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.”*<sup>6</sup>

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *“a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”*<sup>7</sup>.

Given the nature of the Plan, the SEA for the KDEDP is being prepared under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;

<sup>5</sup> SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

<sup>6</sup> See Section 9(1)(a)

<sup>7</sup> Section 5(c)

- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.



The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental Assessment and defined as:

*“...the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision...”<sup>8</sup>*

### 3.2 SEA Stages and Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular ‘*likely significant environmental effects*’ of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the KDEDP are outlined in **Table 2.1** and **Figure 2.1** below.

**Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process**

Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	<p>The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a ‘Screening process’, to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.</p> <p>The preparation of the <i>Draft KDEDP</i> has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 &amp; NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft KDEDP</i> was also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).</p>	Completed 
2. Scoping	<p>Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ methods of assessment;</li> <li>■ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>■ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and</li> <li>■ the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.</p>	Completed 

<sup>8</sup> Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report


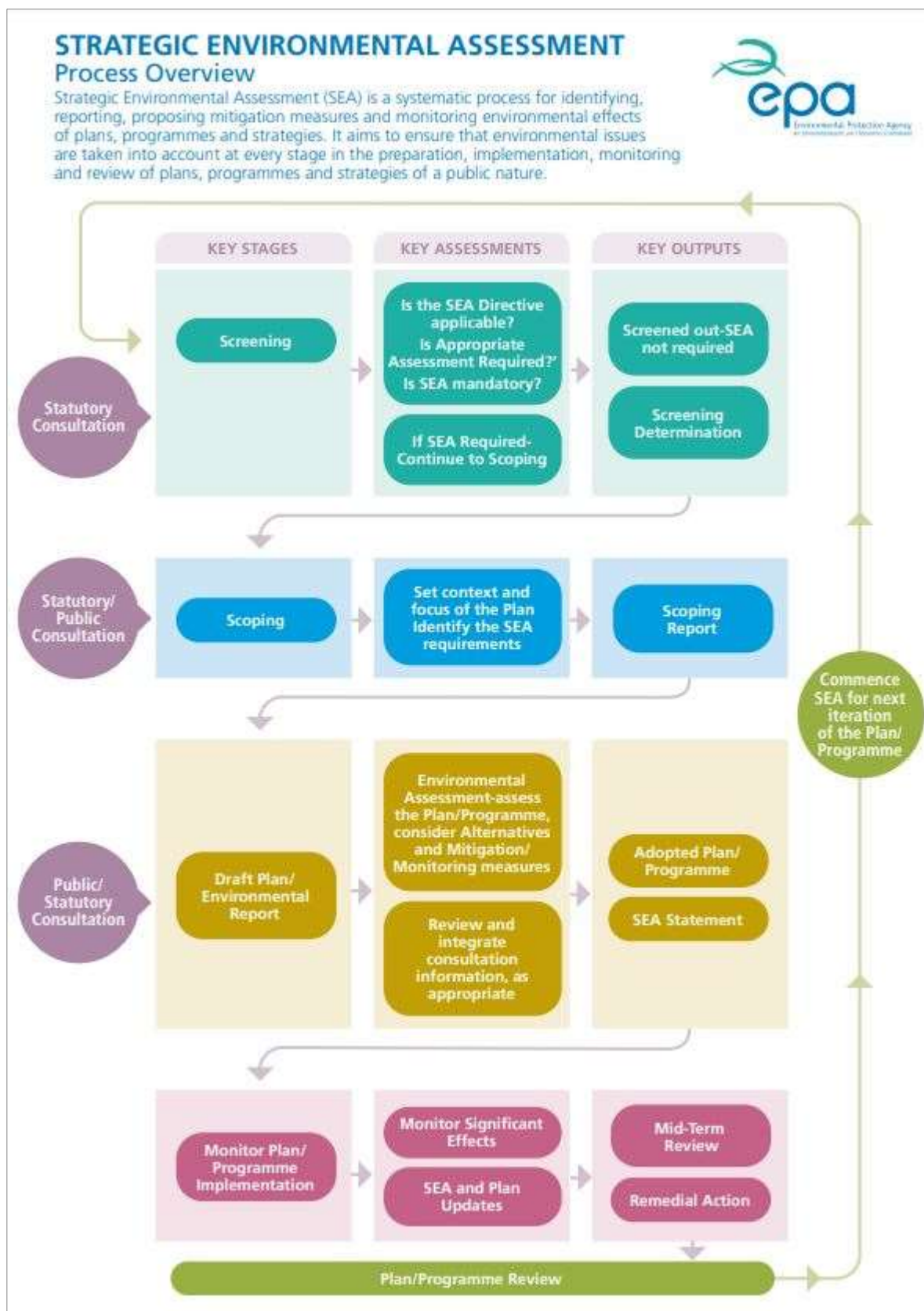
Stage	Description	Status
<b>3. Environmental Report</b>	<p>Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P.</p> <p>The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (<i>e.g.</i> Draft, Amended Draft <i>etc.</i>), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011.</p> <p>The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanied the draft P / P required on public display.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> 
<b>4. SEA Statement</b>	<p>Completion / adoption of the Final KDED, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report is concluded and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>▪ how the environmental report, and any submissions /observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>▪ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</li> <li>▪ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Current Stage</b></p>



Figure 2.1: Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021<sup>9</sup>)



<sup>9</sup> EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Process%20Checklist.pdf>

### 3.3 SEA Screening and Requirement for SEA

The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain P / Ps that are above specified thresholds. Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / P is subject to a 'Screening process', (Stage 1) to consider if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.

Screening for the purposes of SEA is defined as *"the determination of whether implementation of a P / P [Plan or Programme] would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P / P [Plan or Programme] requires SEA."*<sup>10</sup> The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria:

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

It is also noted that in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>11</sup>, SEA for a P / P is also a mandatory requirement where the P / P requires Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive requires that:

*"Subject to paragraph 3, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes,*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC, or*

*(b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC."*

Article 9(1) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, states that:

*"Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*

*(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site."*

Articles 9(2) and 9(3) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, further state that:

*(2) "A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall*

<sup>10</sup> EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

*require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.*

*(3) A competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment”*

The *Draft KDEDP* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive* (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The AA Screening has concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and therefore appropriate assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required.

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*<sup>12</sup> the Draft KDEDP was also required to undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*<sup>13</sup> (the *SEA Directive*).

This Environmental Report has been prepared as the KDEDP is subject to requirements of SEA.

### 3.4 SEA Scoping

Scoping allowed for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

The consultation was undertaken with the following Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, on 13 July 2023:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications;
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and comments have been incorporated into the Plan and Environmental Report as set out in **Table 3.1**.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Table 3.1 SEA Scoping Submissions / Observation from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p><b>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</b></p>	<p>The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations:</p> <p>EPA highlights several key environmental issues to consider in preparing the Plan and SEA. The Plan should set out the implementation arrangement and governance structures, document synergy between the Plan and key national plan and programmes, reflect objective of the SEA Directive. The SEA shall address climate &amp; biodiversity issues.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
	<p>Recommendations from the SEA &amp; AA including mitigation measures and monitoring proposals should be integrated into the Plan. SEA Environmental Report and the Plan should include a chapter on how the recommendations and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Plan.</p>	
	<p>EPA recommend that the SEA Environmental Report includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and Plan policies/measures.</p>	
	<p>EPA recommend that the Plan should include summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and, where relevant, Plan policies/measures.</p>	
	<p>EPA highlight their recently published guidance note to help provide guidance and ideas on how to carry out strategic environmental assessments (SEA) of tourism sectoral plans and programmes in Ireland - 'Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector'.</p>	
	<p>The submission describes the key findings and chapters of the 'State of the Environment Report- Ireland's Environment An Integrated Assessment 2020'. The report recognises the need for full implementation of existing environmental legislation and review of governance/coordination on environmental protection across public bodies.</p>	
	<p>EPA highlights the requirement under the SEA Regulations to consult with Environmental Authorities (EPA, Minister of Housing, Local Government &amp; Heritage, Department of Environment, Climate &amp; Communications, Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)</p>	

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	Appendix I to the EPA submission includes comments on the SEA Scoping Report - scope of the SEA, data and knowledge gaps, range of effects, monitoring, implementation & reporting, SEA statement, integration with other key Plans and Programmes, available guidance & resources, webtools.	
<a href="#">Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)</a>	GSI encourage use of and reference to their datasets attached to their submission. These include geoheritage (county geological sites), culture & tourism, groundwater, geological mapping, geohazards, natural resources, geochemistry of soils, surface waters and sediments, historic mines, physiographic units. GSI also includes a list of publicly available datasets relevant to planning, EIA & SEA processes.	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.

### 3.5 SEA Environmental Report

The current stage of the SEA process (Stage 3) involves the preparation of the Environmental Report for the identification, description, evaluation and mitigation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the KDEDP and the alternatives taking account of the geographical scope of the Plan.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provides detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report. **Table 3.2** provides a checklist of the information referred to in Article 5(1) with a confirmation of where the relevant information is contained within the SEA.

The SEA Environmental Report was placed on public display, together with the Draft KDEDP and for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

**Table 3.2 Information required under Annex I of the SEA Directive**

Information referred to in Article 5(1)	Environmental Report Section
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2 & Section 4
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 5
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 5
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	Section 5
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 6
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Section 8 and Appendix 8.1
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 9
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Section 7
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	Section 10
(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Refer to Non-technical Summary Report

### 3.6 Consultation

The Draft KDEDP, together with the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) were placed on public display. No submissions were received from the public.

Consultation was also undertaken with the Environmental Authorities as specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

Submission was received by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), refer to **Table 3.3** below.

Table 3.3 SEA Consultation Response from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Outline of Nature of the Submission from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations:</p> <p>Ensure the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
<p>Visitor Numbers</p> <p>EPA note that central to the Plan is the aim of increasing visitor numbers. This increase has the potential to disturb or damage the natural environment, if not carefully managed. Where the expected increase in tourist numbers materialises, there may be a need for additional or expanded tourism and tourism-related developments. Such developments may have implications for changes to land use, loss of green field sites, disturbance to natural or cultural heritage (including designated sites and protected species, etc.). It is important that tourism offerings are developed at suitable locations and in an environmentally sustainable manner, which minimises potential adverse environmental impacts.</p>	<p>The Plan and the Environmental Report take into account integrating requirements for environmental protection and management under Appendix 1. Visitor management is specifically addressed on page 40 and also considered throughout the Plan.</p>
<p>Critical Infrastructure Provision</p> <p>In the context of increased visitor numbers and any potential development, the Plan should recognise the need for adequate and appropriate wastewater and drinking water services to be put in place to service any infrastructural development associated with Plan-related projects, in the interests of protecting both the environment and public health. In this context, Fáilte Ireland should liaise with Úisce Éireann in terms of future needs for provision of adequate critical services.</p>	<p>This is already referenced in the introduction paragraph in Appendix 1 of the Plan and specifically included in the table of bulletpoints at the end of page 38. As such this is already included and no further change is required.</p>
<p>Biodiversity Considerations</p> <p>We note the various important ecosystem services and designated sites / protected species within the Plan area. This should be considered carefully, to ensure that any additional tourism developments are sited, designed, operated and maintained in an appropriate manner. In seeking to enhance tourism developments, the need to maintain and protect the significant environmental resources of the area should also be a clear objective.</p> <p>EPA suggest that key findings of the SEA and AA processes are incorporated into the Plan, as shown in Appendix A. It may be useful to include a map in the Appendix A also, showing the key elements of environmental sensitivity in the area.</p>	<p>The following reference has been added to the final Plan:</p> <p><i>“Identification and mapping of the key environmental sensitivities of relevance to the Plan as detailed in the SEA Environmental Report and in the AA Natura Impact Statement.”</i></p>



## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

Outline of Nature of the Submission from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>EPA note the commitment to working closely with stakeholders such as the Local Authority, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Coillte, Community Groups, etc., in delivering many of the projects included in the Plan. Those projects should take into account the requirements of the EIA, Birds and Habitats Directives, as appropriate. The potential for cumulative effects that may arise from multiple tourism initiatives needs to be a key consideration also. It will be important that environmental management plans are prepared as appropriate, to ensure that important environmental and cultural resources are afforded significant protection.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
<p>EPA advise to refer to the following guidance document- Good practice guidance on SEA for the tourism sector (EPA, 2023), Good practice guidance on SEA and landscape (EPA, 2023), EPA Guidance on the Tiering of environmental assessments – The influence of Strategic Environmental Assessment on Project level Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2021), Ireland’s Climate Change Assessment (ICCA),</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
<p>The Monitoring Programme should be flexible to take account of specific environmental issues and unforeseen adverse impacts should they arise. It should consider and deal with the possibility of cumulative effects. Monitoring of both positive and negative effects should be considered. The monitoring programme should set out the various data sources, monitoring frequencies and responsibilities.</p> <p>Guidance on SEA-related monitoring is available on the EPA website.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
<p>The Submission refers to the State of the Environment Report – Ireland’s Environment 2020, which should be considered as relevant. EPA also brings to the attention that the next iteration of the report will be published later in 2024.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
<p>EPA advises on the preparation of the SEA statement and to send a copy of the SEA Statement with the above information to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.</p>	<p>The SEA statement will be prepared as the next step in the SEA process</p>

### 3.7 SEA Statement

Following approval of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan, an SEA Statement (Stage 4) will be prepared which includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the KDEDP, highlighting the main changes to the KDEDP which 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 KDEDP in the light of the other alternatives, identifying the other alternatives considered, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the KDEDP, as adopted, was selected; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the KDEDP.

### 3.8 SEA Guidance

The SEA Environmental Report reflects the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the SEA Directive)* and the national implementing Regulations S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and by the PDR 2001, as amended.

The following principal sources of guidance were used in the SEA process including in the preparation of this Environmental Report:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004.
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 -Environmental Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.
- Guidance on Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission, 2004, at:
- [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923\\_sea\\_guidance.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf)
- SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans - EPA Recommendations and Resources. EPA, Updated January 2023.
- SEA Pack. EPA, Updated January 2022.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. EPA, Updated July 2023.
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA, 2015.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector. EPA, June 2023.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape. EPA, December 2023.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statements and Monitoring. EPA, March 2023.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Impact Assessment Tiering, EPA, 2021.
- Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, March 2023.

- EPA Mapping. Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) tools are available at: <http://gis.epa.ie/SeeMaps>
- EPA Water and Air Quality Reports at: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/legislation/air/quality/>
- EPA Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report/#>
- SEA (EPA) Spatial Information Sources at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment, EPA 2015 at: [https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157\\_web.pdf](https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157_web.pdf)
- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note. EPA, 2015.
- Climate Action Plan 2023, Changing Ireland for the Better. Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, 2023.
- Circular Letter PL 9/2013: Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011: Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011.
- Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008.
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment - Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner's Manual. Strive Report Series No. 106. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment. European Commission 2013.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision\\_of\\_art6\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf)
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2002, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_asses\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_en.pdf)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009, at: [http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS\\_2009\\_AA\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf)

### 3.9 Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is *likely to have a significant impact* on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Stage 1 is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans

or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>14</sup> (15 February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA screening in that *“where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- An AA of the plan must be carried out, and
- In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out.”

Hence, where a plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the KDEDP and the SEA Environmental Report.

The AA has concluded that the KDEDP will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

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<sup>14</sup> NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

## 4 Relationship with Plans and Programmes

### 4.1 Overview

Fáilte Ireland has prepared this Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. The plan is designed to build on the ambition of the Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy. Regional Tourism Development Plans, 2023- 2027 (RTDS) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). These plans provide the strategic framework for other tourism development strategies, most notably, Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) and County Tourism Strategies. The Kilkenny DEDP has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for Ireland's Ancient East.

The Kilkenny Destination and Experience Development Plan (KDEDP) is a five year commercial destination and experience development plan. The role of the KDEDP is to support the development of unique and compelling destination experiences focused on a number of immediate and strategic destination opportunities. The KDEDP was developed through a consultative process involving tourism industry representatives, members of the local community and Kilkenny City and County Council. The KDEDP will guide tourism development through a roadmap of projects linked to a number of destination development opportunities. Over the course of the plan implementation, success will be measured by achieving growth across a range of indicators from new experience supply, visitor demand patterns, growing the value per visitor and a number of additional destination competitiveness indicators.

The key objectives of Destination and Experience Development Plans are:

- Ensure the visitor experience in Kilkenny is brought to life through a mix of tourism products and experiences that will attract domestic and international visitors and retain them in the destination for longer.
- Unlock the economic potential of tourism by progressing key initiatives that will disperse tourists across the city and county.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to local communities by providing sustainable employment opportunities.
- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development by enhancing and creating compelling destination experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to attract leisure visitors on a year round basis to Kilkenny and immerse themselves in the community while providing the opportunity to interact with local people as part of the Kilkenny experience.
- Develop the role of Kilkenny as a driver of regional tourism development and influence visitor flows across the South East.

As part of the SEA process, it is necessary to consider the environmental protection objectives, established at the international; European and national level which are relevant to the KDEDP and how they have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. In its making, the KDEDP sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, are detailed below.

## 4.2 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government’s overarching planning and development policy for the country to 2040. It constitutes a “strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people” by setting public investment policy at a high level. It comprises two documents: the *National Planning Framework* (NPF), which details the strategy for development to 2040; and the *National Development Plan* (NDP), which outlines the public expenditure required to implement this strategy and identifies priority future projects.

The NPF is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment. At its core are ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), “a shared set of goals for every community across the country” (p. 10), which the plan aims to deliver:

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

With a view to achieving these NSOs, the NPF identifies a suite of National Policy Objectives (NPOs).

The NPF identifies under NSO 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage that-

*‘This will ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.’*

The NPF addresses the Plan for Ireland’s growing population and economy and to promote new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism). Local services sectors, including tourism and small-scale manufacturing, are a significant part of the rural economy and are also important local employers.

The National Policy Objective 22 states to –

*‘Facilitate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.’*

The NPF emphasises on tourism opportunities for rural Ireland and states that –

*‘The development of greenways, blueways and peatways offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland. The development of a strategic national network of these*

*trails is a priority and will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy, as well as the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity.'*

The NPF further elaborates on the importance of Ireland's natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape and their role and contribution towards the tourism industry and economic investment.

### 4.3 Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

There are three administrative Regions in Ireland: the Northern and Western Region, the Southern Region, and the Eastern and Midland Region. Under national policy, Regional Assemblies are tasked with drafting Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs), which effectively set the agenda for implementing the national level development policy – the NPF – at the Regional level. The KDED area is situated in the Southern Region and, therefore, falls under the remit of the Southern RSES.

The policies in the RSES are structured under Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Policy Objectives.

The Southern region has a wealth of natural, cultural and heritage assets of national importance and is a significant tourist destination. Under the Strategy, Kilkenny city is identified as the 8th largest employment centre in the State with strong performance in agri-business, finance and tourism/hospitality. Kilkenny City is defined as follows in the Strategy document-

*'The City is internationally renowned as an historic medieval city with major tourist attractions, a popular conference location and an important centre for arts and culture, including high profile annual festivals.'*

Further, the RPO 12 states :

*'e. To support urban generation through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the Public Realm and regenerate underused land in the City and to support implementation of mitigation from Abbey Quarter Masterplan SEA and AA processes;*

*h. Support for the City as a 'Hero site' within the Fáilte Ireland's branding of Ireland's Ancient East. The 'Medieval Mile' package which brings together public realm improvements linking Kilkenny Castle to St Canice's Cathedral and other significant attractions in between, such as the Medieval Mile Museum, the new Butler Gallery, the Smithwick's Experience and Rothe House'*

The RSES reflects the NPF statement that the rural countryside *"is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and overspill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities"*.

The RSES Vision is to make the Southern Region one of Europe's most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions, with planned growth and development in suitable locations that nurtures places to realise their full potential, protects and enhances the environment, and delivers quality of life and economic growth.

### 4.4 Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

The *Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021 – 2027* sets out the Council's policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of Kilkenny City and County to 2027. It has been prepared with regard to the relevant national and regional plans and policies. It is presented in two volumes, the first of which provides the overarching strategies for the City and County (e.g. the Core Strategy and Housing Strategy), and the second of which relates specifically to Kilkenny City.

Kilkenny city has a high profile nationally and internationally as a medieval city and a centre for tourism, festivals, heritage and the arts. The Economic Development section of the Development Plan details on the economic strategy for the County. Its strategic aim is *'To provide a framework for the implementation of the Council's economic strategy by fostering competitiveness and innovation in all sectors within a high-quality physical environment while having due regard to the protection of the environment and heritage, in order to position the county for sustainable economic growth.'*

County Kilkenny has a rich and varied built, natural and cultural heritage resource. It is a valuable economic resource. It underpins Kilkenny's tourism sector, and brings significant economic benefits to the county and its residents.

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of Kilkenny. It is a Core objective of Kilkenny County Council to develop tourism and the County's tourism offer, working with key stakeholders – public, private, community, and voluntary - to implement Kilkenny's Statement of Tourism Strategy and work programme 2017- 2022 as well as maintaining Kilkenny's position as the finest Cultural and Heritage destination in Ireland.

It is Council policy to:

- *support the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.*
- *support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County.*
- *support the provision and improvement of visitor facilities, infrastructure and accommodation (including self-catering, hotels, hostels, guesthouses, B&Bs, caravanning, camping, motorhome service areas and glamping) at appropriate locations, preferably clustered within existing settlements, in order to provide a range of accommodation type to suit all visitors*

Objective 5C of the Development Plan states – *'To continue to develop sustainable high quality tourism, leisure and complementary activities for the City & County with the key stakeholders enhancing the position of Kilkenny as a Hero site within Ireland's Ancient East branding.'*

Objective 5D of the Development Plan states – *'To implement the Woodstock Business Plan on a phased basis as resources permit subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.'*

Policy 12: Tourism, Markets and Events states that-

*'Development proposals within the County's centres that seek to improve the tourism offer will be supported. Tourism proposals should contribute to improving a positive public perception. Proposals that form a link between tourism and the offer of the town centre will be looked upon favourably by the Council. Similarly, markets and public events that are expected to have a positive influence on public perception of a centre will be supported. Within Kilkenny City Centre, proposals that would make a positive contribution to the function of the Medieval Mile will be supported.'*

The Development Plan states that – *'The Council will continue the development of major flagship tourism projects within the county to enhance the tourism product and will develop Kilkenny City and County as a leading tourism destination through continued sustainable expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating high-quality visitor services and the continued development and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.'*

The Development Plan includes the following tourism objectives:



Objective 5E – *‘Invest in public realm to create more multi-functional vibrant and inviting public spaces in urban areas and villages, which will greatly enhance the overall quality of place and act as a catalyst to stimulate private sector development. The public realm will be informed by the Kilkenny Access for All Strategy 2018-2021. The Council will ensure that the maintenance, cleanliness and animation of public spaces is managed in order to encourage visitors to dwell more in these spaces.’*

Objective 5F – *‘Development of the Kilkenny Greenway as part of the South East Greenway in South Kilkenny.’*

Objective 5G – *‘Development of the Waterford to Rosslare Greenway.’*

Objective 5H – *‘Continue the development of projects for submission under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and other funding schemes (e.g. LEADER Programme).’*

Objective 5O – *‘To ensure all new development respect and enhances the historic environment.’*

Objective 5P – *‘To ensure that the synergies between tourism and retailing are taken advantage of.’*

Objective 5X – *‘To promote investment in Place-Making and high-quality public realm through new development, and the enhancement of existing public realm in the City as well as throughout the County’s centres. The aim is to provide more attractive and vibrant urban centre and village locations, supporting retail activity and the wider commercial economy of our settlements and thereby increase footfall.’*

Objective C3C – *‘Improve Trails, Greenways and Walkways, (see Vol. 1 Chapter 8 Open Space), including the construction of a Boardwalk at Greensbridge to link the River Nore Riverside Walk with the new Riverside Linear Park in the Abbey Quarter and onwards to the Canal Walk, and New urban park in Abbey Quarter.’*

Regarding river tourism, the Development Plan states that –

*‘The Council will promote the natural amenity potential of the River Nore, River Breagagh and Pockocke River in order to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, biodiversity and tourism benefits for the city, and will work with agencies and communities to improve access and facilities along the rivers in appropriate locations subject to the availability of resources.’*

*‘The Council will promote the natural amenity potential of the Rivers Nore, Suir and Barrow in order to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, biodiversity and tourism benefits for the city and county generally, and will work with adjoining local authorities, agencies and communities to improve access and facilities along the rivers in appropriate locations subject to the availability of resources.’*

Objective 8D – *‘To undertake a feasibility study to determine the optimal location for, and to develop, a water sports hub on the River Nore.’*

Objective 8G – *‘Investigate the development of a horse trail/bridle path at Woodstock estate.’*

Objective 8H – *‘To complete the development of the linear park along the River Nore in the area of the Abbey Quarter.’*

Objective 8I – *‘To extend the linear park at the Abbey Quarter to link with the existing section of the River Nore Linear Park at Riverside Drive.’*

Objective 8J – *‘To complete the construction of the Kilkenny Greenway, connecting New Ross to Waterford.’*

The Development Plan has been subject to SEA, AA and SFRA. These are discussed, where relevant, below.

