

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

FOR THE

DRAFT BLESSINGTON LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025

for: **Wicklow County Council**



by: **CAAS Ltd.**



OCTOBER 2024

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List of Abbreviations

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

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

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

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

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

Flora is all the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all the animals found in a given area.

Environmental Problems

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

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

Environmental Vectors

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

Mitigate

To make or become less severe or harsh.

Mitigation Measures

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

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

Natural Heritage

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

Protected Structure

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

Recorded Monument

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

Scoping

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

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

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

Section 1 SEA: Introduction and Benefits

1.1 Introduction

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Blessington Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025. It has been prepared by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Wicklow County Council. The purpose of this report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan.

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

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

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

1.2 Implications for the Planning Authority

SEA identifies the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan. The findings of the SEA are expressed in this Environmental Report, which accompanies the Draft Plan on public display and identifies how environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan and how alternatives for the Plan were considered. This report may be updated in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions and/or in order to take account of any changes which are made to the Draft Plan on foot of submissions.

The planning authority must take into account the findings of this report and other related SEA output during their consideration of the Draft Plan and before it is adopted.

When the Draft Plan is finalised, an SEA Statement must be prepared which will summarise, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

1.3 Why SEA? The Benefits

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

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

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

An overlay of environmental sensitivities for the Plan area is provided under subsection 4.14. The mapping shows that environmental sensitivities are not evenly distributed throughout the Plan area. Most of the Plan area is identified as having low to moderate levels of sensitivity.

The most sensitive areas in the Plan area include:

- Various locations and areas within the existing built-up footprint of Blessington, on account of cultural heritage designations, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, Entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas;
- Glen Ding Hill and Forest; and
- Area within and surrounding the Poulaphouca Reservoir, rivers, streams and lakes, on account of ecological and visual sensitivities and elevated levels of flood risk.

The Plan directs incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focuses on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation.

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

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

Section 2 The Draft Plan

2.1 Introduction and Content

The Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 has been prepared pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The purpose of the Plan is to put in place a land use framework that will guide the future sustainable development of the Blessington area. The Plan, in conjunction with the County Development Plan, will inform and manage the future development of the area.

2.2 Draft Plan Format

The Draft Plan comprises a written statement and a series of maps that provide a graphic representation of the content of the written text. Where there is any discrepancy between the text and maps, the text shall take precedence.

The Draft Plan is accompanied by a number of appendices, including this SEA Environmental Report. All of these documents have informed the crafting of the Plan.

2.3 Overall Strategy and Objectives

The Draft Plan sets out an Overall Strategy as follows:

- The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington;
- To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important

recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir.

- To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre;
- To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services;
- To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates;
- To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road.
- To ensure that the lands surrounding the European Site of the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA are protected from adverse impacts arising from new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas. Generally, zoning for new development will only be provided for above the 194m contour adjoining the lakeshore.

The Overall Strategy is accompanied by other provisions including Objectives under the following headings:

- Town Centre Regeneration
- Housing/Residential Development
- Economic Development
- Tourism Development
- Community Development
- Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- Infrastructure
- Zoning

2.4 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning

In preparing the Draft Plan, information relating to various sectors, from different Departments within the Councils and from different bodies and organisations, was gathered and analysed, contributing towards the development of evidence-led Plan provisions. This work included preparing the following documents that are appended to the Draft Plan: a Green Infrastructure Audit; a Town Centre First Plan (prepared by another section of the Council); a Social Infrastructure Audit; and an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule with associated details on implementation.

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

2.5 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

It is important to note that when reading the Plan, the policy objectives of the County Development Plan are relevant and, in this regard, both documents should be read in tandem with each other. As detailed at Part A.1 Introduction of the Draft Plan:

“In particular, development standards, retail strategies, housing strategies etc that are included in the County Development Plan shall not be repeated, and shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Local Area Plan. Any specific policies / objectives or development standards required for this area will be stated as precisely that, and in all cases will be consistent with the County Development Plan. Thus development standards will therefore be the same across the entire County, and any differences for specific settlements would be clear and transparent, to both those adopting the plans, and the general public alike.”

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

The National Planning Framework³ sets out Ireland’s planning policy direction for the years 2018-2040. The National Planning Framework is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region sets out objectives for land use planning, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been subject to environmental assessment and must, as relevant and appropriate, be implemented through the Wicklow County Development Plan, that sets out the overarching development strategy for the County, and the Local Area Plan.

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

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

³ At the time of writing this report, a process to provide a First Revision to the National Planning Framework is underway.

Section 3 SEA Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the integrated Plan preparation, SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA are taking place concurrently and the findings of the SEA and AA have informed the Draft Plan. The process is currently at a stage where the findings of this report will be placed on public display as part of the required statutory public consultations. An AA Natura Impact Report will also accompany the Draft Plan on public display. Submissions made on the Draft Plan and associated documents, including SEA and

AA documents, will be responded to and updates made to the documents where relevant.

When the Plan is finalised, the SEA and AA documents will be finalised. Final documents will include an SEA Statement, which will include information on how environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan, and an AA Conclusion Statement. The Plan will be implemented and environmental monitoring – as well as planning and project development and associated environmental assessments and administrative consent of projects – will be undertaken.