#### 4.5 Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027)

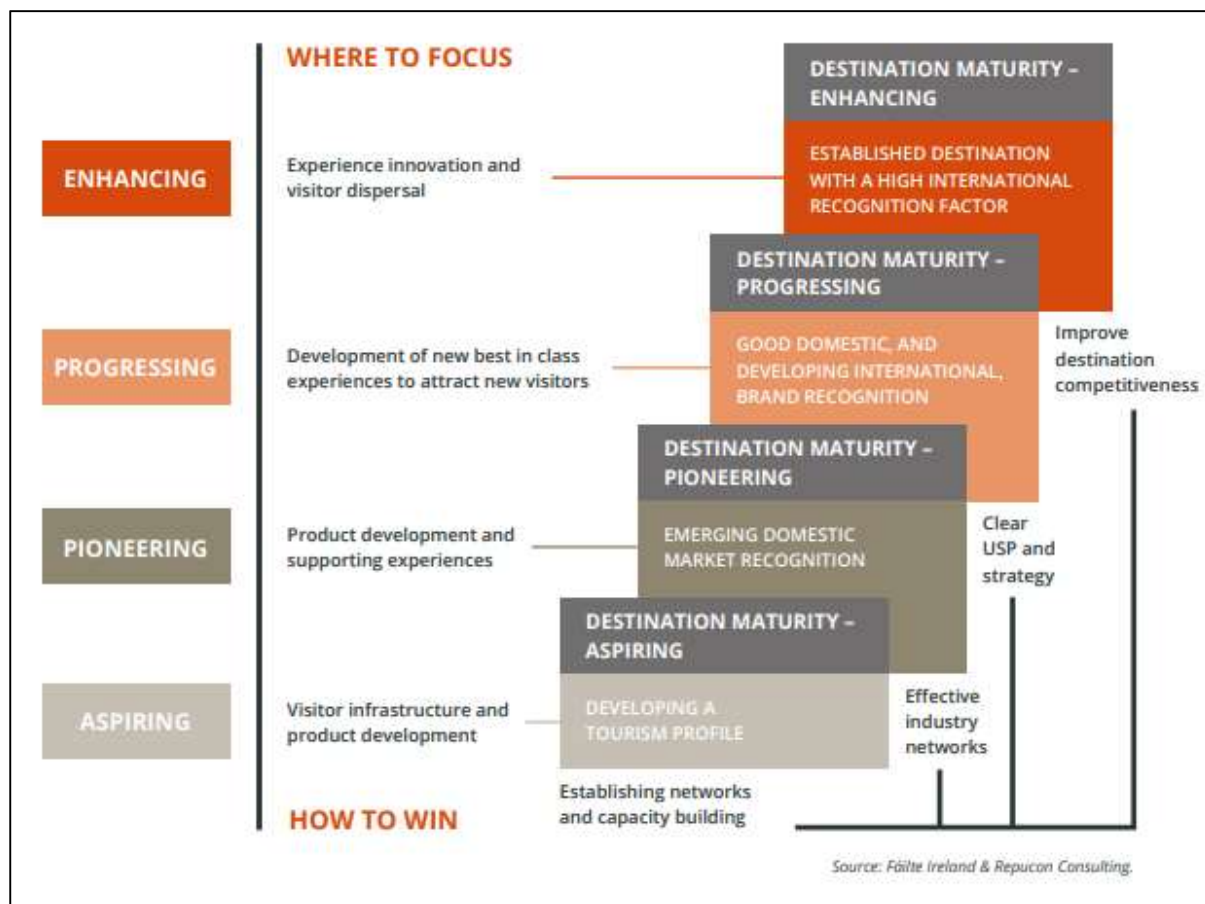
Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). The purpose of the Regional Tourism Strategies is to identify sustainable tourism development priorities that will unlock the commercial potential of the region and generate socio-economic benefits for all local stakeholders and the tourism industry. These plans provide the strategic framework for the development of the KDEDP.

The Ireland Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 identifies five strategic objectives to develop the tourism economy in the region. The projects outlined in the KDEDP align to these overall regional objectives. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland's Ancient East.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure the region is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.*

A new approach to destination development is central to the delivery of the Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Strategy (2023-2027). It will ensure the appropriate interventions and supports are put in place to address the differences that exist in destination maturity levels across the region. Four levels of destination maturity have been identified within the destination development framework. Each maturity level is defined through a set of assessment criteria focused on creating distinctive visitor destinations. These include current levels of recognition within the overseas and domestic markets, range and quality of tourism products and the scale and variety of local accommodation. Additional considerations include the range of services (day and evening time) available for visitors in the primary and secondary tourism hubs in the destination in addition to the strength of local tourism industry networks.

The Ireland Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 has been subject to SEA and AA. These are discussed, where relevant, below.



## 4.6 Other Plans and Programmes

There is a legislative framework for the protection of the environment and our natural resources relevant to the KDED. **Table 4.1** below provides a list of the principle legislative framework.

**Table 4.2** and **Table 4.3** below provide a working list of the principal plans and programmes influencing the formulation of the KDED and the Environmental Report, either directly or through European, National and / or County level policy. The relationship with other plans and programmes is discussed, as appropriate, under the Current State of the Environment in **Section 5** of this Report.

**Table 4.1 Legislative Framework**

Legislative Framework	
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended	Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended	Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EEC)	Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by (2014/52/EU)	Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU) as amended by (EU/2023/2413)
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended)

Legislative Framework	
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979	Renewable Energies in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC)	EU 2020 climate and energy package
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	EU Renewable Energy Road Map
Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)	European Landscape Convention 2000
Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)	Wildlife Acts 1976-2023
Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)	The Water Services Act (2007 – 2017)
Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)	Foreshore Act 1933-2022
Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)	Aquaculture Act 1997-2006
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	Sea Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)	The National Monuments Act 1930-2014
EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Roads Act 1993, as amended
Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)	European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea Fisheries) Regulations 2013

Table 4.2 Relevant National & Regional Plans and Programmes

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)	National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development
National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030	Climate Action Roadmap 2023
Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022	National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region	Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)
Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020	The Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)
National Mitigation Plan 2017	Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042
Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)
Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)	Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework 2009
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2022)	Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021
Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness - 2016	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan
National 3 <sup>rd</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2017-2020
National 4 <sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	The National Broadband Plan 2020
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014- 2020	National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025
Draft National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2030	Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
National CFRAMS Programme	Heritage Ireland 2030
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021	Food Harvest 2020
Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027	National Adaptation Framework Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2018 and Review of the National Adaptation Framework 2022
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)	Climate Action Plan 2024
South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Water Services Strategic Plan / Capital Investment Programme (Irish Water)
People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025	Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) & Ireland Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan	Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019 – 2021	Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices 2021 - 2023
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways	National Physical Activity Plan 2013 – 2025

**Table 4.3 Relevant Local Plans and Programmes**

Local Plans and Programmes	
Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027	Kilkenny County Council Pollinator Programme 2022
Draft Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028	Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021
Abbey Quarter Masterplan 2023	Kilkenny Local Transport Plan 2021-2027
County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide	Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy 2018-2022
Kilkenny County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024	Kilkenny Noise Action Plan 2019 – 2023

Some of the key Plans / Programmes, which were subject to SEA and AA, are discussed further in the following sections.

## 5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline)

### 5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the KDEDP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the KDEDP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the KDEDP, if unmitigated.

### 5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

The *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027* states that it is Council policy to *support the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland*. The development of high quality tourism is an objective (Objective 5C - *To continue to develop sustainable high quality tourism, leisure and complementary activities for the City & County with the key stakeholders enhancing the position of Kilkenny as a Hero site within Ireland's Ancient East branding*) of the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – ‘*the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.*’ In the absence of the KDEDP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027* (CDP) and Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the County. The CDP details policies and objectives specific to tourism, however, the standalone KDEDP provides significant opportunities for specific set of tourism-related mitigation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

The KDEDP will play an important role in promoting and developing tourism in Kilkenny, help to attract visitors to the county, enhance the visitor experience and support the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry.

Therefore while higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan* and various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the absence of the KDEDP would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled. Less coordinated and controlled development would be less certain to result in the positive effects provided for by the KDEDP.

### 5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline

The baseline data helps to assess the current state of the environment, facilitate the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the Plan. Thus, this information creates a platform whereby existing issues relevant to the Kilkenny City & County area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of KDEDP does not exacerbate identifiable problems.

Baseline data collection is a first step in the process of evaluating the sensitivity of the environment. The *SEA Directive* requires that information is provided on ‘*any existing environmental problems which*

*are relevant to the Plan or programme...'. Information is therefore provided on existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan, thus helping to ensure that the Plan does not exacerbate any existing environmental problems in the study area.*

The environmental aspects are described in line with the legislative requirements, under the following headings:

- Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna);
- Population and Human Health;
- Land, Soils and Geology;
- Water Quality;
- Air, Noise and Climate;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape;
- Material Assets;
- Interaction of the foregoing; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

County Kilkenny is situated in the south-east of Ireland, with a land area of 2,062 sq. kilometres. The main urban centre is Kilkenny City. The next largest urban areas in the County are the Ferrybank area, adjacent to Waterford City, and the District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graigueanamanagh and Thomastown. The tourism industry is an important economic driver for the economy of Kilkenny. County Kilkenny is surrounded by County Laois to the north, County Tipperary to the west, County Carlow and County Wexford to the east and County Waterford to the south.

Kilkenny is recognised as an international destination with the capacity to deliver significant growth in international visitor numbers and a substantial increase in tourism related employment in accordance with the Government's Tourism Strategy. Kilkenny has long been recognised as the centre of Ireland's design and craft sector, and is home to the Design & Craft Council Ireland headquarters in the City and Grennan Mill Craft School in Thomastown, with centres of excellence in jewellery and ceramics at these locations.

### **5.3.1 Biodiversity**

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage.

Kilkenny's biodiversity underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the county's green infrastructure. A number of areas in County Kilkenny have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level and are protected through national and European legislation.

#### **5.3.1.1 Designated European Sites**

Within the County, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.



All designated European Sites located within County Kilkenny are listed in **Table 5.1** below. There are a further 6no. SPAs and 13no. SACs within the ZoI of the KDEDP listed in **Table 5.2** below. Refer to **Figure 5.1**.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website<sup>15</sup>. Any potential for impact on European Sites have been fully addressed in the NIS that accompanies the KDEDP and SEA Environment Report.

**Table 5.1 European sites located in County Kilkenny**

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004233	River Nore SPA	002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC
		001858	Galmoy Fen SAC
		000831	Cullahill Mountain SAC
		000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC
		000407	The Loughans SAC
		002252	Thomastown Quarry SAC
		002137	Lower River Suir SAC
		000404	Hugginstown Fen SAC

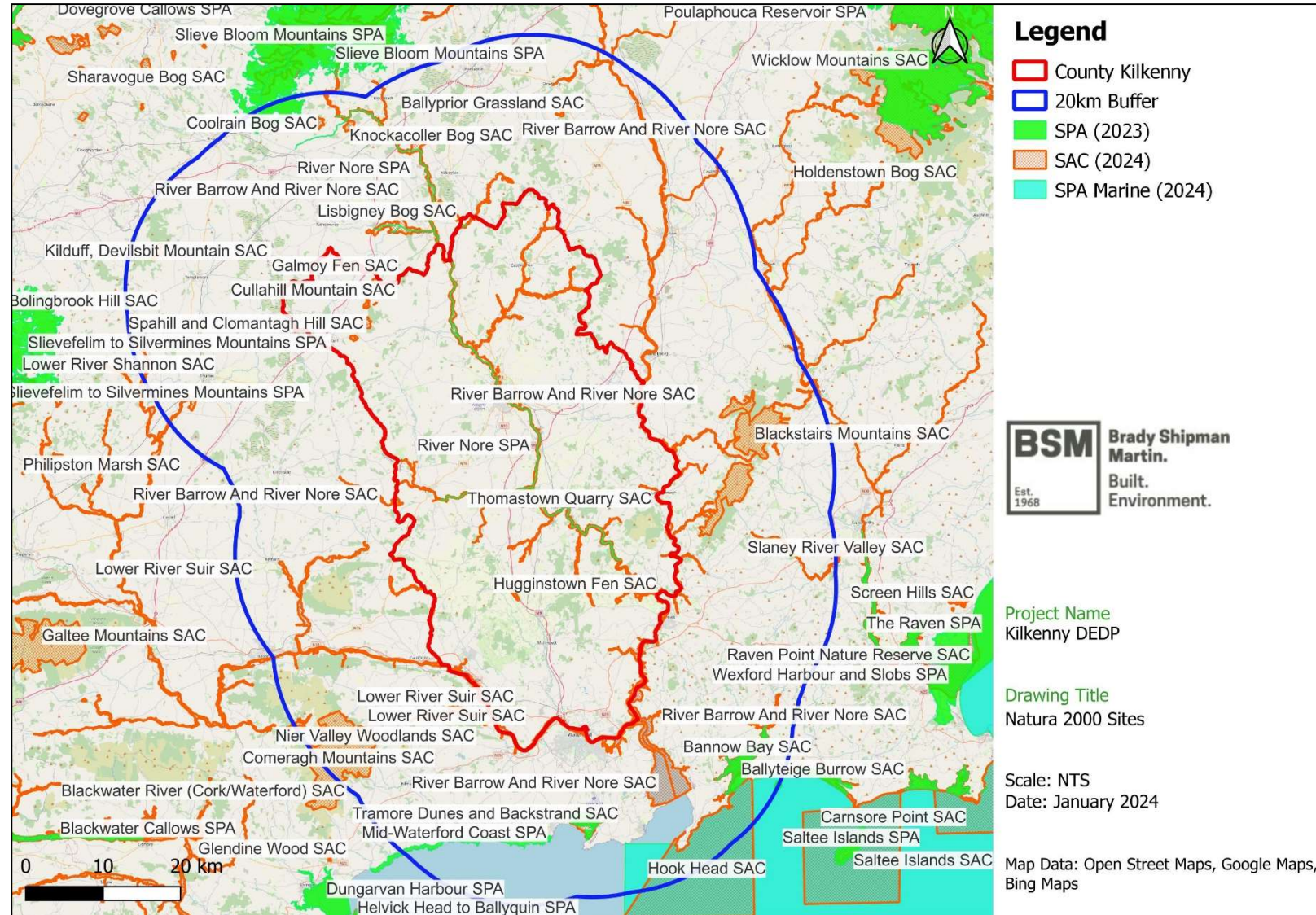
**Table 5.2 European sites located within the zone of influence of the County Boundary**

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004160	Slieve Boom Mountains SPA	002332	Coolrain Bog SAC
004193	Mid- Waterford Coast SPA	002333	Knockacoller Bog SAC
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC
004033	Bannow Bay SPA	000869	Lisbigney Bog SAC
004118	Keeragh Islands SPA	000781	Slaney River Valley SAC
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA	000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC
		000697	Bannow Bay SAC
		000764	Hook Head SAC
		000671	Tramore Dunes and Blackstrand SAC
		001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC
		000668	Nier Valley Woodlands SAC
		000934	Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC
		000412	Slieve Boom Mountains SAC

<sup>15</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>



Figure 5.1 European Sites in County Kilkenny and in the surrounding zone of influence



### 5.3.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation<sup>16</sup>.

Refer to **Tables 5.3** and **5.4** and **Figure 5.2** below for the NHAs and pNHAs located in County Kilkenny and within the zone of influence of the County boundary.

**Table 5.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) located in County Kilkenny and within Zone of Influence**

Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within County boundary	Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within zone of influence
002382	Coan Bogs NHA	002388	Slievenamon Bog NHA
		000703	Keeragh Islands NHA
		001853	Nore Valley Bogs NHA
		000652	Monaincha Bog/ Ballaghmore Bog NHA

**Table 5.4 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) located in County Kilkenny and within Zone of Influence**

Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within County boundary	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
001858	Galmoy Fen pNHA	000958	Kilcooly Abbey Lake pNHA
002076	River Nore/Abbeyleix Woods Complex pNHA	000420	The Curragh and Goul River Marsh pNHA
000831	Cullahill Mountain pNHA	000869	Lisbigney Bog pNHA
000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill pNHA	000862	Coolacurragh Wood pNHA
000407	The Loughans pNHA	000417	Grantstown Wood and Lough pNHA
000836	Inchbeg pNHA	000418	Cuffsborough pNHA
000821	Ardaloo Fen pNHA	000806	Cloghristick Wood pNHA
000832	Esker Pits pNHA	000797	Ballymoon Esker pNHA
000401	Dunmore Cave pNHA	000770	Blackstairs Mountains pNHA
001859	Dunmore Complex pNHA	000765	Killoughrum Forest pNHA
001914	Lough Macask pNHA	000812	Pollmounty River Valley pNHA
000845	Newpark Marsh pNHA	000774	Oaklands Wood pNHA
002051	Archersgrove pNHA	000744	Ballykelly Marsh pNHA
000408	Mothel Church, Coolcullen pNHA	000699	Boley Fen pNHA
000855	Whitehall Quarries pNHA	000695	Ballyhack pNHA

<sup>16</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

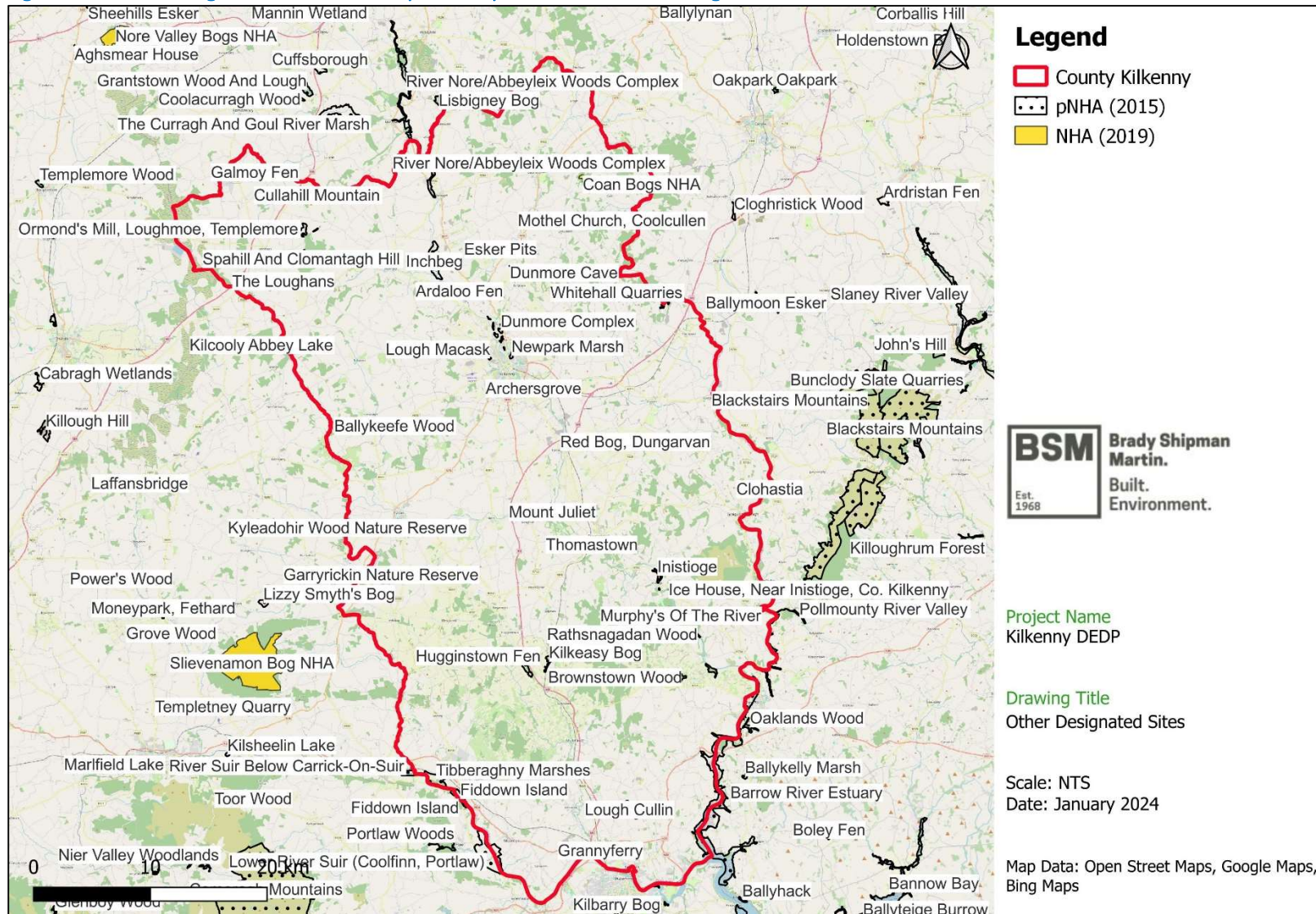
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Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within County boundary	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
000846	Red Bog, Dungarvan pNHA	000787	Waterford Harbour pNHA
000843	Mount Juliet pNHA	001738	Duncannon Sandhills pNHA
000410	Thomastown pNHA	000659	Belle Lake pNHA
000830	Clohastia pNHA	000664	Dunmore East Cliffs pNHA
000837	Inistioge pNHA	000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand pNHA
002094	Ice House, Near Inistioge pNHA	001702	King's Channel pNHA
000844	Murphy's of the River pNHA	001700	Kilbarry Bog pNHA
000409	Rathsnagadan Wood pNHA	000669	Portlaw Woods pNHA
000842	Kylecorragh Wood pNHA	000402	Fiddown Island pNHA
000827	Brownstown Wood pNHA	001980	Lizzy Smyth's Bog pNHA
000698	Barrow River Estuary pNHA	000958	Kilcooly Abbey Lake pNHA
000406	Lough Cullin pNHA	000420	The Curragh and Goul River Marsh pNHA
000833	Grannyferry pNHA	000862	Coolacurragh Wood pNHA
000399	Lower River Suir (Coolfinn, Portlaw) pNHA	000417	Grantstown Wood and Lough pNHA
000402	Fiddown Island pNHA	000418	Cuffsborough pNHA
000411	Tibberaghny Marshes pNHA		
000655	River Suir below Carrick-On-Suir pNHA		
000403	Garryrickin Nature Reserve pNHA		
000405	Kyleadohir Wood Nature Reserve pNHA		
000400	Ballykeefe Wood pNHA		
000839	Kilkeasy Bog pNHA		
000404	Hugginstown Fen pNHA		



Figure 5.2 Other Designated Sites in County Kilkenny and in the surrounding zone of influence



#### 5.3.1.3 Ecological Networks and Connectivity

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas of the County.

There are c. 28no. ancient woodlands and long-established woodlands in Co. Kilkenny. Hedgerows contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. They have an important farming function, they are wildlife habitats, and corridors, between habitats, and they also have historical significance as townland and field boundaries. The Rivers Barrow, Nore and Suir (known collectively as the “Three Sisters”) are the principal rivers flowing through County Kilkenny. They are protected habitats under European legislation. The rivers provide a rich landscape setting for the towns and village of the county and are the primary green infrastructure network in the county.

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, and provide open space and recreational opportunities.

#### 5.3.1.4 National Biodiversity Action Plan

Ireland’s fourth *National Biodiversity Action Plan* (NBAP) sets national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030. The Plan’s vision for Ireland in 2050 is as follows:

*Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.*

The Key objectives of the NBAP are as follows:

- Adopt a Whole-of Government, Whole of-Society Approach to Biodiversity;
- Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs;
- Secure Nature’s Contribution to People;
- Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity;
- Strengthen Ireland’s Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.

#### 5.3.1.5 Water Framework Directive (WFD) Register of Protected Area

Under the requirements of the *Water Framework Directive* (WFD) a number of waterbodies (or parts of) 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). This register is split into five categories as outlined by the EPA:

- Areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption under Article 7;
- Areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species (i.e. shellfish);
- Bodies of water designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters under Directive 76/160/EEC;
- Nutrient-sensitive areas, including areas designated as vulnerable zones under Directive 91/676/EEC and areas designated as sensitive areas under Directive 91/271/EEC; and
- Areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including relevant European sites (Natura 2000) designated under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 79/409/EEC.

A number of these protected areas are present within Kilkenny and these are as follows:

- The entire ground waterbody beneath the county is included on the Drinking Water - Ground Waterbody.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – Barrow Estuary and Middle Suir Estuary
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Rivers) - River Nore and River Barrow.
- WFD RPA Shellfish Areas – Waterford Harbour
- Salmonid Rivers – River Nore.

#### 5.3.1.6 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There is one area of Shellfish waters - Waterford Harbour (IE\_SE\_100\_0100) off the Waterford coast designated as Shellfish Waters pursuant to the Shellfish Directive and Section 6 of the *Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006)* require the development of Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) for designated shellfish areas in order to support shellfish life and growth and to contribute to the high quality of directly edible shellfish products. Shellfish PRPs relate to bivalve and gastropod molluscs, including oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams. They do not cover shellfish crustaceans such as crabs, crayfish and lobsters.

#### 5.3.1.7 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

The River Nore in County Kilkenny is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

#### 5.3.1.8 Other Designations

##### RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. There are no Ramsar sites located in County Kilkenny. However, relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations. The nearest Ramsar Site to County Kilkenny is Tramore Backstrand, c. 9.5km south of the County boundary in County Waterford.

#### Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68no. sanctuaries in the State<sup>17</sup>. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The River Barrow (Goresbridge) (WFS-31) and Lough Cullin (Holy Lake) (WFS-32) is located within County Kilkenny.

#### Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order.

There are 3no. Nature Reserves in County Kilkenny including Ballykeeffe Wood Nature Reserve (young ash woodland with pedunculate oak and abundant bramble and bluebells), Kyledohir Wood Nature Reserve (mixed, young oak-ash-elm woodland on a low-lying site with moisture-loving species) and Garryricken Woods Nature Reserve (mixture of ash, oak and birch woodland on a variety of soil types).

#### Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) enables local authorities to preserve any single tree or group of trees and brings them under planning control. Tree preservation orders are only made if it appears that a tree or group of trees, need to be protected in the interests of amenity in the environment. The *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) has further outlined the legal framework and procedures provided in the 1963 Act to make a TPO. There are 5no. TPOs within County Kilkenny.

#### 5.3.1.9 Biodiversity Issues

Ireland is currently experiencing a decline in floral and faunal populations. Implementation of measures to achieve the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the objectives of the WFD are likely to benefit protected sites in the future.

Certain developments and activities associated with urban developments, tourism and recreation that are located within, or close to, ecologically sensitive sites can give rise to significant environmental pressures. Within Kilkenny, the protection of waterways, wetlands and peatlands and the avoidance of the spread of invasive species are major issues.

Existing biodiversity issues / pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species, which are also relevant to the County Kilkenny, include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, recreational activity works.

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<sup>17</sup> NPWS (2021).



- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of commercial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example development within watercourses.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes,
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at coastal sites, riverside walkways, pressure from increased visitor numbers etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.

### 5.3.2 Population and Human Health

#### 5.3.2.1 Population

The administrative area of Kilkenny covers an area of over 2,062 sq. kilometre. County Kilkenny is surrounded by County Laois to the north, County Tipperary to the west, County Carlow and County Wexford to the east and County Waterford to the south. The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) outlines that by 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in Ireland.

The 2022 Census results showed that the population for County Kilkenny was 104, 160<sup>18</sup> persons, an increase of c. 5.0% from the 2016 census (99, 232<sup>19</sup> persons). The 2016 Census showed that the population of Kilkenny was an increase of c. 4.0% from the 2011 census (95, 419<sup>20</sup> persons). There has been an increase in the population of the County from 2011 to 2022. Refer to **Figure 5.3** below for the overall population change for the County between 1841 to 2022.

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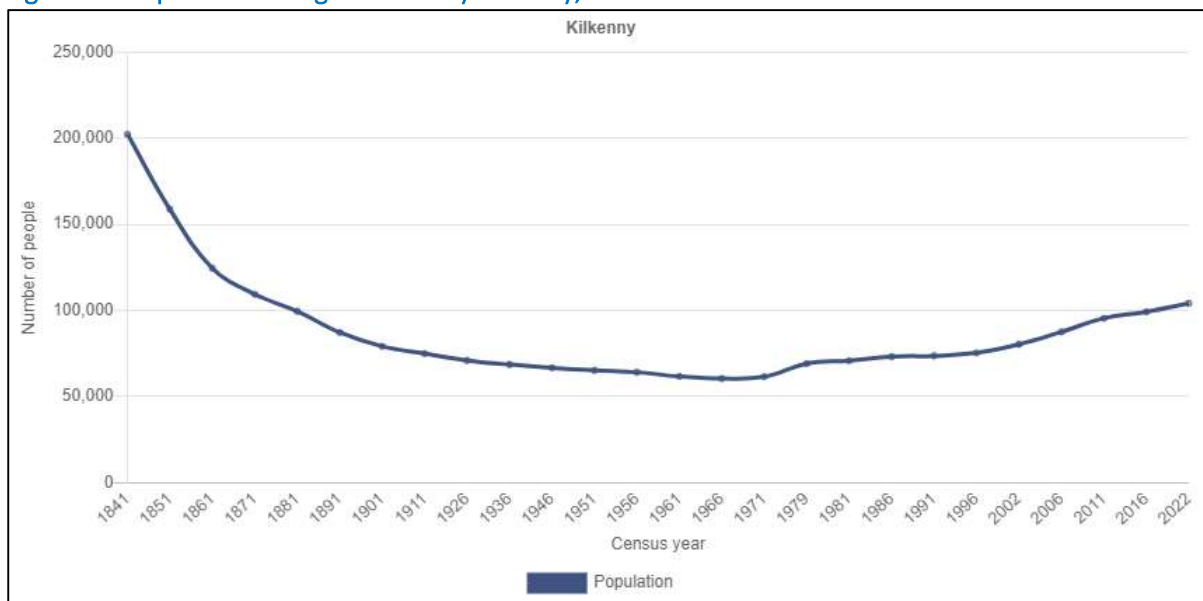
<sup>18</sup> 2022 Census Data : <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2022&boundary=C03789V04537&guid=2ae19629-14a8-13a3-e055-000000000001>

<sup>19</sup> 2016 Census Data : <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2016&boundary=C03849V04599&guid=2ae19629-14a8-13a3-e055-000000000001>

<sup>20</sup> 2011 Census data : <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2011&boundary=C03994V04752&guid=C07>



Figure 5.3 Population change for County Kilkenny, 1841 to 2022<sup>21</sup>



### 5.3.2.2 Socio-Economic Trends

Kilkenny city is identified as a self-sustaining regional driver with a significant population and as a major centre for delivery of public services, with public and private hospitals, third level education, courts, local and national government functions as well as economic and business roles and higher order retail functions.

The County as a whole boasts a strong indigenous industry in sectors such as food and drink (e.g. Glanbia, Connolly Red Mills and artisan food producers) as well as the craft sector. The city has a high profile nationally and internationally as a medieval city and a centre for tourism, festivals, heritage and the arts.

#### Age profiles / Age dependency ratio

The age structure of a population is influenced by patterns of natural increase and migration. The age dependency ratio is the proportion of population in the young (0-14 years) and old (65 years and above) cohorts to the working population cohort (15-64 years). The age structure of the population of County Kilkenny reflects the future housing requirements, school requirements and community services.

The age structure of the population indicates that the County in 2022 has a relatively young and working population (42 years and 10 years in 2022) and corresponds to that of the State (41 years).

Child dependency<sup>22</sup> in County Kilkenny is high with 20.2% of the population under the age of 14 in comparison to an average of 19.65% for the State. Old age dependency<sup>23</sup> in the State has an average of 15% for the State, while for County Kilkenny is 16.4%. The working population (15-64 years) for County Kilkenny is 63.4% and corresponds to that for the State (65.02%).

The increased numbers in the young population (0-14 years) reflects a more immediate requirements for additional childcare and schools for the younger population. The slight increase in the older

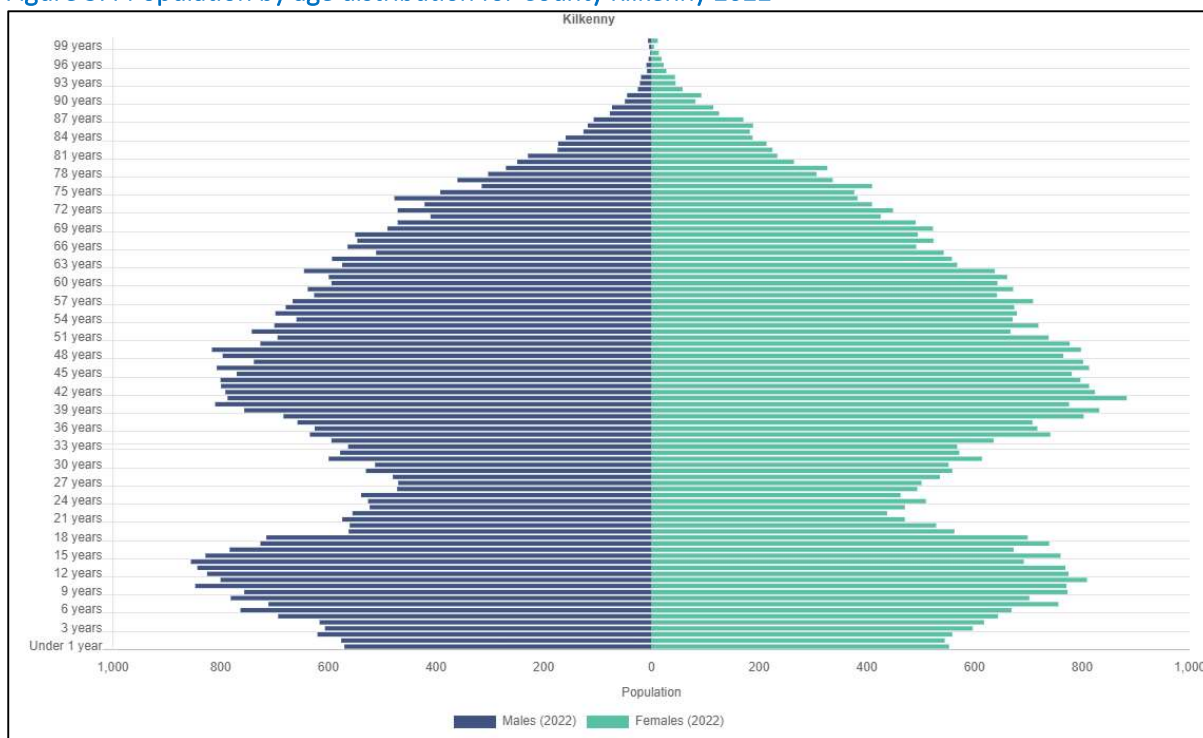
<sup>21</sup> 2022 Census : Population Distribution and Movements - <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp1/censusofpopulation2022profile1-populationdistributionandmovements/populationdistribution/>

<sup>22</sup> CSO Census 2022: Persons aged 0-14

<sup>23</sup> CSO Census 2022: Persons aged 65+

populations (65 years and above) will also have long-term implications relating to healthcare, social services and transport. **Figure 5.4** below shows the population by age distribution for County Kilkenny.

**Figure 5.4 Population by age distribution for County Kilkenny 2022<sup>24</sup>**



## Tourism

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of Kilkenny. Tourism is particularly important in that it can assist in providing business and employment opportunities across regions and leads to jobs across the spectrum of skills requirements. The quality and diversity of Kilkenny’s tourism is particularly strong in relation to its rich heritage, quality rural landscape and many towns and villages, meaning the County has a lot to offer as a tourist destination.

It is a Core objective of Kilkenny County Council to develop tourism and the County’s tourism offer, working with key stakeholders – public, private, community, and voluntary - to implement Kilkenny’s Statement of Tourism Strategy and work programme 2017- 2022 as well as maintaining Kilkenny’s position as the finest Cultural and Heritage destination in Ireland. Kilkenny is recognised as an international destination with the capacity to deliver significant growth in international visitor numbers and a substantial increase in tourism related employment in accordance with the Government’s Tourism Strategy; People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025, Food Vision 2020-2025 and the three-year Destination Marketing, Sales and Revenue Growth Plan for Kilkenny City and County. Kilkenny has long been recognised as the centre of Ireland’s design and craft sector, and is home to the Design & Craft Council Ireland headquarters in the City and Grennan Mill Craft School in Thomastown, with centres of excellence in jewellery and ceramics at these locations.

As stated in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan, *the Council will continue the development of major flagship tourism projects within the county to enhance the tourism product and will develop Kilkenny City and County as a leading tourism destination through continued sustainable expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating high-quality visitor services and the continued development*

<sup>24</sup> Census 2022 Population by age - <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp1/censusofpopulation2022profile1-populationdistributionandmovements/populationdistribution/>

*and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.*

Outside the Kilkenny City, the tourism sector continues to be a crucial element of community and economic development. Mount Juliet Estate and the adjoining Ballylynch Stud are situated in the Nore Valley to the west of Thomastown. Mount Juliet is generally recognised as a high-quality tourism and sporting resource of significant local, national, and international importance. It is also a significant built, natural and cultural heritage resource. The Development Plan sets out a vision of transforming Woodstock into a high-quality regional park for major tourism and recreation flagship project.

#### 5.3.2.3 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. The impact of development on human health is also influenced by the extent to which new development is accompanied by appropriate infrastructure and the maintenance of the quality of water, air and soil.

#### Infrastructure / Amenity and Human Health

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being. Nationally there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally.

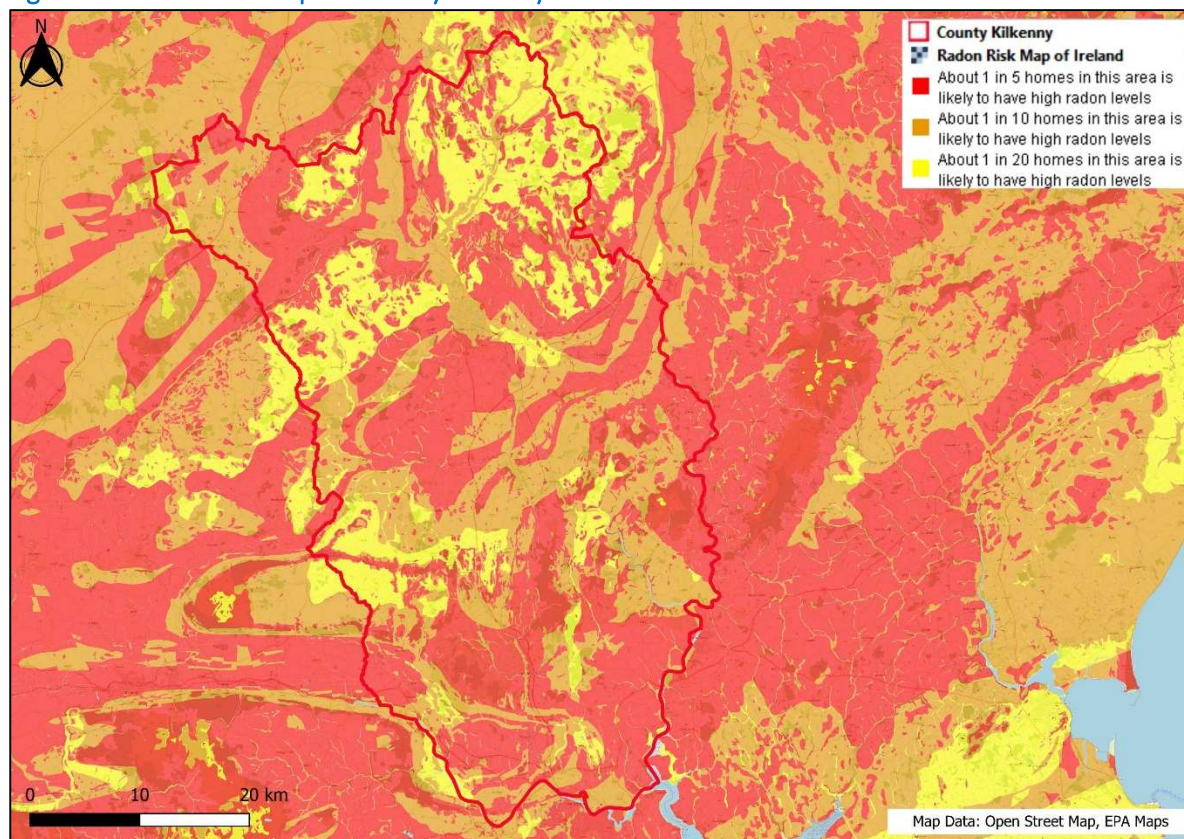
The *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2026* has objectives for delivery of several greenways, blueways and upgrade of towpaths in the County. The County hosts a number of regional-scale facilities, such as the Castle Park, Castlecomer Demesne, the River Nore Linear Park and Woodstock Estate in Inistioge. In addition to the Regional Parks, day to day recreational provision for local communities are provided by a series of neighbourhood parks and local parks. There are a number of walking routes available in Kilkenny, through publicly owned and private lands – including long distance and looped walks and hiking routes.

There are a large number of built recreation and sporting facilities provided throughout the county through a mix of public, private, schools, community facilities and voluntary organisations. Hurling and equestrian pursuits are of considerable importance to the county. Outdoor facilities include GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association), soccer and other playing pitches, golf courses, pitch and putt courses, equestrian facilities and athletic running tracks. Water sports cover a wide range of activities from tranquil uses such as angling, sailing, canoeing, rowing and sail boarding to powered activities such as jet skis, water-skiing and powerboat uses.

#### Radon and Human Health

Radon is a radioactive gas, which is naturally produced in the ground from the uranium present in small quantities in all rocks and soils. Tiny radioactive particles are produced by the gas which when inhaled can cause lung cancer. The risk of contracting lung cancer as a result of Radon depends on how much Radon a person has been exposed to over a period of time. Radon risk map levels in the County have been collated from the EPA *Radon Risk Map of Ireland* and are shown in **Figure 5.5** below. Areas in red are most at risk from radon and are called High Radon Areas, the areas of the map in orange and yellow are areas of medium and low risk respectively. However, a high radon level can be found in any home in any part of the country.

Figure 5.5 Radon Risk Map for County Kilkenny<sup>25</sup>



#### 5.3.2.4 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of the Kilkenny administrative area, include:

- Health and Well-being - continue the development of recreation and leisure facilities.
- Support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County.
- Radon - Radon risk map levels in the County have been collated from the EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland, refer to Figure 5.5.
- Flooding - Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. Refer to Section 5.3.4.
- Information on the status of drinking water, wastewater and climate change are provided in other sections of this Report.

#### 5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Soil is composed of mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Land degradation is a global problem, often caused by a combination of factors such as poor land management and unsustainable development. Land degradation may exacerbate the impacts of natural disasters.

##### 5.3.3.1 Land

##### Forestry and Woodlands

<sup>25</sup> EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland- <https://gis.epa.ie/geonetwork/srv/eng/catalog.search#/metadata/3b2e9226-c40a-44c9-b4f0-7234c0810769>



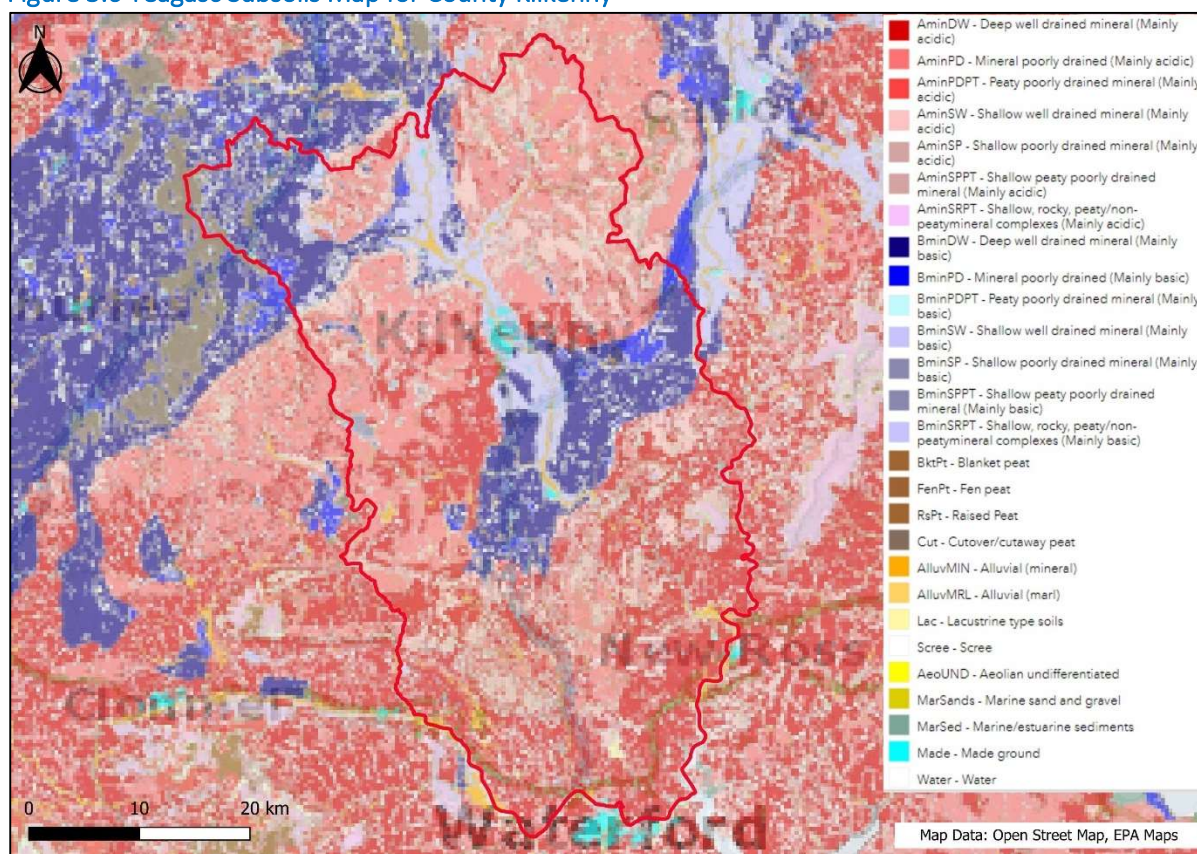
Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are also important as links in the county’s green infrastructure network. Coillte have provided access to many of their forests and support the use of the forests for recreational uses, and provide access to three forests currently in Co. Kilkenny; Jenkinstown, Coill an Fhaltaigh near Kilkenny City and Castlemorris.

### 5.3.3.2 Soils

Soil is a non-renewable resource that performs many vital functions: food, 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. The *Irish Soil Information System (SIS)* concludes a 5 year programme, supported by the EPA and Teagasc, to develop a 1:250,000 scale national soil map. The Irish Soil Information System adopted a unique methodology combining digital soil mapping techniques with traditional soil survey application.

County Kilkenny contains a range of soils that support various habitats and land uses and provide valuable mineral resource potential. Fertile soils also provide the basis for a thriving agricultural and food sector. Kilkenny comprises a mix of soil types, see **Figure 5.6** below. These soils can be impacted upon by development, land use changes and water quality.

Figure 5.6 Teagasc Subsoils Map for County Kilkenny<sup>26</sup>



<sup>26</sup> EPA Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

#### Seveso Sites

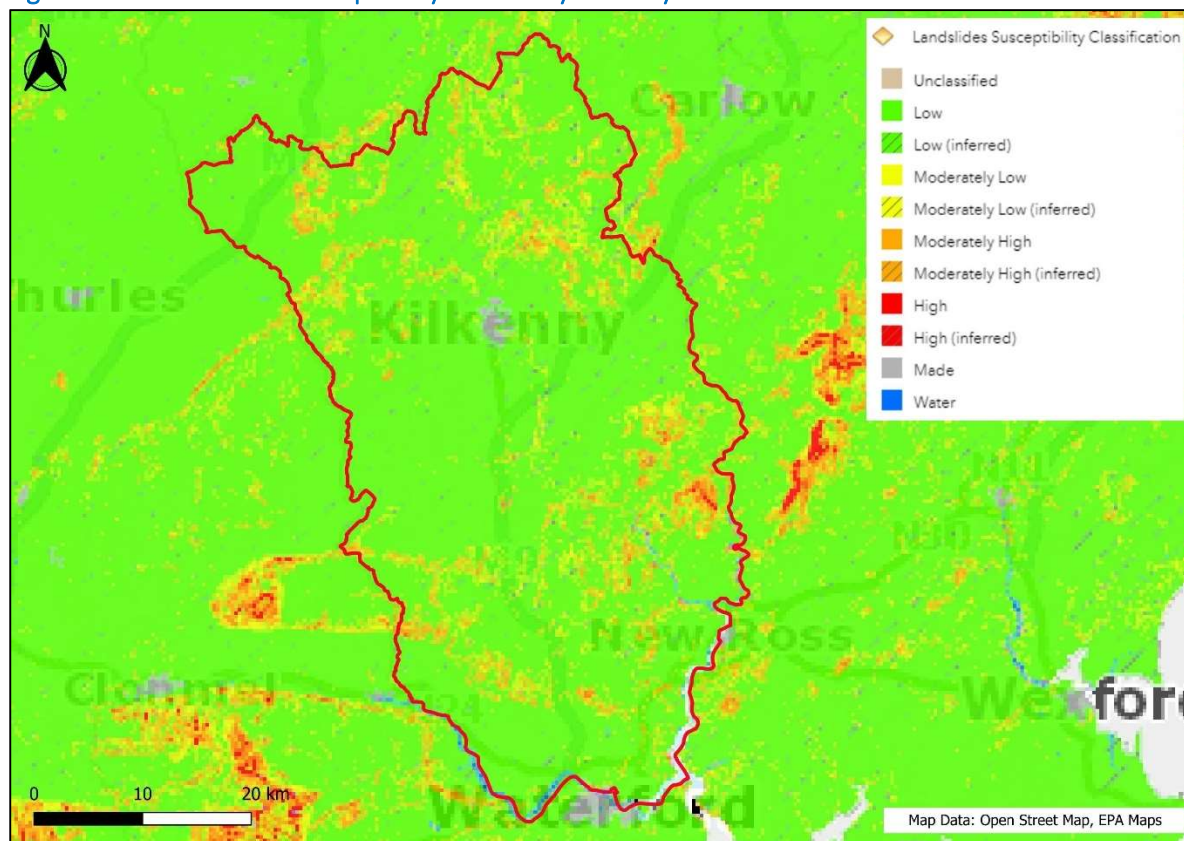
The *Seveso III Directive* (European Directive 2012/18/EU) and the *European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000* (S.I. No. 476 of 2000) apply to companies where dangerous substances are present in quantities equal to or above specified thresholds. There are two thresholds, a lower one of 50 tonnes ('lower tier sites') and a higher one of 200 tonnes ('upper tier sites'). Lower tier sites are required to have a *Major Accidents Prevention Policy* and a *Safe Work Systems Plan*. Upper tier sites are required to carry out, in conjunction with the local competent authority (which includes the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Local Authority and An Garda Síochána) a *Major Accidents External Emergency Plan*.

Emergency Plans must take full account of objectives established for nearby waters in river basin plans. The legislation deals with the prevention of major accidents. At present there are three Upper Tier Seveso (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (Revocation) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 208 of 2015) sites in the county; Grassland Fertilisers (Kilkenny) Ltd. Palmerstown, Tullaroan Road, Kilkenny; Nitrofert Ltd., Raheen, New Ross and Trans-Stock Warehousing and Cold Storage Ltd., Christendom, Ferrybank. There are two Lower Tier Seveso Sites in close proximity to Co. Kilkenny. The Councils will consult with the Health & Safety Authority when assessing proposals for development of, in or near sites which are identified under the COMAH (Seveso II) Directive.

#### Landslides

Kilkenny has a low landslide risk as much of the county is low-lying ground. According to Geological Survey, Ireland landslide susceptibility mapping, the vast majority of the county has been rated as having 'low' landslide susceptibility, with the risk rising to 'moderately low' to 'moderately high' in isolated patches throughout the county. Refer to **Figure 5.7**. There are three recorded landslide within Kilkenny.

Figure 5.7 GSI Landslide Susceptibility for County Kilkenny<sup>27</sup>



### 5.3.3.3 Geology

#### Geological Heritage

The *Geological Survey of Ireland* (GSI) provides information available on bedrock, subsoil, aquifer classifications and vulnerability. GSI has assessed the geological heritage of County Kilkenny and identified sites of geological and geomorphological importance. The bedrock foundation, with hundreds of millions of years in the formation and shaping, and the more recent history of geomorphological processes involving river channels and glaciers are what have created the underlying geological diversity, or geodiversity. County Kilkenny has a range of such natural and man-made sites.

County Kilkenny is underlain by several different rock formations and includes- Tournaisian limestone, Viséan Limestone & Calcareous Shale, Namurian Shale, Sandstone, Siltstone & Coal, Westphalian Shale, Sandstone, Siltstone & Coal, ORS, Sandstone Conglomerate & Mudstone, Silurian deep marine mudstone, greywacke & conglomerate, Siluro- Devonian granitic rocks & appinite, Lr Palaeozoic basic intermediate intrusion, Lower-Middle Ordovician slate, sandstone, greywacke, conglomerate, Ordovician Volcanic Rocks, Middle-Upper Ordovician slate, sandstone, greywacke, conglomerate<sup>28</sup>.

The GSI has identified 26no. geological sites in Kilkenny which are important Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites, see **Table 5.5** below. Geological Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system.

<sup>27</sup> GSI Spatial Resources - <https://dcnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>

<sup>28</sup> GSI Bedrock Geology - <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/publications/Pages/Bedrock-Geology-of-Ireland-Map-Scale-1-to-1-Million.aspx>

Table 5.5 Geological Heritage Sites in County Kilkenny<sup>29</sup>

IGH Theme	Site Name	Site Code	Description
IGH3	Lisdowney Quarry	KK004	A disused historical limestone quarry with natural exposures of rock along a ridge
IGH8	Ballyragget Quarry	KK009	A working quarry
IGH14	Clogh River	KK014	A section of the clogh river over a distance of 2.5km
IGH15	Deerpark Mine	KK017	Disused coal mine and old mine buildings
IGH9	Coolbaun Hill	KK012	A working open cast quarry
IGH15	Coolbaun Valley	KK016	Disused coal mines within a small river valley
IGH7/IGH1	Dunmore Cave	KK001	A large show cave
IGH7/IGH14	Ballyfoyle Channels	KK005	A series of deeply incised channels
IGH15	Threecastles Quarry	KK018	A working dimension stone quarry producing Kilkenny black marble
IGH8	Ballykeffe Quarry	KK008	A disused quarry used as an amphitheatre and rock climbing venue
IGH8/IGH15	Archersgrove Quarry	KK007	An original quarry where the Kilkenny black marble was excavated
IGH8	Bennettsbridge Quarry	KK010	A working quarry
IGH8	Dunbell M9 Cutting	KK023	Road cutting, 600m long, along the M9 motorway, with limestone rocks of the Butlersgrove Formation
IGH8	Bennettsbridge M9 Cutting	KK021	Road cutting along the M9 motorway, approximately 2 km north of junction 9. The rocks are limestones of Carboniferous age, part of the Ballyadams Formation
IGH8	Danesfort M9 Cutting	KK022	A road cut, approximately 350 m long, on the M9 motorway, just north of junction 9. The rocks are limestones of Carboniferous age, part of the Butlersgrove Formation
IGH8	King's River M9 Cutting	KK026	This is a 280 m long road cutting along the M9 motorway at the King's River bridge. The rocks are limestones of Carboniferous age, part of the Butlersgrove Formation
IGH8	Barrettstown Quarry	KK020	Disused quarry with Ballysteen Limestone Formation
IGH10	Hugginstown M9 Cutting	KK025	Road cutting in the M9 motorway, approximately 2 km south of junction 10, comprised of rocks of Devonian age, being sandstones of the Kiltorcan Formation
IGH10	Earlsrath M9 Cutting	KK024	Road cutting, 115 m long, along the M9 motorway, with rocks of Devonian age, sandstones of the Carrigmaclea Formation
IGH2/IGH10	Kiltorcan New Quarry	KK002	Microfossils linked to Kiltorcan Old Quarry. They provide a constraint on the age of the Kiltorcan Old Quarry sandstones and siltstones
IGH2/IGH10	Kiltorcan Old Quarry	KK003	A disused and now overgrown quarry, within a pasture field

<sup>29</sup> GSI – The Geological Heritage of Kilkenny - <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/publications/Pages/The-Geological-Heritage-of-Kilkenny.aspx>



IGH Theme	Site Name	Site Code	Description
IGH7	Inistioge	KK006	A series of heavily wooded, deeply incised channels along an 11km section of the River Nore
IGH15	Ahenny	KK015	Disused quarries and associated workings
IGH12	Piltown	KK013	Borehole locations and a disused quarry
IGH8	Granny Quarry	KK011	A disused quarry
IGH16	Windgap Artesian Borehole		Artesian Borehole

#### 5.3.3.4 Existing Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology Issues

Existing land, soil and geology issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Soil - the loss / damage of soil from the construction of greenfield sites for development.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites can release CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.
- Land- management of woodlands for recreational purposes.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the County, see Table 5.5.

#### 5.3.4 Water Quality (including Flooding)

Water is fundamental to all life; for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, power generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring continued protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition flooding is also dealt within this section. County Kilkenny has a rich and extensive aquatic environment consisting of rivers, streams, lakes and ground waters.

Wastewater treatment and drinking water are discussed under Material Assets in **Section 5.3.6** below.

##### 5.3.4.1 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface water and groundwater waterbodies. Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the WFD 2000/60/EC, which was transposed into Irish law under the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). This legislation requires governments to take a holistic approach to managing all their water resources based on natural geographic boundaries, *i.e.* the river catchment or basin. The WFD establishes a common framework for the sustainable and integrated management of all waters covering groundwater, inland surface waters, transitional waters and coastal waters. The WFD requires Member States to manage all of their waters and ensure that they achieve at least '*good status*' by 2015 and beyond. The ultimate deadline for Member States for achievement of '*good*' status is 2027 at the latest.

**5.3.4.2 Surface Waterbodies**

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland was divided into eight River Basin Districts (RBDs) or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The first cycle of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ran from 2009-2015, where the eight RBDs devised separate plans with the objective of achieving at least ‘good’ status for all waters by 2015.

The second cycle of the RBMP 2018-2021 merged all eight RBDs to form one national RBD. The RBMP sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve ‘good’ ecological status in waterbodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. The third cycle of the RBMP 2022-2027 is currently being prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in line with the *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC).

Water quality data is also collected by the EPA to provide an overall status of water quality. The monitoring programme, as part of the WFD, assesses water quality but also water trends of rivers in relation to ecological and physio-chemical quality. The WFD status of rivers ranges from ‘high’ to ‘bad’. The EPA also undertakes water quality surveys for transitional and coastal waterbodies.

Water quality in Ireland has deteriorated over the past two decades. Overall, the water quality is declining and the number of water bodies in satisfactory condition (high or good status) across rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters has decreased under the last WFD monitoring cycle 2016-2021 as compared to the previous assessment which covered the period 2013-2018.

Table 5.6 below has a list of the **WFD Catchments** and **WFD Sub-Catchments** in County Kilkenny.

**Table 5.6 WFD Catchments and Sub-Catchments in County Kilkenny**

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
Nore Catchment (15)	Goul_SC_010 (15_15)
	Erkina_SC_010 (15_14)
	Nore_SC_050 (15_16)
	Nore_SC_070 (15_21)
	Nore_SC_060 (15_7)
	Dinin[North]_SC_010 (15_12)
	Dinin[South]_SC_010 (15_3)
	Nore_SC_080 (15_8)
	Nore_SC_100 (15_4)
	Nore_SC_090 (15_6)
	Munster_SC_010 (15_5)
	King’s[Kilkenny]_SC_010 (15_11)
	Nore_SC_110 (15_19)
	Nore_SC_120 (15_17)
	Glory_SC_010 (15_2)
	Nore_SC_130 (15_20)
Nore_SC_140 (15_18)	

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
Barrow Catchment (14)	Barrow_SC_120 (14_8)
	Barrow_SC_130 (14_7)
Suir Catchment (16)	Suir_SC_040 (16_21)
	Suir_SC_010 (16_22)
	Anner_SC_010 (16_24)
	Blackwater[Kilmacow]_SC_010
	Lingaun_SC_010 (16_15)
	Pil_SC_010 (16_27)

#### 5.3.4.3 Surface Water Quality

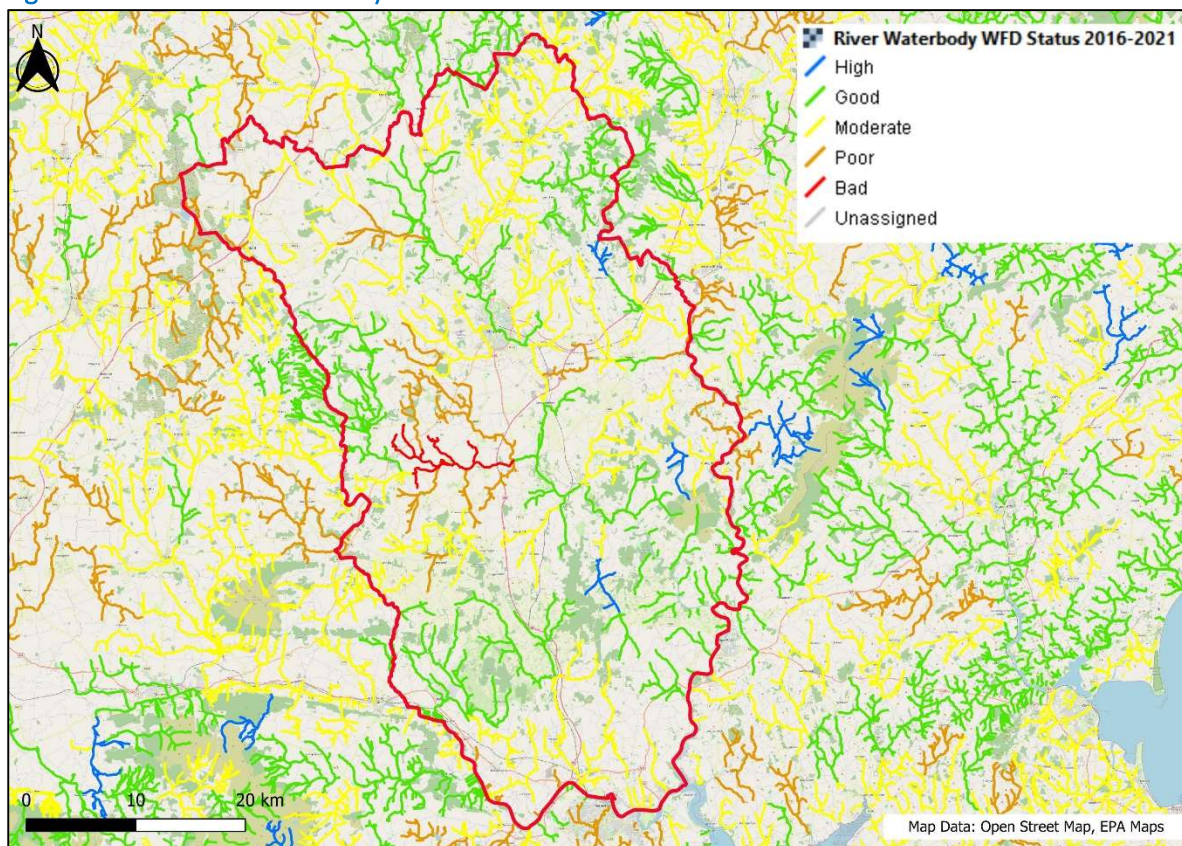
The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The status of the **river waterbodies** in County Kilkenny range from '*bad*' to '*high*', however the majority of the major river waterbodies range from '*poor*' to '*high*'.

EPA data, on the biological quality of watercourses, based on monitoring up to 2021, indicates that 3no. river achieved '*high*' status; 23no. of monitored river waterbodies in County Kilkenny achieved a '*good*' status; 26no. achieved a '*moderate*' status; 10no. were '*poor*'; and 1no. was bad.

The WFD water quality status of the river waterbodies in the County Kilkenny is shown in **Figure 5.8** below.

Figure 5.8 WFD River Waterbody Status 2016-2021<sup>30</sup>



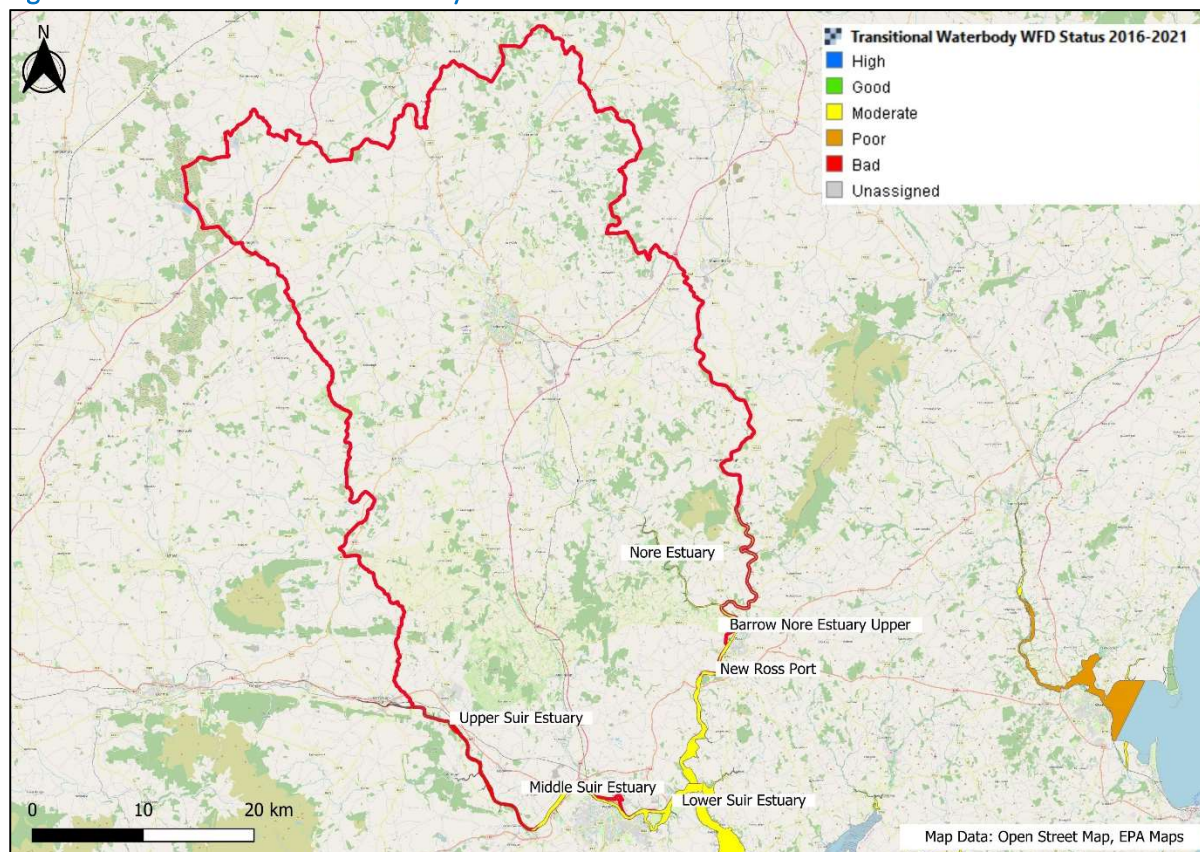
There are no lakes in County Kilkenny which are designated WFD operational monitoring lakes.

There are six transitional WFD waterbodies within County Kilkenny, Upper Suir Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0600) was designated 'bad' under WFD Status 2016-2021, Nore Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0400), Barrow Nore Estuary Upper (IE\_SE\_100\_0250), New Ross Port (IE\_SE\_100\_0200), Lower Suir Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0500) and Middle Suir Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0550) achieved 'moderate' status. Refer to **Figure 5.9** below.

<sup>30</sup> EPA Water Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>



Figure 5.9 WFD Transitional Waterbody Status 2016-2021<sup>31</sup>



#### 5.3.4.4 Groundwater and Aquifer Vulnerability

The *EU Groundwater Directive* (2006/118/EC) uses a holistic approach to groundwater by addressing the relationships between groundwater, surface water and ecological receptors.

As per the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027, groundwater is used to supply some water supply schemes, and is also used by a significant number of households in the County who are dependent on private wells. A number of group schemes are also dependant on groundwater (aquifers). Underground aquifers are exploited commercially for bottled water, which can be a significant economic resource. Groundwater also contributes to the river system.

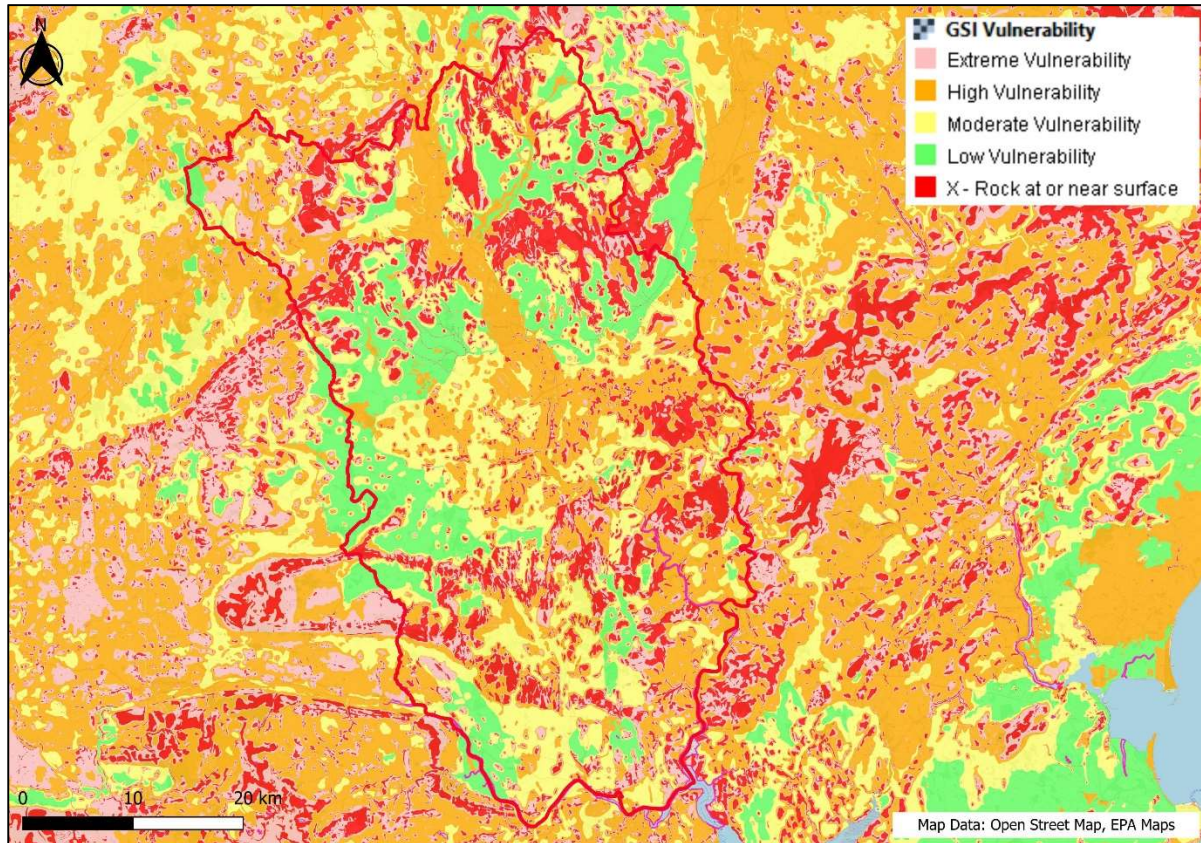
Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally 'good'<sup>32</sup> across the groundwater bodies in County Kilkenny, with the exception of two groundwater bodies. These are the Durrow (IE\_SE\_G\_156) and Stoneyford Gravels (IE\_SE\_G\_128) groundwater bodies which have a status of 'poor'.

The groundwater vulnerability of County Kilkenny ranges from 'low' to 'extreme'. The groundwater vulnerability of County Kilkenny is shown in **Figure 5.10** below.

<sup>31</sup> EPA Water Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

<sup>32</sup> EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

Figure 5.10 Groundwater Vulnerability in County Kilkenny<sup>33</sup>

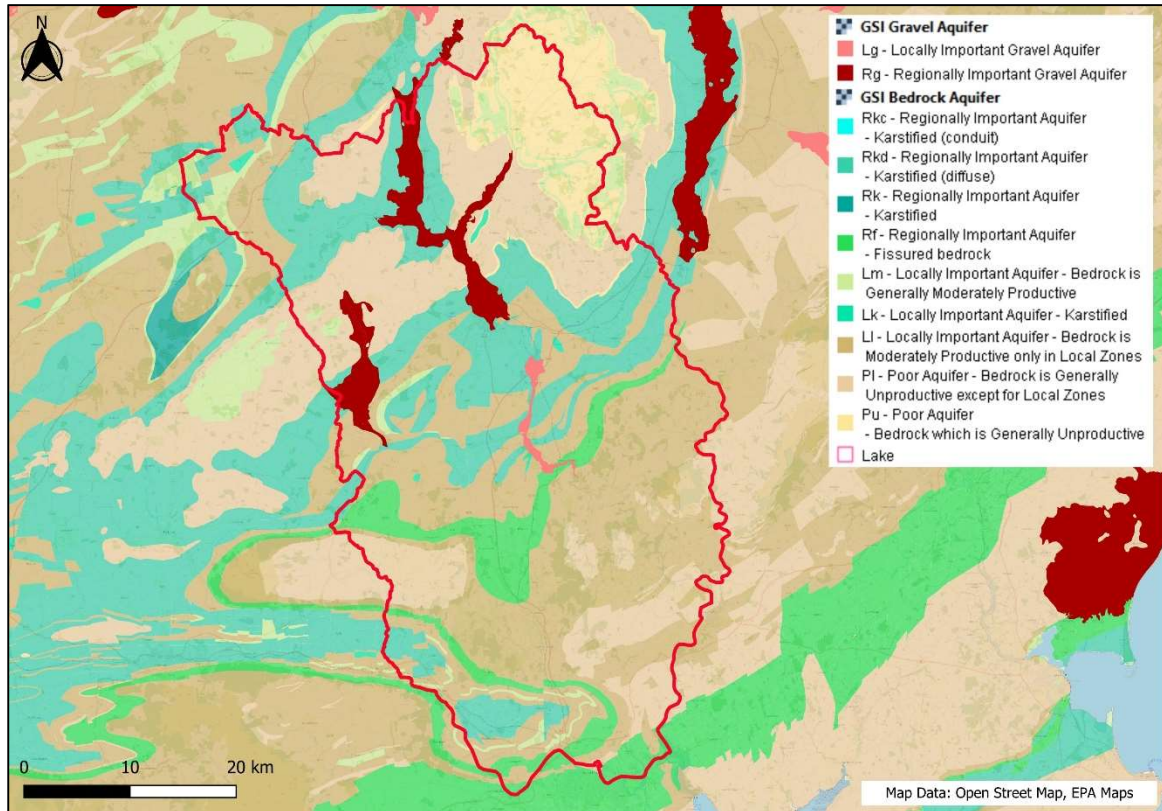


The GSI rates aquifers according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. Aquifer vulnerability is the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. County Kilkenny is underlain with both regionally important and locally important bedrock & gravel aquifers. Refer to **Figure 5.11**.

<sup>33</sup> GSI Spatial Resources- <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>



Figure 5.11 Bedrock and Gravel Aquifer – County Kilkenny<sup>34</sup>



#### 5.3.4.5 Flooding and Flood Risk

The underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels are, essentially uncontrollable. Floods are usually caused by a combination of events including overflowing river banks, heavy rains, coastal storms or blocked or overloaded drainage systems and an increase in development and impermeable surfacing.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body for flood risk management. As part of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared. The main sources of flooding in Kilkenny are fluvial and other sources are pluvial and groundwater flooding.

Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle shall demonstrate the use of the sequential approach in terms of the site layout and design and, in satisfying the Justification Test (where required), the proposal will demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and management measures are put in place.

#### 5.3.4.6 Existing Hydrogeology and Water Quality Issues

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Water - the surface waterbodies in County Kilkenny need to be improved to achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies by 2027.

<sup>34</sup> GSI Spatial Resources- <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>

- Water - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication;
- Water - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, water-based recreational sports, erosion, industry and urbanisation.
- Sustainable management of waterways and water-based recreation activities to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural resources and heritage areas.
- Water - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- Surface, ground & transitional waters - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages. There is growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- Flooding - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criteria.

### 5.3.5 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

#### 5.3.5.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation<sup>35</sup> in Ireland highlights the need *‘to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole’*. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate *‘shall preserve through appropriate measures the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development’*.

EU legislation on air quality requires that Member States divide their territory into zones for the assessment and management of air quality. The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication *‘2022 Annual Report on Air Quality in Ireland’* which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. Four national air quality zones have been designated in Ireland, these are:

- Zone A is the Dublin conurbation;
- Zone B is the Cork conurbation;
- Zone C comprises of 23 large towns in Ireland with a population of >15,000; and
- Zone D is the remaining area of Ireland.

County Kilkenny is located within Zone D, within the ‘Rural Ireland’ zone and Kilkenny city is located within Zone C in the ‘other cities and large towns’ zone. The designated zones have been defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as defined in the aforementioned regulations. The air quality monitoring sites in County Kilkenny are located at Callan Road, Kilkenny (Station 36) and Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny (TNO4157).

The air quality index for health (AQIH) regions are calculated on an hourly basis at various locations around Ireland. The AQIH is based on measurements of air pollutants which can harm health. The five pollutants are:

- Ozone gas;
- Nitrogen dioxide gas;
- Sulphur dioxide gas;

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<sup>35</sup> S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print>



- PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles; and
- PM<sub>10</sub> particles.

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' in each region. The current air quality across County Kilkenny is 'good'. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in County Kilkenny, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

#### 5.3.5.2 Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is 'to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole', and this includes noise nuisance. The Noise Directive - Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing community policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

- 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; and
- draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.

The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities. In accordance with *Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006)*, a *Noise Action Plan* was prepared by Kilkenny County Council (2019). Kilkenny's only major noise source for the purpose of this plan is major roads.

During the implementation of the KDED, consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country.

#### 5.3.5.3 Climate

Climate Change is a phenomenon that has widespread economic, health and safety, food production, security, and other dimensions. Climate change refers to a long term, large scale change in global or regional climate patterns. In recent years, global temperatures have been rising. Urgent action is needed to address climate change and to move Ireland towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.

The ever increasing rate of carbon dioxide combustion, and the emission of other greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution, has resulted in the 'greenhouse affect'. Most greenhouse gases emissions are related to the energy generation, transport, agriculture, and industry sectors.

In Ireland, the expected effects of Climate Change are increased frequency of extreme weather events within the next century. This will include a 20%-30% increase in precipitation, greater rainfall intensity coupled with flash floods and an average annual temperature increase of ~2°C. The potential impacts

of Climate Change could have serious consequences for both people and infrastructure along Ireland's coastal areas as well as its rivers<sup>36</sup>.

The recent *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland's *Climate Action Plan 2023* sets out Ireland's national and sectoral targets in this regard. The Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan *provides a strong focus on amenity and recreation use, and the potential for sustainable slow tourism and strategic trails development, unlocking the regenerative and commercial potential within the region*<sup>37</sup>.

The IPCC Working Group II Report, published in February 2022, assesses the impacts of climate change, looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels, and is more relevant to reviewing vulnerabilities, and the capacities and limits of the natural world and human societies to adapt to climate change. The report states that economic damage from climate change has been detected in climate-exposed sectors, with regional effects on agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, and tourism<sup>38</sup>.

The Action Plan supports the further development of sustainable tourism and sustainable destination management and provides for various measures that will contribute to climate mitigation, such as those relating to sustainable mobility, carbon pricing, electricity, agriculture and the built environment.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the *Regional Planning Guidelines* are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland. The OPW has undertaken a number of *Flood Risk Management Studies* for different River Basin Districts (RBDs) in Ireland. These studies have identified the areas which are most at risk and future management plans have been advised; these are adopted by the OPW. In some cases, mitigation measures will involve the construction of physical flood defences.

The *Climate Action Plan* identifies actions to decarbonise electricity generation, the built environment and transport and to move towards carbon neutrality for agriculture, forest and land use sectors.

#### 5.3.5.4 Existing Issues

In urban areas, concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO<sub>2</sub>, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible.

Tourists contribute to greenhouse gas emissions across the same sources/sectors as local and national populations, e.g. transport, heating and electricity, agriculture/food production and waste generation.

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events,

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<sup>36</sup> GOI (2019).

<sup>37</sup> Climate Action Plan 2023 – <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/270956/94a5673c-163c-476a-921f-7399cdf3c8f5.pdf#page=null>

or very cold events with or with snowfall could adversely impact upon town's and people in County Kilkenny leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

#### 5.3.6 Material Assets

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal including recycling, transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications and utilities infrastructure. The sustainable growth of the County is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

##### 5.3.6.1 Water Services and Water Supply

There have been significant changes in responsibilities for water supply and wastewater treatment services. As of January 2014 Uisce Éireann (formerly known as Irish Water) replaced local authorities as a single provider of water supply and wastewater services. Uisce Éireann have prepared the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP), '*A Plan for the Future of Water Services*' and it provides for the first time at national level an opportunity to consider the way water services are delivered in Ireland. The WSSP sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services up to 2040.

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and developing public water services; and ensuring drinking water quality meets the standards in the Drinking Water Regulations. The EPA is the drinking water quality regulator, responsible for enforcing the Drinking Water Regulations. Private bored wells used as a source of water supply to single dwellings are the responsibility of the householder, and are therefore not regulated and Uisce Éireann has no regulatory function in this regard.

The latest *Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2022*<sup>38</sup> was published by the EPA in 2023. The report provides a summary of assessment of drinking water quality in public supplies and public group water schemes in Ireland during 2022.

Practical water conservation measures including active leakage detection, demand management and pressure management played and will continue to play a major role in reducing the demand for potable water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the County through the existing watermain networks.

##### 5.3.6.2 Wastewater Services

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) aims to protect the environment from the adverse effects of wastewater discharges by ensuring that wastewater is appropriately treated before it is discharged to the environment. Such treatment is essential in order to meet the requirements of the WFD.

There are currently 34 public wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in Kilkenny county. Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities, etc, and the Council will continue to work with Irish Water to monitor the performance of the networks and to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the County.

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<sup>38</sup> EPA Drinking Water Quality - <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/drinking-water-quality-in-public-supplies-2022.php>

In un-serviced areas and outside the main settlements, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The requirements for these systems are set out in the EPA *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses*<sup>39</sup>.

#### 5.3.6.3 Waste Management

Waste management in Ireland is regulated by the Waste Management Acts 1996 (as amended), which require Local Authorities to prepare detailed plans for the management of waste. Under the Waste Management Acts, a Development Plan is deemed to include the objectives of the Waste Management Plan (WMP) for its area.

EU and National waste management policy can be summarised by the waste hierarchy of prevention, recycling, energy recovery and disposal. For the purposes of waste management planning, Ireland is now divided into three regions: Southern, Eastern-Midlands and Connacht-Ulster. County Kilkenny is located within the Southern Region and waste management is controlled in accordance with the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021.

The Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021<sup>40</sup> provides a framework for the prevention and management of wastes in a safe and sustainable manner for ten county councils including Kilkenny County Council. The waste plan contains a comprehensive list of policies to achieve the overarching strategy and targets of the plan. The strategic approach of the plan places a stronger emphasis on preventing wastes and material reuse activities. The plan focuses on enhancing the collection of quality materials from discarded waste to build on the positive progress made in recycling. The Plan is the framework for the prevention and management of wastes in a safe and sustainable manner, and includes the promotion of resource efficiency and the circular economy as one of its strategic objectives.

The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner More Competitive Europe, March 2020, forms one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal. A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy<sup>41</sup> was published in 2020 and outlines Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.

The Council will continue to promote awareness of and promote an increase in the amount of waste that is re-used and recycled to reflect the objectives of the waste hierarchy.

#### 5.3.6.4 Transport

The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of the County. Land-use planning and transport planning are inextricably linked and their proper integration is a key determinant to sustainable development.

'*National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022-2025*' is a national document which seeks to achieve a shift to more sustainable means of transport by setting actions and timeline for Modal Change. This policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions.

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<sup>39</sup> EPA, 2010: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/water/wastewater/code%20of%20practice%20for%20single%20houses/>

<sup>40</sup> Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 - <https://www.southernwasteregion.ie/content/southern-region-waste-management-plan-2015-2021-associated-reports>

<sup>41</sup> DCCA (2020).

The Policy aims to improve the delivery of sustainable mobility by –

- *Implementing the accompanying action plan to 2025 and a reviewed and updated action plan for 2026 to 2030.*
- *Establishing a Leadership Group to oversee and drive implementation of the Policy and delivery of the action plan, and agree a programme of “pathfinder” projects at local level.*
- *Introducing a new annual National Household Travel Survey to measure progress against the Policy’s targets.*
- *Convening a new National Sustainable Mobility Forum to provide a platform for collaborative engagement with national, regional and local stakeholders.*
- *Increasing public engagement around the benefits of sustainable mobility and raising awareness of the availability of alternative options to the private car.*
- *Establishing a new National Transport Authority Advisory Council to engage with the NTA around the discharge of its functions.*
- *Developing a transport research network to support existing research programmes and draw on the sustainable mobility expertise available across academia and industry, both in Ireland and internationally.*

The national road network caters for the efficient and safe movement of long-distance traffic. The network also provides strategic links for the towns within the county and within the South-East region as a whole. There are ten national roads within County Kilkenny. There are 421km of regional routes in the County. Regional roads provide important strategic linkages within the county and to the national road network and other counties.

The improved provision of alternatives to the private car should bring about a reduction in demand for private car journeys and a commensurate increase in public transport, walking and cycling. Providing public transport and a network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths and cycleways within local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage walking and cycling.

The development of public transport is critical in achieving more sustainable travel patterns and a reduced reliance on the car. Bus Éireann and a number of private operators operate services throughout County Kilkenny. Kilkenny is well served by a number of regional services providing national and regional connectivity to key urban centres such as Dublin, Cork and Waterford.

There are two passenger railway lines in use in the county. A spur from Kilkenny City at Lavistown connects to the Dublin-Waterford main passenger line. There are stations on the line at Thomastown and Kilkenny City. The Waterford-Limerick passenger line runs in the south of the county, serving Waterford and Carrick-on-Suir stations.

Air travel is essential for industrial, commercial and tourism development. The nearest airport to Kilkenny is the Waterford Airport, south of Waterford City centre.

It is Council policy to support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County<sup>42</sup>.

#### **5.3.6.5 Energy**

The existing transmission network in County Kilkenny comprises mostly 110 kilovolt (kV) circuits and one 220 kV circuit in the south of the county. There is one transmission substation within the County at Clara near Kilkenny City, which is served by two 110 kV overhead lines. The Council recognises the

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<sup>42</sup> Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>

need to increase electrical infrastructure capacity and security. Kilkenny also has excellent renewable energy resources which is critical to growing component of Irish energy supply.

#### 5.3.6.6 Telecommunications

High-speed broadband and telecommunications is core to competitiveness. The National Broadband Plan 2019<sup>43</sup> (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. Ireland has made significant progress in recent years in terms of broadband connectivity at all levels: international connectivity, backhaul networks, Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and local access networks. Since its publication, significant investment has been made in upgrading and modernising networks which support the provision of broadband and telecommunications services, with significant additional investment expected over the coming years. The *'Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework'* (2022) is intended to assist Ireland in maximising the socio-economic benefits from the digitisation trend.

Kilkenny City & County Council recognises the essential need for high quality communications and information technology networks in assuring the competitiveness of the county's economy and its role in supporting development.

#### 5.3.6.7 Utilities

Gas and electricity are the energy utilities which have traditionally supported homes and businesses across County Kilkenny.

ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. EirGrid manages the higher capacity electricity network which supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of energy and electricity, whilst the ESB manages and operates the distribution network supplying electricity to homes, businesses, schools and institutions.

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) are the utility provider responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas. The national gas mains network traverses County Kilkenny from the north west to south east, serving Kilkenny City and Ballyragget in the north of the county before continuing to Tipperary from where it serves Waterford via Carrick-on-Suir. A spur from this line starts south of Kilkenny City, from where it runs in a south eastern direction, serving both Great Island and Wexford Town. A spur from the Waterford pipeline in turn serves Ferrybank and Belview Port in the south of the County. Subject to appropriate commercial and technical evaluation, the Council will support an extension of the gas network to other significant population centres in the county<sup>44</sup>.

Public lighting is an important component of placemaking and is essential for the operation of the city. While the city is generally an illuminated area, excessive light pollution can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed. Insensitive lighting can cause light pollution. Light pollution can have a negative impact on biodiversity by affecting the normal diurnal patterns of plants and animals.

#### 5.3.6.8 Existing Material Asset Issues

The increased tourism at the Country level will result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services.

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<sup>43</sup> DCCAE, 2019: <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Delivering%20the%20National%20Broadband%20Plan.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>

Existing material assets issues / pressures within County Kilkenny, include:

- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - increased tourist numbers will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- Energy - there is a need to phase out the reliance on fossil fuels, with a shift to renewable energy resources. Identifying and enabling indigenous renewable energy will also support Ireland's energy security. New developments require excellent energy and power services which create direct and indirect emissions, particularly CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and dioxins.
- Transport - the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of County Kilkenny. Sustainable development of blueways and greenways is essential to promote recreation and tourism.
- Waste - increased tourist numbers will pose challenge in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure and will put pressure on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.
- Light Pollution - can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed which can in turn lead to inappropriate or excessive light spillage.
- Utilities - provide, protect and maintain adequate utilities to support existing and envisaged development.

### 5.3.7 Cultural Heritage

The physical traces left in the landscape by previous generations in archaeological monuments and sites and in historic buildings, townscapes and vernacular structures forms part of the tangible cultural heritage linking the past and present. County Kilkenny has a rich and varied built and cultural heritage resource. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures such as houses, shops, churches, bridges and mills are features of Kilkenny's built heritage. Kilkenny's heritage is a valuable economic resource and underpins tourism and associated economic benefits in the County.

The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other types as well as their context, whether situated on or under land or water.

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2014* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The *Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)* was established under *Section 12* of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994* and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments.

In Kilkenny the archaeological heritage dates from the Mesolithic period (8000 BC) to the end of the Medieval Period (1700 AD) and includes earthworks (e.g. ringforts), megalithic sites; Fulachta Fiaidh; early Christian ecclesiastical sites, churches, graveyards, medieval buildings; castles, industrial archaeology and underwater sites.

An archaeological landscape is a natural landscape that has been deliberately modified by a group (or groups) of people during a particular archaeological period (or periods). In 2019 the Council carried out a Preliminary Audit of Archaeological Landscapes in County Kilkenny which identified a number of potential archaeological landscape sites, including 3 sites which were selected as a priority for protection, as follows:



## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

- Freestone Hill and environs
- The Lingaun River Valley - specifically the megalithic monuments within it and the relationships between them
- Tory Hill and environs

County Kilkenny's rivers and tidal estuaries contain features and objects associated with its riverine and limited maritime heritage (such as boat wrecks, fishtraps, fording points, bridges etc.).

County Kilkenny has a rich medieval heritage including a number of walled towns and villages, of which Kilkenny city is perhaps the best known. There are also other towns and villages throughout the county which are known to have been walled, including Callan, Gowran, Inistioge and Thomastown<sup>45</sup>.

Kilkenny has a wealth of industrial heritage sites - sites of past industrial activity. This includes sites and machinery relating to extractive industries (e.g. mines and quarries), manufacturing (e.g. corn and textile mills), service industries (e.g. main drainage, water supply, gas, electricity), power (windmills, watermills, steam engines) and transport and communications (e.g. roads, bridges, railways, canals, harbours, airfields).

Kilkenny County Council has compiled an inventory of the historic graveyards of the County. The data from this survey has been mapped and is available for inspection on the Council's website<sup>46</sup>.

Historic gardens and designed landscapes are of natural heritage, architectural, landscape, cultural and historical importance. In addition, they are often the important setting of a Protected Structure. A total of 196 potential historic gardens and designed landscape sites in County Kilkenny were identified.

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.

The architectural heritage of Kilkenny contributes to its unique sense of place. The Council wishes to ensure that those buildings, streetscapes and features which are of merit are protected and managed so that they retain their character and special interest.

In 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published the *Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan* (Prepared under the National Adaptation Framework). The adaptation strategy and accompanying action plan presented in the document aim to:

- Build adaptive capacity within the sector
- Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change
- Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector

A *Protected Structure*, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes:

- the interior of the structure;
- the land lying within its curtilage;
- any other structures within the curtilage, and their interiors; and
- all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

Owners or occupiers of a protected structure may request the Council to issue a declaration as to the type of works, which may or may not be permitted in their structure. The record of protected structures

<sup>45</sup> Kilkenny City and County Development Plan - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/vol1-master-ccdp-2-11-2021.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> <https://historicgraves.com/>



## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

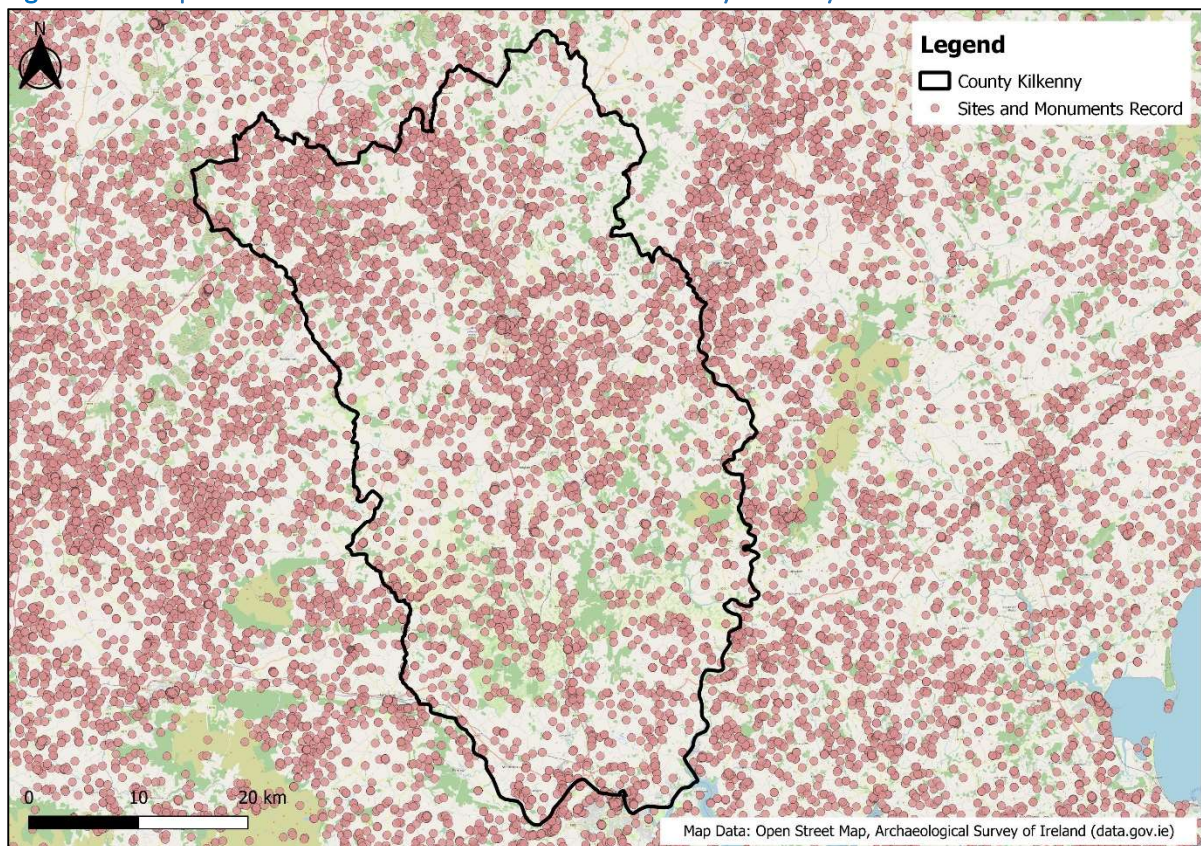
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for County Kilkenny are presented in **Figure 5.12** and **Figure 5.13** below. There are now approximately 1,400 (City and County) buildings, structures and features listed in the RPS.

An architectural conservation area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve. There are 13 ACA's located within County Kilkenny:

- Ballyragget
- Bennettsbridge
- Callan
- Castlecomer
- Freshford
- Gowran
- Graiguenamanagh
- Inistioge
- Johnstown
- Kells
- Piltown
- Stoneyford
- Thomastown

**Figure 5.12** Map of the Sites and Monuments Record in County Kilkenny<sup>47</sup>



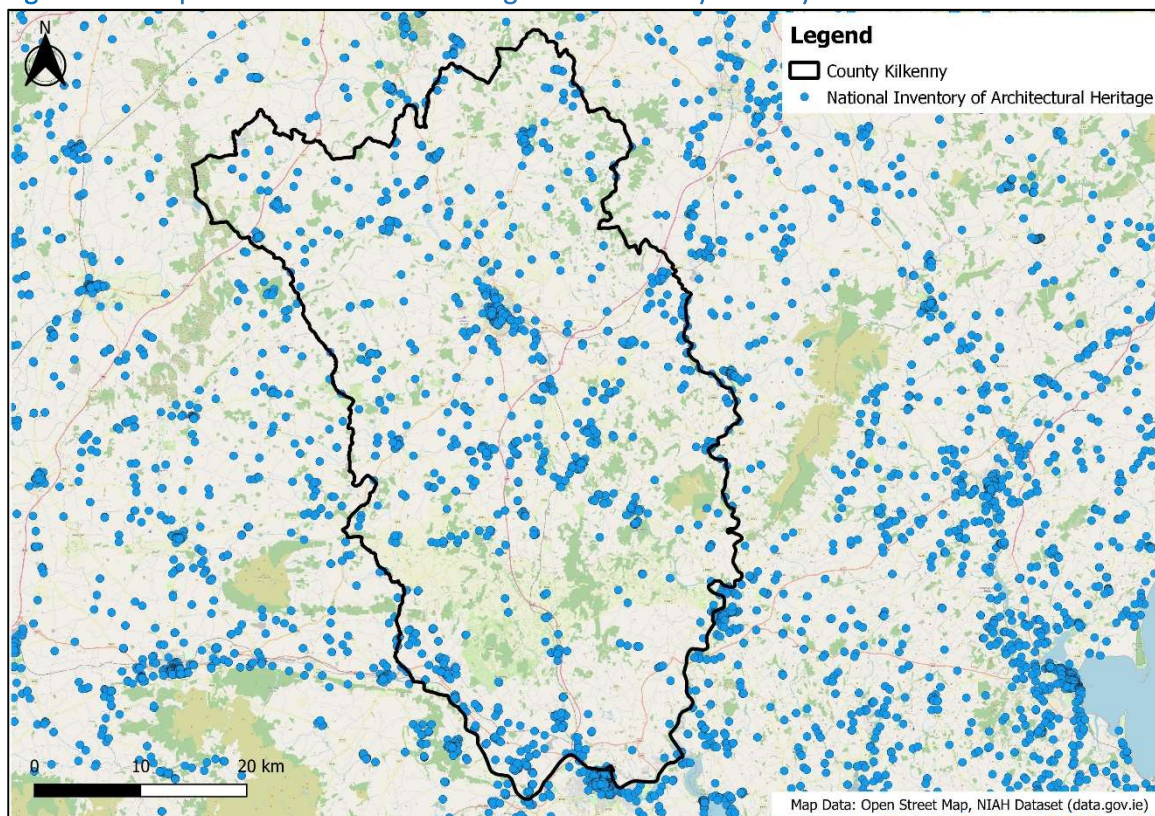
<sup>47</sup> National Monuments Service – Archaeological Survey of Ireland - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-monuments-service-archaeological-survey-of-ireland>



There are many 18th and 19th century bridges still in use in the county today. These include : Greensbridge and Johns Bridge (Johns Bridge was replaced in 1910) in Kilkenny City, Bennettsbridge, Thomastown Bridge, Castlecomer Bridge (over the River Dinan), Graiguenamanagh Bridge (over the River Barrow), and Inistioge bridge. These bridges, along with some later 18th century River Barrow bridges of Croomaboo Bridge in Athy, Co. Kildare, and Maganey Bridge in Laois, have been identified as forming a distinct local typology, and were labelled the “Kilkenny Group” of bridges.

A positive approach to heritage management enhances quality of life and environmental sustainability and ensures that the cultural and natural heritage is a resource that helps the County to compete as a cultural tourism destination.

Figure 5.13 Map of the Architectural Heritage Sites in County Kilkenny<sup>48</sup>



#### 5.3.7.1 Cultural Heritage Issues

Increased tourist activities have the potential for direct negative impacts on heritage features and their setting. Development of infrastructure, in addition to development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features of architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest. This could directly impact upon the cultural amenity resource and tourism potential of County Kilkenny.

Existing cultural heritage issues / pressures include:

- Development of infrastructure -increased visitor numbers can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features and their views to / from architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest.
- Development in close proximity to sites and areas of cultural heritage may adversely impact upon the cultural landscape setting.

<sup>48</sup> National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) National Dataset - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-inventory-of-architectural-heritage-niah-national-dataset>

- Development has the potential to impact archaeological heritage which is sub-surface. This includes the insertion of services (e.g. cycleways), landscaping works, ground levelling and tree planting.
- Architecture - impact on heritage streetscapes of regional and local importance.
- Archaeology - impact on archaeological monuments and their settings including undiscovered sites / features.
- Risk - protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk.

### 5.3.8 Landscape & Visual

The landscape of County Kilkenny is a dynamic and valuable resource which incorporates all aspects of the natural, built and cultural heritage. Landscapes provide a sense of place and characterise the county for local residents and visitors alike both in terms of a place to live and also for recreational and tourism purposes.

A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025<sup>49</sup> was published, in line with Ireland's obligations under the European Landscape Convention. The key objectives of this Strategy are the recognition of landscape in law and the provision of a policy framework to put measures in place for the management and protection of landscape, the production of a national Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) through data gathering and an evidence based description of character assessment, raising awareness and public consultation.

#### 5.3.8.1 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process that describes maps and classifies landscapes. Landscape character is defined as '*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*'. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future. The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be divorced from its physical and visual characteristics so all of these elements are considered.

#### 5.3.8.2 Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types (LCT) are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the country. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, e.g. Hills and Upland Areas.

The LCA for Kilkenny divides the county into four main LCTs and these are:

- Upland Areas;
- Lowland Areas;
- River Valleys; and
- Transitional Areas.

These LCTs are further sub-divided into 14no. geographically specific Landscape Character Areas. These includes:

- Upland Areas
  - The Slieveardagh Uplands
  - The Castlecomer Plateau

<sup>49</sup> National Landscape Strategy: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf>

- Brandon Hill Uplands
- The South Western Uplands
- The South Eastern Hills
  
- Lowland Areas
  - The Kilkenny Basin
  - South Kilkenny Lowlands
  
- River Valleys
  - The Nore Valley
  - The Barrow Valley
  - The Suir Valley
  
- Transitional Areas
  - The Slieveardagh Transition
  - The Castlecomer Transition
  - The Brandon Hill Transition
  - The South Western Transition

Landscape Character Areas are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, landuse, cultural, historical and ecological features. The landscape character areas and types are shown in **Figure 5.14** below.

#### **5.3.8.3 Landscape Character Values**

Landscape values can be described as the environmental or cultural benefits (including services and functions) derived from various landscape attributes. The Landscape Character Assessment highlights the special landscape value of several of the Landscape Character Areas– in particular Brandon Hill Uplands and the River Valley Areas of the Rivers Nore, Barrow and Suir have been identified as being highly scenic and visually pleasing, and as having significant visual amenity value and tourism potential within the county.

#### **5.3.8.4 Landscape Character Sensitivity**

The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from ‘High’ to ‘Low’ and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and / or tolerant of change.

#### **5.3.8.5 Protected Views & Prospects**

There is a need to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads and river valleys throughout the county where these views are of high amenity value. Landscape objectives of the current Development Plan aims to preserve the views and prospects and to protect views from development which would interfere unduly with the visual amenity and character of the landscape, so far as practically possible.

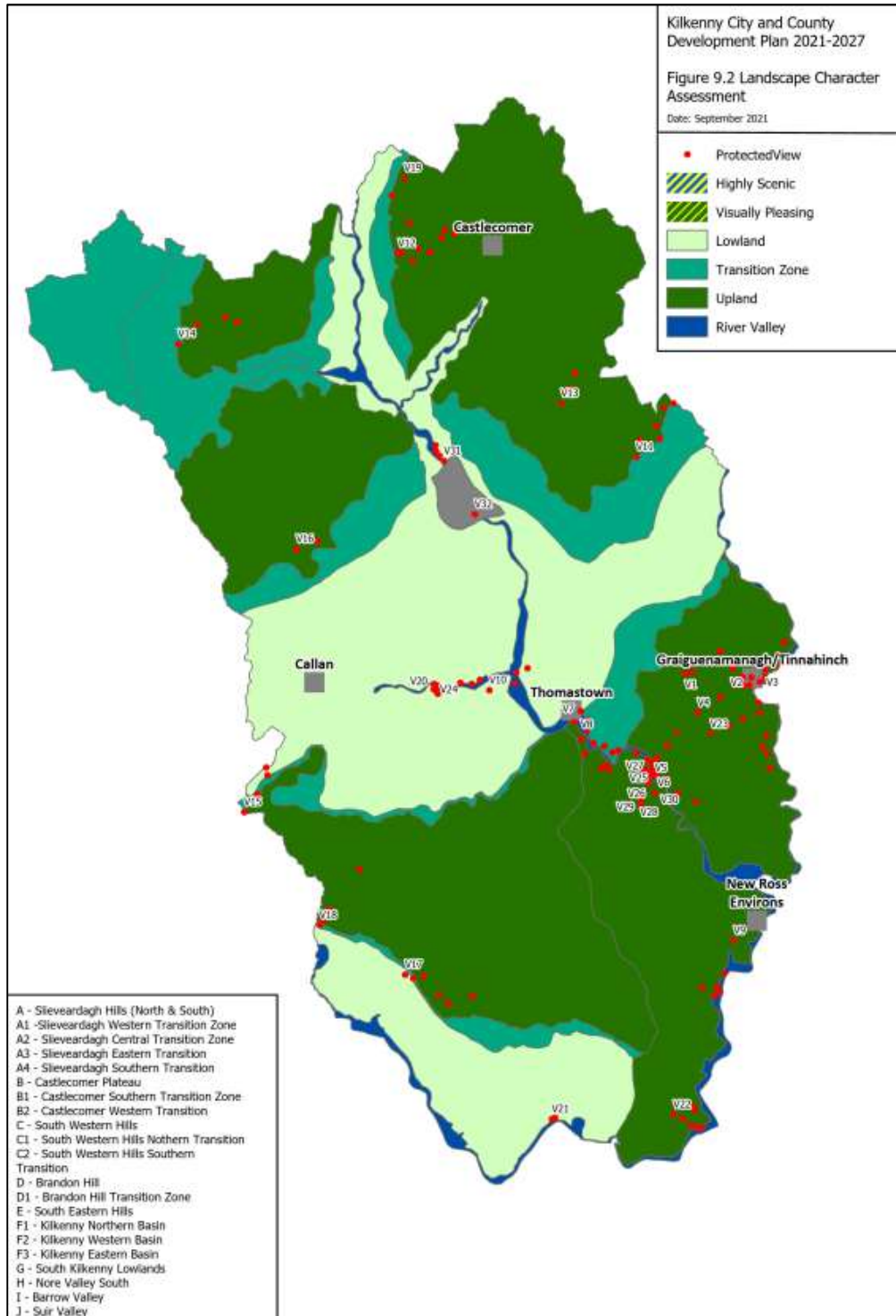
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Many of these views are associated with heritage and tourism sites and provide vantage points over high quality landscapes. These scenic views are of an amenity and tourism value and contribute to our quality of life.

Within County Kilkenny, c.32no. views and prospects have been identified and c. 17no. views have been identified in Kilkenny City. Refer to **Figure 5.15** below.

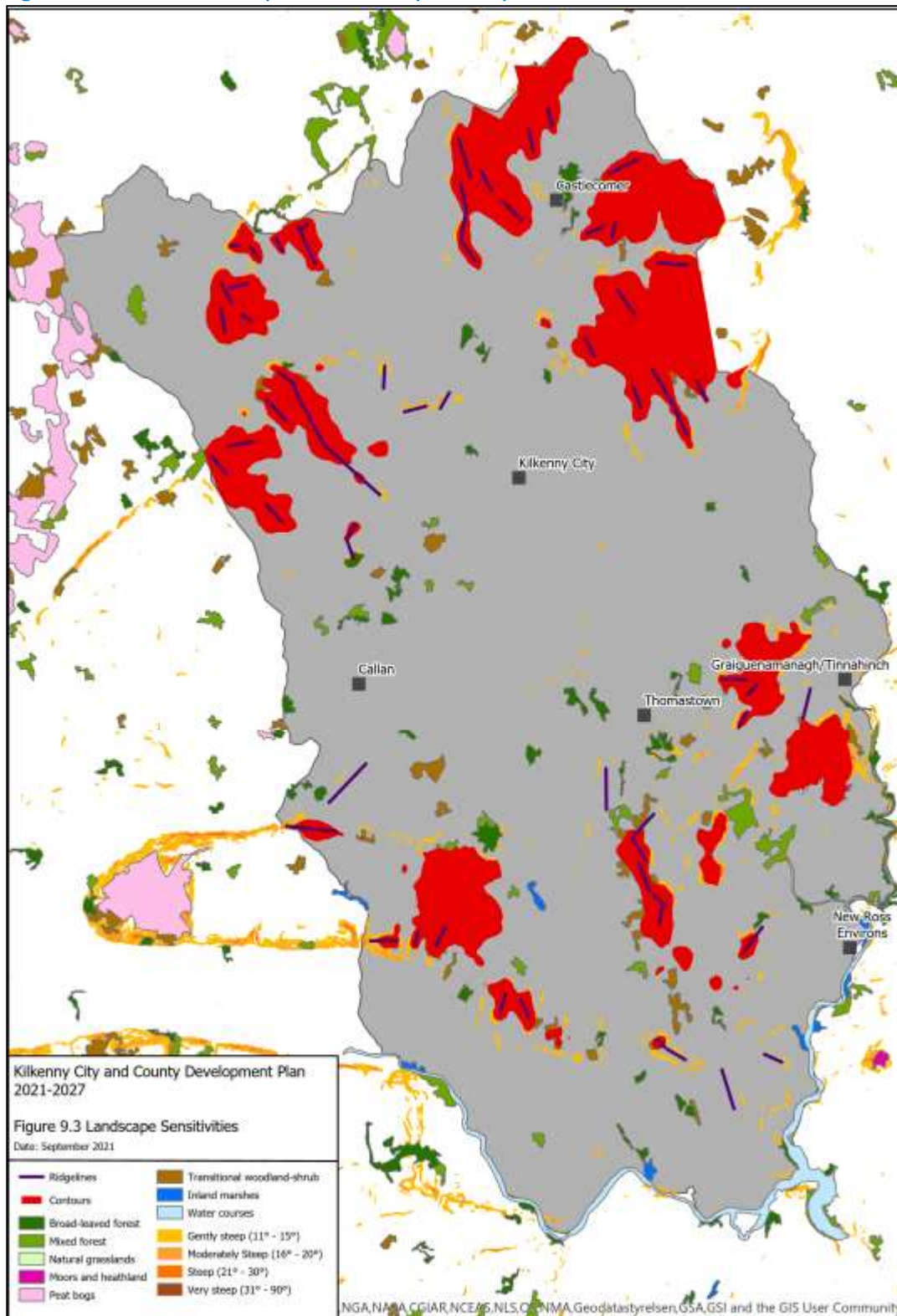
**Figure 5.14 Landscape Character Types in County Kilkenny<sup>50</sup>**



<sup>50</sup> Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>



Figure 5.15 Views and Prospects for County Kilkenny <sup>51</sup>



<sup>51</sup> Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>

#### 5.3.8.6 Existing Problems

Landscape can be considered a dynamic rather than static asset. It is constantly changing, and its changes are driven by nature itself, by direct human intervention, and indirectly through the consequences of human activity, notably Climate Change. All physical development undertaken by human impacts on the landscape.

Areas of a highly sensitive landscape have a low capacity to absorb new development and this can be a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive.

Existing landscape and visual issues / pressures include:

- New development having adverse and visual impacts on the landscape.
- Green Infrastructure - protecting the existing green infrastructure network from fragmentation and loss due to pressures of urban development within and adjoining the network.
- Ecosystem Services - recognising and promoting the value of ecosystem services that the green infrastructure network provides to the County.
- Protected views – development has potential to obstruct protected views and scenic routes

## 6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’ Given the position of the KDEDP beneath the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 in the land use planning hierarchy, the measures identified in the SEA for the Development Plan have also been considered in this assessment, with some modification where appropriate.

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the KDEDP (refer to **Table 6.1**). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the KDEDP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the KDEDP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the strategic objectives within the KDEDP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators (see **Section 10** of this Report).

**Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for KDEDP**

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species <sup>52</sup> and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B_2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.
	B_3	Ensure KDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH_2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Annexed habitats and species’ refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.



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Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC_1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC_2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.

## 7 Assessment of Alternatives

### 7.1 Introduction

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the plan will be implemented within the national planning hierarchy. As preparation of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory plan, the 'do-nothing' or 'do-minimum' scenarios are viable alternatives, as is the 'do-something' scenario.

### 7.2 Alternative 1: Do-nothing / Do-Minimum

Tourism operations in Kilkenny City and County would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan, whose objective is to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders involved in tourism activities and interest.

### 7.3 Do-something (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Plan)

The do-something scenario sees the preparation of a Plan that seeks to better manage tourism in Kilkenny City and County. The Plan will facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment.

While the Plan would co-ordinate activities and stakeholders in the tourism area, it would not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent (such frameworks fall under the remit of other public authorities). Therefore, any projects arising from the Plan would be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

In essence the Plan would present a five year sustainable tourism development plan for Kilkenny City and County. The key objectives of the Plan would be:

- Ensure local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of hero and ancillary tourism products that attract visitors and retain them for longer in the destination.
- Unlock the economic growth potential of an area by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate tourists to explore the wider destination.
- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development centred on creating strong signature, supporting and ancillary experiences that are commoditised through the creation of saleable experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to attract leisure visitors on a year round basis to Cork to immerse themselves actively in the community, interacting with local people.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

There are two separate alternatives under the 'do-something' (prepare a Plan) scenario.

#### Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects including land use and infrastructural development and land use activities. In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities, Alternative 2A would require stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the relevant Fáilte Ireland published guidance and documents.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) would have to demonstrate compliance, as relevant, with various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Further environmental requirements would be integrated into the Plan under Alternative 2A, relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

#### Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management

Alternative 2B would not include the requirements for environmental protection and management described under Alternative 2A. Projects would continue to be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

### 7.4 Assessment of Alternatives

Three reasonable alternatives for the Kilkenny DEDP have been identified and assessed as set out in **Table 7.1**. The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

### 7.5 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Whilst unlikely to have negative environmental effects, Alternative 1 does not deliver positive benefits for tourism in Kilkenny City and County.

Alternative 2A will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Kilkenny City and County, whilst at the same providing for sustainable development and environmental protection.

Alternative 2B will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Kilkenny City and County, but without ensuring environmental protection.

Given the tourism and environmental benefits, Alternative 2A is selected as the preferred approach.

Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for the Kilkenny DEDP

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
<b>Alternative 1</b> Do-nothing / Do-Minimum	Tourism operations in Kilkenny City and County would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan, whose objective is to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders involved in tourism activities and interest.	All SEOs	+/-	In comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to potential uncertain or unplanned environmental effects across all environmental factors.  It is likely that this alternative will not realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach.  In comparison to other alternatives, this approach may generate uncertain or negative environmental effects, which would not be counterbalanced by the positive environmental effects associated with other alternatives.
<b>Alternative 2A</b> Do-something Prepare a Plan with Environmental Considerations	Tourism operations in Kilkenny City and County would be facilitated, promoted, supported and coordinated through the preparation of a Plan, with environmental considerations, that seeks to better manage tourism in Kilkenny City and County	All SEOs	+	In comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to protection of the environment across all environmental factors.  At the same time this alternative will also realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach.  In comparison to other alternatives, this approach would generate positive environmental effects.
<b>Alternative 2B</b> Do-something Prepare a Plan without Environmental Considerations	Tourism operations in Kilkenny City and County would be facilitated, promoted, supported and coordinated through the preparation of a Plan, without environmental considerations, that seeks to better manage tourism in Kilkenny City and County	All SEOs	+/- or -	While it is likely that this alternative will realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach, in comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to potential uncertain, unplanned or negative environmental effects across all environmental factors.  In comparison to other alternatives, this approach would generate negative environmental effects.

## 8 Assessment of Effects of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### 8.1 Introduction

The KDEDP has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in **Section 5** of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the KDEDP. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are detailed in **Section 6** of this Report.

The *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027* states that it is Council policy to ‘support the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland’. It is noted that during its preparation the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*, was subject to full SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>53</sup>.

The environmental assessment of the ‘Strategic Objectives’ and of the ‘Catalyst Projects’ of the KDEDP are set out separately in the following sections of this Report. 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.

### 8.2 Environmental Assessment of the Strategic Objectives of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision, Strategic Objectives of the KDEDP is presented in **Table 8.1**.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>

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**Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Strategic Objectives of the KDEDP**

(SEO Key: *B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, ANC – Air Quality, Noise & Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual*)

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
<p><b>Vision</b></p> <p>The Kilkenny Vision 2033 statement is for Kilkenny to be:</p> <p><i>“Kilkenny is a leading year round destination by 2033, providing an exceptional experience blending medieval with contemporary and the great outdoors. A revitalised Medieval Mile is at the core of the Kilkenny City visitor experience linking Kilkenny Castle with iconic attractions who captivate audiences through a new experiential approach. A best in class city experience links seamlessly with the outdoor experiences across the county brought alive through our river based activities, woodlands, trails and activity centres. The destination is globally recognised as a Ireland’s home for design, craft and creative experiences. Visitors are attracted by a year round programme of</i></p>	<p>This vision statement sets a target objective for destination experience and tourism in Kilkenny. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, industry and associated workers. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>			<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p>No</p>



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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<i>culture, festivals and events, reflecting Kilkenny's association as a vibrant and fun city experience."</i>						
<b>Strategic Objective 1 : Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland's Ancient East.</b>						
1.1 Develop the Medieval Mile to become a key attractor for Kilkenny City and the catalyst for visitor attraction and destination experience innovation delivered by a Kilkenny visitor attractions network committed to experience innovation.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>Yes</b>
1.2 Harness Visit Kilkenny, Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland's marketing campaigns to drive awareness in the international and domestic markets.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county, raise awareness and have positive effect on population and human health.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>No</b>
1.3 Maximise the international appeal of Kilkenny Castle and its potential to orientate visitors to	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1,	<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
other attractions and city wide locations.	environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.				MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	
1.4 Realise the tourism potential of the Abbey Quarter and how it is integrated into the Kilkenny cultural and creative experience.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2),		<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>Yes</b>
1.5 Develop County Kilkenny into river activity centre of excellence using the Three Sister Rivers to introduce visitors to a mix of urban and rural outdoor activity experiences linked to local communities across the city and county.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. water-based activities) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. The development of new and existing blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	<p>including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, might result in negative 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 have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>					
<p>1.6 Develop Kilkenny into a world class design, craft and creative destination building on its designation as a World Craft Council Craft City and Region.</p>	<p>This objective will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>			<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	therefore, mitigation is not required.					
<b>Strategic Objective 2 : Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.</b>						
2.1 Maximise the investment in the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny to become a signature experience within Kilkenny City and enhance their role in developing a new experiential Medieval Mile approach.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>Yes</b>
2.2 Enhance the visitor experience within the network of county wide heritage experiences working with OPW to encourage visitor dispersal to county sites.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage and biodiversity. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2) <b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3),	<b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>Yes</b>
2.3 Develop the visitor experience and site capacity at Woodstock House and Gardens to become a signature attraction within the county.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2),	<b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA3)	<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	<p>heritage, landscape &amp; visual and biodiversity.</p> <p>Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain.</p> <p>The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>					
2.4 Maximise investment in the Kilkenny riverside activity facilities to become a catalyst for river tourism and linkages to river activity hubs across the county	<p>The increased investment in river activity facility will result in positive effect for population and human health and neutral effects on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
2.5 Expand the range of things to do for families through new product development or enhancing existing experiences linked to	The development of new and existing activity hubs might give rise to uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b>		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
existing or potential new activity hubs.	potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.			(ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		
2.6 Maximise the heritage of craft and artisan producers by creating year round opportunities to meet the makers and build on the investment in crafts hubs in the county. Examine the opportunity to reinvigorate the Castle Yard into a vibrant craft and creatives centre.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on architectural heritage.</p> <p>The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>CH</b> (CH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1)	<b>Yes</b>
2.7 Augment the creative experience base through the development of a new city based international attraction focused on animation.	The development of new animation attraction might give rise to uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such development and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
2.8 Grow the number and range of rural food experiences to grow the reach of Taste Kilkenny between the city and county. Build	This objective will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1,	<b>No</b>



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on the unique brewing and distilling heritage of Kilkenny City to create a unique portfolio of experiences contributing to the overall food and drink heritage of the area.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	
2.9 Support the city of Kilkennys night time economy initiatives including the use of visitor attractions and public spaces as venues for innovative events and installations.	This objective will result in positive effects on population.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the use of visitor attractions and public spaces presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from the use of these spaces and/or provision of ancillary infrastructure for the events.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
2.10 Develop a new strategy for festivals and cultural events in Kilkenny to enhance and grow the existing calendar of events and the creation of one major creative / cultural event of scale.	This objective will result in positive effects on population.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on air quality & noise and human health due to elevated levels of noise & congestion.	PHH (PHH1)		ANC (ANC1, ANC2), PHH (PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.					
2.11 Grow the accommodation base across the city and county.	The development of new and existing accommodations might result in uncertain 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.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the destination is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.</b>						
3.1 Develop the trails linkages between rural communities and Kilkenny city to create the infrastructure that will encourage the visitor to explore the county through slow tourism activity e.g. Kilkenny to Inistioge and links to the South East Greenway.	The development of new and existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations, has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.  The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects that would, if	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>MA</b> (MA3)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2)		<b>Yes</b>

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	unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.					
3.2 Optimise new technologies to disperse visitors across the destination reflecting Kilkenny's creative and innovation profile.	This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
3.3 Examine the opportunity to link Kilkenny with the Dublin to Cork / Waterford Greenway to become part of the wider regional and national trail network.	This objective will result in a better understanding of the baseline, encourage modal shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and encourage use of active travel measures, resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA3)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>No</b>
3.4 Examine the requirements to enhance the Kilkenny cycling infrastructure and the development	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health and on material assets by	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>MA</b> (MA3)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b>		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
of a network of safe and accessible cycling trails across the county.	<p>promoting sustainable transportation.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.</p>			(LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		
3.5 Enhance the capacity of existing trails such as the Kilkenny Trails, Butler Trail, Lingaun Valley Trail and opportunities such as the William Marshall story to orientate the visitor around the destination.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.					
3.6 Develop the transport links between the city and county, building on existing pilot programmes linked to the rural Kilkenny experience.	This objective will enhance connectivity and have positive effect to population and human health.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing transport links, presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
3.7 Examine new opportunities for innovative visitor orientation and way finding that builds on the destination's creative and craft heritage adopting a destination theme to link the city to the county e.g. placemaking and signage innovation.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>No</b>
3.8 Develop a series of regional connection projects with neighbouring counties destinations through product linkages e.g.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1,	<b>No</b>

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Castles, Food, Gardens, Adventure, Craft and Culture.	neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure that it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.</b>						
4.1 Provide the tourism industry training to grow their capacity and capabilities to increase their international sales linked to existing and emerging destination development opportunities.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism and also provide economic benefits to the county population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
4.2 Grow the digital capacity of the tourism industry in Kilkenny.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
4.3 Develop an experience development training and capacity programme to enable the crafts and creative community realise	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding the craft heritage of Kilkenny and also	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b>	<b>No</b>



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economic opportunities through tourism.	provide economic benefits to the county population.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				(LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	
4.4 Support the development of community experiences and create new level of capacity to ensure rural communities can realise the benefits of tourism.	This objective would result in positive effects for the rural communities and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
4.5 Encourage participation in key strategic programmes across state agencies to ensure tourism grows as an attractive employment option.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
4.6 Support Kilkenny tourism businesses to build expertise and knowledge to allow them to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of their business.	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3),				<b>No</b>

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		<b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)				
4.7 Develop the capacity and capabilities of the tourism industry to deliver an enhanced range of family experiences contributing to the development of Kilkenny as a family destination.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for families and will have positive effect on population and human health.  However, the new development presents potential uncertain 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.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.</b>						
5.1 Adopt sustainability as a core destination message and promote an enhanced sustainability focus through our environment, heritage, culture and community experiences.	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)				<b>No</b>
5.2 Achieve low carbon and sustainable growth in the development of urban and rural visitor experiences to become a	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors.	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b>				<b>No</b>

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
leading sustainable tourism destination.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	(ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)				
5.3 Collectively work towards reducing the carbon footprint of tourism.	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3),			<b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2)	<b>No</b>
5.4 Ensure tourism is integrated into future urban and rural regeneration activity in developing the city and county as a great place to live, work and visit.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
5.5 Create awareness of the importance of the Kilkenny Tourism structure to support cohesive promotion and development approach in Kilkenny.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism opportunities in Kilkenny.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
5.6 Develop the capacity of the Kilkenny Tourism Network to deliver	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1,	<b>No</b>

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
on the tourism vision for the destination through collaboration and new ways of working together, cross promotion and collaboration in the delivery of new visitor experiences.	opportunities in Kilkenny and promote collaboration for effective working.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.				WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	
5.7 Develop a series of tourism clusters aligned with the experience development focus within the Kilkenny DEDP.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.  However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
5.8 Work in partnership with the OPW to enhance the visitor experience across the key visitor sites.	This objective will promote collaboration with OPW, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of sites and have positive effect on population and human health.  No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.					
5.9 Work with the Kilkenny Visitor attractions network and experience providers to deliver accessible tourism experiences.	<p>This objective will promote collaboration with OPW, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of sites and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain 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.</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
5.10 Examine local community experience development opportunities through sport tourism events and the local culture of sport and Gaelic games.	This objective would result in positive effects for promoting sports tourism and cultural heritage and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>

### 8.3 Environmental Assessment of the Catalyst Projects listed within the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

The KDEDP includes a list of catalyst projects and destination enablers which will be delivered to support the above strategic objectives of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the catalyst projects and destination enablers is detailed in **Appendix 8.1**.

There are 5no. catalyst projects and 7no. destination enablers in total and projects 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and destination enablers 1, 5, 6 & 7 in the absence of mitigation, could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Refer to **Table 8.1A** in **Appendix 8.1** for the detailed assessment of effects of the catalyst projects and destination enablers.

Following the consultation stage, a number of minor amendments were made to the list of catalyst projects and destination enablers. Text deleted from the Draft version of the KDEDP is shown ~~red strikethrough~~, while new text inserted in the final plan is shown *green italic*.

Mitigation measures are presented further in Section 9.

### 8.4 The Interrelationship between Environmental Factors

An overview of the key and minor / no interaction between environmental factors with potential for effects arising from the KDEDP are set out in the matrix in **Table 8.2**.

Actions within the Plan that give rise to positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component also have the potential to generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components – e.g. negative effect on soils can have a negative effect on biodiversity, water, and / or landscape. Likewise, actions supporting the delivery of SuDS will improve water quality, which in turn can have a positive effect on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is already embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that has been carried out in this environmental report. This ensures that there is adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of plan actions. In addition the mitigation measures set out in **Section 9.0** of this Report.

**Table 8.2 Significant Interrelationships between Environmental Factors**

Component \ Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Biodiversity		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☒	☑
Population & Human Health	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Land, Soils & Geology	☑	☑		☑	☒	☑	☑	☑
Water Quality	☑	☑	☑		☒	☑	☒	☑



Component \ Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Air Quality, Noise and Climate	☑	☑	☒	☒		☑	☑	☒
Material Assets	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑		☒	☒
Cultural Heritage	☒	☑	☑	☒	☑	☑		☑
Landscape & Visual	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
<b>Legend:</b> Key Interaction ☑      Minor/No Interaction ☒								

## 8.5 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are 2 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. The interrelationships between environmental factors that help determine these potential effects are identified on **Table 8.2**.
- 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, projects, etc.

The KDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. **Table 8.3** lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the KDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the KDEDP.

The Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, and management, cultural heritage, climate change, etc. for County Kilkenny. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan and have been assessed as such. The KDEDP will comply with the provisions set within the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan which itself has been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the KDEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed the implementation of the KDEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher level plans in relation to increased

## Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

**Table 8.3 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes**

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040  National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 ( <i>As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030</i> )	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National CFRAMS Programme  South- eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National 4 <sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as	No

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
County Development Plans (Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027, Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028, Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028)	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. Each of the CDP with Zone of Influence of County Kilkenny has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Ireland’s Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No

## 8.6 Overview

The environmental assessment of the provisions of the KDED (Section 8) identifies potential uncertain effects on the environment as set out in Table 8.1. Much of this relates to uncertainty in the likely outcome of objectives and the potential nature and scope of any development, which may or may not, derive from the implementation of catalyst projects and the Plan. Therefore, measures are detailed in the following which will set the context for the avoidance and / or reduction of any such potential environmental effects.

In working with the SEA process, the Plan acknowledges the requirement for any development to adhere to best practice in terms of environmental governance. Indeed protection and enhancement of the environment is a critical pillar underpinning the core objectives and success of the KDED.

In this context any proposals for development arising from the KDED must meet the proper planning and sustainable development policies, objectives and development management provisions of the statutory *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

## 9 Mitigation Measures

### 9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in **Section 8.0** of this Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan have potential for uncertain or negative effects on aspects of the environment. These potential negative and / or uncertain effects, which derive from potential works resulting from the relevant action, focus primarily on biodiversity, water, cultural heritage, material assets and landscape. This section of the Environmental Report identifies measures for the mitigation and avoidance of potential uncertain or negative environmental effects.

### 9.2 Mitigation Measures

This Plan sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of 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, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the **Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027** especially the **Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy**. As stated in the KDEDP these include:

- **Infrastructure Capacity** - *With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential impact on existing infrastructure as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant. The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.*
- **Visitor Management** - *Those receiving funding shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities.*  
*Extensive research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas with visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.*
- **Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services** - *Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities.*

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the *Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027*. The Development Plan provides for sustainable planning and management control of all development in County Kilkenny – including the delivery of Destination & Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Proposals for development within the KDEDP area must comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions included within the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*. Given that the KDEDP sits within and at a lower level in the planning hierarchy, the measures contained to the Development Plan, and in its Natura Impact Report (NIR), SEA Environmental Report / SEA Statement and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) are applicable to the KDEDP.

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*, provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the KDEDP. These measures include the following selected aims / policies / objectives:

#### Strategic Aims:

- **Climate Change** – *‘To provide a policy framework with objectives and actions in this City and County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change.’*
- **Economic Development** - *‘To provide a framework for the implementation of the Council’s economic strategy by fostering competitiveness and innovation in all sectors within a high-quality physical environment while having due regard to the protection of the environment and heritage, in order to position the county for sustainable economic growth.’*
- **Rural Development** – *‘To manage rural change and guide development to strengthen the rural economy and community through the network of towns and villages ensuring vibrant, sustainable and resilient rural areas whilst conserving and sustainably managing our environment and heritage.’*
- **Open Space and Recreation** – *‘To ensure the provision of open space and recreational facilities in order to maintain, and improve open spaces that contribute to the well-being and making of place for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors to the County while protecting and enhancing biodiversity.’*
- **Heritage, Culture and the Arts** – *‘To seek the protection and sustainable management of the arts, culture and heritage of Kilkenny for the benefit of current and future generations; to encourage the collection of knowledge to inform its protection; and to promote access to, awareness of and enjoyment of Heritage, Arts and Culture, to further develop the infrastructure and actively support engagement with communities. throughout Kilkenny.’*
- **Infrastructure & Environment** – *‘To ensure a sufficient level of water services within the county for the implementation of the core strategy, provide a framework for the protection of the environment, including water quality, the avoidance of flood risk and the provision of a high-quality telecommunications infrastructure.’*
- **Movement and Mobility** – *‘To co-ordinate transport and land use planning, reducing the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking by providing for a greater mix of suitable uses and by promoting and facilitating the transition to electrification of our transport modes moving away carbon intensive modes to new technologies such as electric vehicles.’*

#### Key Environmental Protective Policies in the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027:

##### ■ Rural Development –

*It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the sustainable development of forestry in appropriate areas of the county, where it will not significantly impact upon designated habitats and biodiversity, archaeology, and that it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the local landscape.*

Policy objectives includes:

- *Protect the quality of the environment, including the prevention, limitation, abatement and/or reduction of environmental pollution and the protection of waters, groundwater and the atmosphere.*
- *Protect features of the landscape and areas of major importance for biodiversity.*
- *Protect the character of the landscape, including views and prospects listed in this Plan and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.*

##### ■ Heritage, Culture and the Arts –

*It is Council policy to ensure the protection of architectural heritage by including all structures considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the Record of Protected Structures.*

##### ■ Infrastructure & Environment-

*It is Council policy to adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk. In accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, the avoidance of development in areas where flood risk has been identified shall be the primary response.*

*It is the Council's policy to have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.*

- *To have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.*
- *For all significant construction/demolition projects, the developer shall include an Environmental Management Plan. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.*
- *Construction and demolition waste management plans, to be prepared in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.*

##### ■ Renewable Energy -

*It is the policy of this Plan to:*

- *Support the implementation of the NECP and associated adaptation & mitigation measures.*
- *Support the implementation of Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future.*
- *Support the implementation of the All of Government Climate Action Plan (CAP) and associated adaptation and mitigation measures*



#### Key Environmental Protective Objectives in the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027:

##### ■ Protection of Natura 2000 Sites -

Objective 1A - *To implement the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive and ensure that any plan or project within the functional area of the Planning Authority is subject to appropriate assessment in accordance with the Guidance Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 or any subsequent version, and is assessed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in order to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of the site.*

##### ■ Climate Action –

Objective 2C - *To promote, support and direct effective climate action policies and objectives that seek to improve climate outcomes across the settlement areas and communities of County Kilkenny helping to successfully contribute and deliver on the obligations of the State to transition to low carbon and climate resilient society.*

Objective 2D - *To integrate appropriate mitigation and adaptation considerations and measures into all forms of development.*

Objective 2F - *To adopt nature-based approaches and green infrastructural solutions as viable mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where feasible. The Council will promote and support physical activity, active recreation and an active lifestyle.*

Objective 2G - *To reduce energy related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of Kilkenny County Council.*

##### ■ Natural Heritage –

Objective 9A - *Continue to identify and map habitats and green infrastructure of county importance, and raise awareness and understanding of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity identifying green corridors and measures to connect them.*

Objective 9B - *To identify and map green infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.*

Objective 9C - *To protect archaeological sites and monuments (including their setting), underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and in the Urban Archaeological Survey of County Kilkenny or newly discovered sub-surface and underwater archaeological remains.*

Objective 9J - *To ensure the preservation of the special character of each ACA listed in this Plan (See Table 9.2 and Volume 2 Heritage Strategy) with particular regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, fenestration, signage, and other appendages such as electrical wiring, building materials, historic street furniture, paving and shopfronts.*

Objective 9K - *To designate ACAs where appropriate and provide a local policy framework for the preservation of the character of these area.*

Objective 9M - *To provide a shared space facility for the creative sector within the Abbey Quarter.*

Objective 9N - *To implement the Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy.*

#### ■ Infrastructure and Environment -

Objective 10A - *To facilitate Irish Water and to assist, subject to service level agreements, with the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure provision in accordance with the water services strategic plan, made in accordance with the Water Services Act 2007*

Objective 10B - *To implement the measures of the River Basin Management Plan, including continuing to work with communities through the Local Authority Waters Programme to restore and improve water quality in the identified areas of action.*

Objective 10E - *To continue to update noise mapping in accordance with revised or updated thresholds for noise mapping.*

Objective 10F - *Develop priority list of actionable works to mitigate against excessive noise and implement subject to cost benefit analysis*

Objective 10G - *To implement the Southern Region Waste Management Plan.*

Objective 10H - *It is an objective of the Council to, with due regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and Regulations, give effect to the Directive by controlling development with respect to—*

- *The siting of Major Accident Hazard sites*
- *The modification of an existing Major Accident Hazard site*
- *Development in the vicinity of a Major Accident Hazard site*

Objective 10I - *To support and facilitate the delivery of high capacity Information Communications Technology Infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting, throughout the County, in order to ensure economic competitiveness for the enterprise and commercial sectors and in enabling more flexible work practices e.g. remote working subject to other relevant policies and objectives of the Plan.*

#### ■ Movement and Mobility –

Objective 12 - *To plan for and progressively implement a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of road, bus, rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities and interfacing different modes as the opportunity arises.*

Objective 12B - *To plan for a transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and ‘walkable communities’ together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement in all settlements.*

Objective 12E - *To deliver on sustainable mobility with an accompanying investment in infrastructure to provide for integration between all modes of transport to support the use of sustainable travel choices.*

Objective 12G - *To achieve a modal shift from the private car to walking or cycling in accordance with the targets in Table 12.1 for County Kilkenny.*

Objective 12I - *To develop a network of cycling and pedestrian routes within Kilkenny city to provide connectivity and provide an alternative to car-based transport.*

Objective 12P - *To provide connections to the Kilkenny Greenway to settlements along its route as the need arises and resources permit.*

#### ■ Historic Environment –

Objective xi - *Ensure all new development respects and enhances the historic environment.*

#### Development Management Requirements:

- *To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.*
- *To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands, trees) which are not within designated sites.*
- *To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development.*
- *To protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character of the county, and to ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.*
- *To have regard to, and seek the conservation of identified trees and woodlands from a) the National Survey of Ancient and Long-Established Woodlands, b) the Tree Register of Ireland (c) sites of significance identified in the Kilkenny Woodlands Survey 1997, (d) the National Survey of Native Woodlands, and (e) Survey of Mature Trees in Kilkenny City and Environs, in the assessment of planning applications.*
- *To retain hedgerows, and other distinctive boundary treatment such as stone walls, when undertaking, authorising or approving development; where the loss of the existing boundary is unavoidable as part of development, to ensure that a new hedgerow is planted using native species, and species of local provenance to replace the existing hedgerow and/or that the wall is re-built using local stone and local vernacular design.*
- *To discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and, where appropriate make use of Tree Preservation Orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an amenity, biodiversity or historic value.*
- *To require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments as appropriate*
- *To require relevant development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.*
- *For proposals connected to surface water systems, risks associated with the spread of crayfish plague shall be considered and applicants should submit a crayfish plague management strategy where appropriate.*
- *To protect the landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness of County Kilkenny, and have regard to the guidance set out in the Landscape Character Assessment.*
- *Where necessary, to require that applications are accompanied by a visual impact assessment, particularly in upland areas, river valleys and areas of greater sensitivity.*
- *To endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at*

*the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on archaeological heritage.*

- *To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains.*
- *To ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential. Where upstanding remains of a Recorded Monument exist a visual impact assessment may be required to fully determine the effect of any proposed development.*
- *To require the retention of surviving medieval plots and street patterns and to facilitate the recording of evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts etc. in the course of development.*
- *To seek the protection and sustainable management of historic gardens, parklands and designed landscapes in the Kilkenny County and City, their setting and their visual amenity.*
- *To request visual impact and /or an architectural heritage impact assessment where development is considered to, have a potential impact on a historic landscape or protected structure.*
- *To protect elements of designed landscapes within the attendant grounds of Protected Structures, including boundary features.*
- *To have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines<sup>28</sup> when assessing proposals for development affecting a protected structure and buildings listed in the NIAH.*
- *To encourage the sympathetic retention, reuse and rehabilitation of protected structures and their setting, while ensuring the involvement of suitably qualified professionals.*
- *To ensure proposed service upgrades undertake an initial assessment of current services, to ensure the internal environment and fabric is not impacted on by such works. Energy assessments and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessments may be required where energy and service upgrades are proposed.*
- *To ensure proposed development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure respects the protected structure and its setting.*
- *To require an architectural impact assessment where appropriate for developments within the grounds of country house estates which are Protected Structures.*
- *To promote principles of best practice in conservation in terms of use of appropriate materials, repair techniques, and thermal upgrades by adhering to the guidelines as set out in Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Advice Series publications.*
- *To promote best conservation principles and practice when assessing proposals for Kilkenny's architectural heritage.*
- *To ensure that energy upgrades for buildings constructed from traditional materials are respectful of architectural features, form, and environmental requirements necessary to maintain breathability in the structure.*
- *To require an assessment, including mitigation measures, of the potential environmental, visual, and heritage impacts of proposals to floodlight buildings and structures.*
- *To ensure the protection of the special character and setting of protected structures, ACAs and Recorded Monuments, and protected species when considering proposals for floodlighting.*
- *To seek to minimise noise and dust through the planning process by ensuring that the design of developments incorporate measures to prevent or mitigate the transmission of dust, noise and vibration, where appropriate.*
- *To ensure that that appropriate mitigation measures to counter noise impact are implemented at all new developments to limit exposure to high noise areas.*
- *Where flood risk may be an issue for any proposed development, a detailed flood risk assessment should be carried out appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the*

*risks arising. In particular, any area within or adjoining flood zone A or B, or flood risk area, shall be the subject of a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed. This shall be undertaken in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanying this Plan.*

- *To have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.*
- *For all significant construction/demolition projects, the developer shall include an Environmental Management Plan. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.*
- *Construction and demolition waste management plans, to be prepared in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes*

## 10 Monitoring

### 10.1 Introduction

Monitoring of the KDEDP and its implications on the environment is important to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. In accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”*

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (**Section 6**) used in the assessment. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the targets. The monitoring programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for monitoring and the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action. It is recommended that the monitoring for the KDEDP and review is undertaken in parallel with monitoring and review of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan for efficiency and given that similar data sets will be used to measure the progress of each plan.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive / neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive / neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the objectives of the KDEDP are well-defined with regard to the environment. Conversely where the objectives of the KDEDP have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the objectives of the KDEDP or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective is having a significant adverse impact, an amendment may be considered during the lifetime of the KDEDP.

Refer to **Table 10.1** below for the monitoring programme set for the SEA which includes details on the indicators, targets and data sources to monitor the progress of the KDEDP.



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Table 10.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>Biodiversity (Flora &amp; Fauna) (B)</b>				
<b>B1</b>	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species <sup>54</sup> and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under European and International legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for habitats and species protected under European and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years). Consultation with NPWS (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>B2</b>	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under International and National legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under International and National legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Consultation with NPWS (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>B3</b>	Ensure KDED P does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	Kilkenny County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
<b>Population &amp; Human Health (PHH)</b>				

<sup>54</sup> 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
PHH1	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.	To comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	No contravention of the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	Central Statistics Office (CSO) census data. Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
PHH2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.	Occurrence of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the KDEDP, as identified by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and / or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of the KDEDP.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Consultations with the HSE and EPA (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Land, Soils &amp; Geology (LSG)</b>				
LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.	Extent of conversion of land cover / green field to developed / artificial surfaces.	Contribute towards the target of the SEA for the National Planning Framework's (2018) to " <i>Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%.</i> "	CORINE mapping surveys (every 5 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Water Quality (WQ)</b>				
WQ1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment,	Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities	No deterioration in the status of any groundwater or surface water, or adverse effect upon the ability of any groundwater or	Consultations with the OPW, EPA and Inland Fisheries (every 3 years).

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
	in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	<p>Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009).</p> <p>Groundwater compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD.</p> <p>Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies reported.</p>	surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the KDEDP.	<p>Information issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
<b>WQ2</b>	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.	Flood-related incidences related to the KDEDP.	Compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that any new developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands.	<p>Consultations with OPW (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
<b>Air Quality, Noise &amp; Climate (ANC)</b>				
<b>ANC1</b>	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.	<p>Demonstration of compliance with air quality and noise provisions.</p> <p>Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National</p>	To maximise the amount of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented.	<p>Consultations with EPA (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p>

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
		Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.		Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>ANC2</b>	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation.	To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented.	Consultations with EPA (every 3 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Material Assets (MA)</b>				
<b>MA1</b>	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure.	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	Consultations with Uisce Éireann and EPA (every 3 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>MA2</b>	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.	Increase waste recycling in the County. Reduce waste generation in the County.	Consultations with Regional Waste Authority and EPA (every 3 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
		<p>Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p>		
<b>MA3</b>	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	<p>% change in modal split.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network.</p> <p>Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county.</p> <p>Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the County</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives</p>	<p>Consultations with TII and NTA (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
<b>Cultural Heritage (CH)</b>				
<b>CH1</b>	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on archaeological or cultural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	<p>Consultations with National Monuments Section of Department (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p>

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>CH2</b>	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Landscape &amp; Visual (LV)</b>				
<b>LV1</b>	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.	Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>LV2</b>	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.  Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the CDP.  No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.



## 11 References

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## 12 Appendices

## **Appendix 8.1:**

### **Detailed Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Catalyst Projects listed within the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan**

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**Table 8.12.1A Environmental Assessment of the Catalyst Projects and Destination Enablers of the KDEDP**

(SEO Key: *B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, ANC – Air Quality, Noise & Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual*)

Following the consultation stage, a number of minor amendments were made to the list of catalyst projects and destination enablers, text deleted from the Draft version of the KDEDP is shown ~~red strikethrough~~, while new text inserted in the final plan is shown *green italic*.

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
<b>CATALYST PROJECTS</b>							
<b>1</b>	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 1 : RE-IMAGINED MEDIEVAL MILE</b>						
1.1	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Develop a visitor experience master plan for the Medieval Mile to develop a best in class urban tourism experience linking all elements of the Kilkenny medieval experience from visitor orientation, way finding, wider industry engagement and a new experiential approach across all visitor touchpoints.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>Yes</b>
1.2	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Undertake an attractions experience audit among Kilkenny City attractions to influence a new experience led approach across all Kilkenny attractions as part of the ambition to deliver a world class Medieval Mile visitor experience.					
1.3	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Grow the number of ultra lux experiences linked to emerging opportunities around craft, design, river activities and a new vision for the Medieval Mile experience.					
1.4	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Develop the opportunity to link the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny with sacred sites in Co. Kilkenny such as the Langaun Valley and local community experiences.					
1.5	<b>Kilkenny Urban Gardens Experience Trail</b>	Examine the opportunity for a Kilkenny Urban Gardens Experience Trail linking existing gardens and new experiences to include Kilkenny Castle, Butler House, Butler Gallery, Rothe House and future Abbey Quarter developments.					
1.6	<b>Kilkenny City Interpretation</b>	Examine the opportunity to develop new standards of interpretation of key historical/heritage buildings across Kilkenny					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		City through an innovative approach to information delivery that enhance walking and cycling tours of the city.					
1.7	<b>Kilkenny Living History Project</b>	Examine the feasibility of developing a Kilkenny “Living History” project focused on the evening time animation of the city’s urban experience.					
1.8	<b>Kilkenny Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan</b>	Undertake an assessment of the future orientation and way finding requirements based on the Kilkenny Living City model and potential mobility projects around the city core and future investment in the public realm to include a focus on the visitor experience.					
1.9	<b>Kilkenny Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan</b>	Develop a roadmap and vision for the Kilkenny Outdoor Spaces and their future incorporation into how the urban open spaces contribute to the tourism economy, visitor experience and link with existing attractions and community amenities.					
1.10	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Deliver on the vision for the Abbey Quarter masterplan detailing the elements that will contribute to the city’s visitor experience and the opportunity to influence visitor flow across the city via incorporated infrastructures such as coach parking. This will include the development of the area as a key city event space (i.e. pre-planned infrastructure for outdoor events, provision for a Spiegeltent).					
1.11	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Undertake an opportunity assessment on buildings in or adjacent to the Abbey Quarter that have the potential to contribute to the international vision for craft, design and cultural provision in the city.					
1.12	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Examine the opportunity to develop a creative/design and arts centre in the Abbey Quarter to grow the scale of creative and design experiences in Kilkenny.					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
1.13	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Explore the expansion of the Smithwicks Experience into the Abbey Quarter as part of the areas future integration of tourism within the area.					
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>							
<b>2. CATALYST PROJECT 2: CREATIVE CITY EXPERIENCE</b>							
2.1	<b>World Class Creative and Animation Visitor Experience</b>	Develop a world class creative and animation space delivering visitor experiences that motivate domestic and international visitors to visit Kilkenny.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)				Yes
2.2	<b>Creative Visitor Orientation</b>	Develop a creative destination approach to way finding, orientation and place making that builds on the previous success of the 'Kilkenny Catwalk' installations across the city.					
2.3	<b>Kilkenny Creative Theme</b>	Undertake an assessment of the requirements to develop a visitor focused 'Kilkenny Creative Triangle' linking existing and emerging cultural, creative and design experiences to reflect a world class creatives and design destination.					
2.4	<b>World Crafts Council Craft City and Region Vision &amp; Action Plan</b>	Develop a World Crafts Council Craft City and Region Vision and Growth Action Plan to create international visibility for Kilkenny supported by the associated experiences for to realise the global opportunity. This will also examine the requirements to dedicated resources to grow the craft and design opportunity for Kilkenny as evident in comparable international destinations.					
2.5	<b>Castle Courtyard Development Plan</b>	Undertake a concept development plan for the Castle Courtyard to maximise its potential as a focal point for Kilkenny craft and					



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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		design and its role in orientating visitors across the city and county to explore associated craft experiences.					
2.6	<b>Jewellery/ Goldsmith and Ceramics Centres of Excellence</b>	Complete the development of the Crafts Centres of Excellence in jewellery/goldsmith and ceramics and pottery in Thomastown supported by an experience development programme that links the city with the Thomastown craft experience.					
2.7	<b>Experience Development Programme</b>	Develop the experience development capacity of the design and craft sector through a dedicated experience development programme.					
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>							
<b>3.</b>	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 3: RIVER TOURISM CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE</b>						
3.1	<b>River Barrow Masterplan</b>	Develop and implement a tourism masterplan for the River Barrow <del>for the River Barrow.</del>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes
3.2	<b>River Tourism Experiences</b>	Grow the number of river experiences in Kilkenny linked to water activities, local heritage and community tourism.					
3.3	<b>Platforms for Growth Activity Centre</b>	Develop the Platforms for Growth activity centre in Kilkenny City supported by a programme of training for the activity industry to maximise the river amenity opportunity and the enhancement of Three Sisters River Experience.					
3.4	<b>Kilkenny City / Thomastown River Navigation Project</b>	Examine the feasibility of a river navigation project linking Kilkenny City with Thomastown.					
3.5	<b>Waterways College</b>	Develop the Waterways College in Graiguenamanagh to become a catalyst for river enterprise and activity development in the county. Develop the “learn to” tourism opportunity through the Waterways College focused on river activities.					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. water-based activities) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land &amp; soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air &amp; noise. The development of new and existing blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, might result in negative 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 have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>						
<b>4.</b>	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 4: KILKENNY ATTRACTIONS EXPERIENCE</b>						
4.1	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Develop a visitor experience plan for Kilkenny Castle to continuously operate as international best in class experience. This will include a visitor experience audit and also account for projects being delivered under the Castle’s masterplan and potential new experiences in the Castle and Gardens. This will also include an examination of signage and wayfinding, foreign language capabilities, use of technology and tour guide training.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	Yes
4.2	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Examine future visitor experience opportunities for the ultra luxe market and Kilkenny Castle.					
4.3	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Deliver the elements of Kilkenny Castle accessibility project and the enhancement of the castle and grounds as leading accessible tourism experience.					
4.4	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Examine the opportunity for Kilkenny Castle to promote other sites and encourage visits to city centre attractions and county wide attractions e.g. Castle to St. Canice’s Cathedral. Examine the interpretation opportunity on the Blue Corridor of Kilkenny Castle to introduce visitors to other sites on the Medieval Mile and regional attractions such as Ormond Castle. Examine the visitor orientation opportunities linking Kilkenny Castle to Medieval Mile and the ability to influence visitor flow from the site to the city.					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
4.5	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Review the development of saleable Kilkenny Castle Gardens experiences across the four seasons and the associated opportunities provided by a seasonal approach.					
4.6	<b>Kilkenny Tourism - Attractions Network</b>	Establish a dedicated capacity building approach for the Kilkenny attractions through Kilkenny Tourism to work collectively to develop the destinations visitor attraction experience scale and grow the collective marketing capacity of attractions.					
4.7	<b>Kilkenny Famine Experience</b>	Enhance the visitor experience at the Kilkenny Famine experience with the implementation of a multilingual and enhanced audio-visual approach.					
4.8	<b>Museum of Medieval Kilkenny</b>	<i>Deliver Museum of Medieval Kilkenny, a new world class experience.</i> Undertake an experience review and commercial performance assessment after one year following the opening of the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny to examine learnings and adjustments to commercial planning if required.					
4.9	<b>City Gaol Development</b>	Undertake feasibility analysis into the development of the City Gaol (underneath the Courthouse that currently houses ten gaol cells with an isolation unit with an opportunity to develop a visitor experience to create a new visitor experience linked to the Medieval Mile cluster).					
<del>4.10</del>	<del><b>OPW Attractions</b></del>	<del>Undertake a programme of visitor experience training/development across all visitor focused OPW sites</del>					
4.10	<i><b>Jerpoint Abbey, Kells Priory, Dunmore Caves</b></i>	<i>Explore Visitor experience opportunities at Jerpoint Abbey, Kells Priory, Dunmore Cave to maximise the sites potential as county based attractions.</i>					
<del>4.11</del>	<del><b>Jerpoint Abbey</b></del>	<del>Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience at Jerpoint Abbey and opportunities to maximise the sites potential as a county based attraction.</del>					
<del>4.12</del>	<del><b>Kells Priory</b></del>	<del>Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience requirements at Kells Priory as Ireland's largest enclosed ecclesiastical site.</del>					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
4.13	<del>Dunmore Cave</del>	<del>Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience requirements at Dunmore Cave.</del>					
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>							
<b>5. CATALYST PROJECT 5: TRAILS AND OUTDOORS</b>							
5.1	<b>Castlecomer Discovery Park Master Plan</b>	Implement the Castlecomer Discovery Park master plan and grow its capacity to support the county's ability to attract the family market, grow the outdoor product base and add to the accommodation stock in rural communities. Explore the opportunity with Coillte to expand the experience at the Castlecomer Discovery Park.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), MA (MA3)				Yes
5.2	<b>Castlecomer Discovery Park Needs Analysis</b>	Develop a needs analysis for Castlecomer Discovery Park that provides a road map aligned with existing site activities and future opportunities identified in the master plan. This will examine Castlecomer Discovery Park as a key site project that will motivate city visitors to explore the county.					
5.3	<b>Kilkenny Trails Enhancement Programme</b>	Undertake an assessment of the Kilkenny trails to identify immediate and longer term enhancements to continuously add to progress the user experience and identify potential new trails and enhancement of the Kilkenny outdoor activity product.					
5.4	<b>South Kilkenny Development</b>	Assess the opportunity for South Kilkenny communities to develop local experiences, accommodation and supporting services linking to the Waterford to New Ross Greenway.					
5.5	<b>South Leinster Way Trail Opportunities</b>	Examine the opportunity to grow the community experience base associated with the South Leinster Way. Assess the South Leinster					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		Way to establish trail opportunities linking Kilkenny with adjoining counties.					
5.6	<b>Kilkenny to Inistioge Walking and Cycling Trails</b>	Develop a planned approach to link Kilkenny City to Inistioge through the development of the required walking and cycling trail infrastructure.					
5.7	<b>Inistioge to Waterford/ New Ross Greenway</b>	Undertake a feasibility analysis of connecting Inistioge to the Waterford to New Ross Greenway and potential recreational linkages with Woodstock Estate and Gardens.					
5.8	<b>Glenmore / Slieverue to Waterford / New Ross Greenway</b>	Examine the feasibility of a future connection to the Waterford to New Ross Greenway linking with Glenmore and Slieverue.					
5.9	<b>Barrow Way Pedestrian Cycle Bridge</b>	Examine the infrastructural requirements to unlock the tourism and activity potential on the Barrow Way and Tinnahinch Castle with the addition of a pedestrian / cycle bridge.					
5.10	<b>Woodstock House and Gardens Master Plan</b>	Develop a visitor experience master plan for Woodstock House and Gardens to become a key catalyst for sustainable tourism and outdoor product excellence in Kilkenny. This will include an analysis to identify the requirements to develop.					
5.11	<b>Kilkenny Forest Experiences</b>	Develop a five year roadmap with Coillte to examine the requirements at agreed Kilkenny Forests with capacity for visitor experience development and the creation of a collective destination forest experience to include sites such as Woodstock House and Gardens, Jenkinstown and Millenium Woods.					
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The development of new and existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations, has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain 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 have potential to be located in</p>						

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
	ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. Increased tourism in these location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain.						
<b>DESTINATION ENABLERS</b>							
<b>6.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 1: TOURISM INDUSTRY CAPABILITIES</b>						
6.1	<b>International Sales Project</b>	Develop and implement a new international sales project for Kilkenny supported by the appropriate capacity and capability training required across the tourism industry to successfully target international visitors.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	Yes
6.2	<b>Family Market Development</b>	Develop an industry wide focus on growing the share of the family market in Kilkenny linking day and evening time experiences with the accommodation sector.					
6.3	<b>Night Time Economy Innovation</b>	Develop Kilkenny City as a regional night time economy hub growing the range and diversity of things to do and see in the evening. Implement the night time economy pilot and identify a number of key night time opportunities for development aligned with Kilkenny DEDP.					
6.4	<b>Key City Visitor Attractions</b>	Examine the visitor experience development requirements for key city visitor attractions to motivate visitors to explore the city with a focus on priority sites including St. Canice's, Rothe House and the Medieval Mile Museum.					
6.5	<b>Cultural Experiences Development</b>	Grow the range of new Kilkenny cultural experiences across the city merging different experience categories to create a unique blend of experiences e.g. the Clay Rooms and Cake Face.					
6.6	<b>"Learn to" Experiences</b>	Expand the range of signature "learn to" experiences with the potential to extend into the evening time economy e.g. the development of Cake Face Cookery School and expansion into the evening "learn to" experiences.					



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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
6.7	<b>Kilkenny Tourism Digital Capacity Audit</b>	Undertake a digital capacity audit of the Kilkenny tourism industry to identify key gaps in how the industry markets and sells its experience and informs future training needs.					
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> These action will enhance tourism opportunities for the county, raise awareness and have positive effect on population and human health. However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>							
<b>7.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 2: REGIONAL CONNECTORS</b>						
7.1	<b>Regional Conference Centre</b>	Examine the feasibility of developing an opportunity site in Kilkenny City to deliver a regional conference centre.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)			No
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>							
<b>8.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 3: FOOD AND DRINK HERITAGE</b>						
8.1	<b>Kilkenny Whiskey Trail</b>	Develop an international Kilkenny whiskey trail experience built on the origins of Irish Whiskey and its reference in the Red Book of Ossory. Support the development of the whiskey trail with the	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1),			No

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		required industry training and development of premium saleable experiences around the whiskey story in Kilkenny.		<b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)			
8.2	<b>Red Book of Ossory Experience</b>	Examine the feasibility of permanently housing the Red Book of Ossory in Kilkenny to create an international experience based on the heritage and origins of Irish Whiskey.					
8.3	<b>Brewing and Distilling Heritage</b>	Develop a series of drinks experiences linked to the heritage of brewing and distilling in Kilkenny. Support the development of new experiences in local breweries through the examination of a dedicated “Brew Kilkenny Experience Trail” to complement the Whiskey Trail.					
8.4	<b>County wide Food Trail</b>	Grow the Taste Kilkenny Food Trail through annual growth in the number of food and drink experiences through Kilkenny and enhancing the commercial capacity of food producer to consider new tourism opportunities.					
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>						
<b>9.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 4: SUSTAINABILITY / CLIMATE ACTION</b>						
9.1	<b>Empowering Climate Action Change</b>	Drive change at individual business level, through recruitment of all stakeholders into a long-term programme of Fáilte Ireland supports.	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2),				<b>No</b>
9.2	<b>County Sustainable Initiative</b> <b>Wide Tourism</b>	Develop a county wide sustainable tourism initiative to develop the profile of Kilkenny as a sustainable visitor destination.	<b>LSG</b> (LSG1),				

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
9.3	<b>Kilkenny Sustainable Transport Model</b>	Develop a sustainable transport model linking Kilkenny City and county and providing visitors with the opportunity to visit key attractions, activities and communities.	<b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)				
	<p><i>SEA Evaluation:</i> These actions will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.</p>						
<b>10.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 5: RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT</b>						
10.1	<b>Lingaun Valley Master Plan</b>	Undertake a Lingaun Valley tourism development master plan to create a road map of the opportunities that exist to develop the destination, cluster development focus and community tourism opportunities.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>Yes</b>
10.2	<b>Lingaun River Valley Slate Quarry Outdoor Recreation and Activity Hub</b>	Undertake a feasibility / opportunity assessment on the potential for Lingaun River Valley Slate Quarry to develop into an outdoor recreation and activity hub.					
10.3	<b>Community Tourism Access Hub</b>	Develop Wind Gap as a community tourism access hub to the Lingaun Valley. Examine local opportunities to expand the accommodation base and grow the area's capacity to retain visitors in the Lingaun Valley.					
10.4	<b>Lingaun Valley App</b>	Examine the feasibility of developing a Lingaun Valley augmented reality mobile app to deliver an augmented reality heritage					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		experience based on the sacred sites in the Lingaun Valley and key points of interest on the Lingaun Valley trail.					
10.5	<b>Callan Friary Complex Master Plan</b>	Examine the tourism elements of the Friary complex master plan in Callan to develop associated tourism opportunities for the area and cultural, heritage and creative experiences.					
10.6	<b>Graigenamanagh Cycle Bridge</b>	Explore the feasibility of the development of a cycle bridge in Graigenamanagh to expand the town's ability to link with an additional network of trails.					
10.7	<b>Graigenamanagh Hotel Concept</b>	Support the development of the dispersed hotel concept in Graigenamanagh linking a range of repurposed rooms across the town.					
10.8	<b>County Creative &amp; Design Focal Points</b>	Develop a series of county creative focal points and visitor experiences in Callan, Graigenamanagh and Thomastown to develop community, arts and creative experiences linked to the Kilkenny creative, craft and design story.					
10.9	<b>Kilkenny GAA Community Experiences</b>	Grow the GAA cultural visitor experience linking city and county through a series of Kilkenny GAA community experiences. Undertake a pilot with interested GAA clubs and interested private sector operators to assess the feasibility of growing the summer time GAA experiences focused on the heritage of hurling and introducing visitors to hurling matches.					
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>						
<b>11.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 6: FESTIVALS AND EVENTS</b>						

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
11.1	<b>International Events and Festivals Strategy</b>	Develop a five year international events and festivals strategy for Kilkenny City and County to grow key events across the year and examine new event opportunities. This will include a re-appraisal previously successful niche events hosted in Kilkenny e.g. Roots Festival, Food and Drink festivals.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
11.2	<b>Heritage Site Event Venues</b>	Develop a pilot programme to explore the extended use of heritage sites as potential event venues and deliver niche Kilkenny experiences e.g. St. Canice's as a concert / gala dining venue.					
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> This action will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage.</p> <p>The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>							
<b>12.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 7: ACCOMMODATION GROWTH</b>						
12.1	<b>Accommodation – Opportunity Sites</b>	Grow the accommodation base in opportunity sites across Kilkenny City and county focused on developing a mix of new hotel bedroom stock combined with a mix of sustainable accommodation options suitable for rural locations.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1,		Yes
12.2	<b>Accommodation Audit</b>	Undertake an accommodation audit and destination accommodation strategy for Kilkenny identifying short to long term development opportunities.					
12.3	<b>RV / Camper Van Accommodation</b>	Undertake a review of possible county wide sites to expand the recreational vehicle (RV/campervan) options in the county					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		aligned with the growth of the outdoor product base. Undertake a county wide accommodation audit to establish accommodation growth requirements and the opportunities that exist to support rural communities and the outdoors e.g. campsites, RV/glamping and niche accommodation.			MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		
<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> This action will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>The development of new and existing accommodations might result in uncertain environmental effects on the environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>							





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