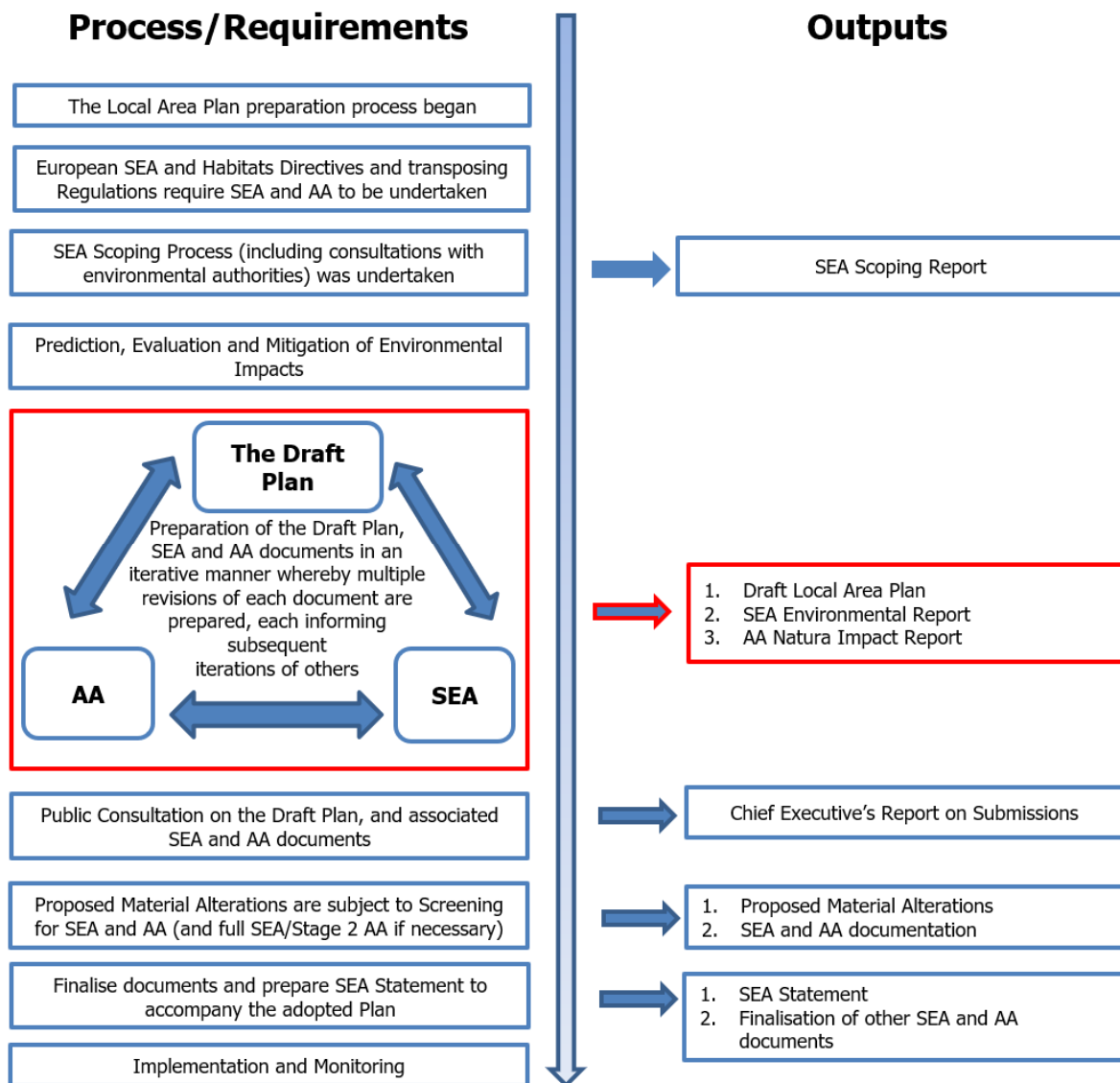


Figure 3.1 Overview of the SEA/AA/SFRA Plan-preparation Processes

3.2 Appropriate Assessment and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

3.2.1 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA are being undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC).

The emerging conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.⁴

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

3.2.2 Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

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

Scoping

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

Baseline

- Biodiversity data sources relevant for this local level assessment have been identified and datasets collated/gathered.
- The biodiversity baseline addresses designated sites and other habitats and species of ecological value.
- AA information has been incorporated into the SEA baseline.

Alternatives

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

Impact assessment

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

Mitigation and monitoring

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

Reporting

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

Communication and consultation

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

3.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

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

3.4 Scoping

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

⁴ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
(a) no alternative solution available,
(b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
(c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

components that are specified under the SEA Directive⁵.

All relevant environmental authorities identified under the SEA Regulations as amended, were sent SEA scoping notices by the Council indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to the Council⁶.

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

3.5 Alternatives

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

3.6 Environmental Report

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

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

This Environmental Report may be updated in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions and in order to take account of changes that are made to the original, Draft Plan that is being placed on public display. Any proposed changes to the Draft Plan will be examined for the need to undertake SEA and AA.

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

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

3.7 SEA Statement

On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared that will include information on:

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

⁵ These components comprise biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

⁶ The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council; South Dublin County Council; Kildare County Council; Carlow County Council; and Wexford County Council.

Table 3.1 Checklist of Information included in this Environmental Report

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

Section 4 Environmental Baseline

4.1 Introduction

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

This description includes information that is relevant to lower tier planning, environmental assessments and decision-making⁷.

4.2 National Reporting on the Environment

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

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

protect the environment now and into the future.

- Protecting the environment to protect our health - protecting the environment is key to protecting our health and we must act to reduce the modifiable risks to our health from environmental exposures."

4.3 Sustainable Development Goals

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

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

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

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

⁷ Article 5 of the SEA Directive, in accordance with the established European principle of subsidiarity, requires that the Environmental Report includes the information that may reasonably be required taking into account, inter alia, the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.

development and environmental protection and management in the Plan area.

As a result, there would be a decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of the positive environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring, including:

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

Furthermore, and as a result, there would be an increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of the adverse

environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring, including:

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

4.5 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

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

Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing. There are four main types; provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services. Provisioning services are the products obtained from ecosystems such as food, fresh water, wood, fibre, genetic resources and medicines. Regulating services are defined as the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes such as climate regulation, natural hazard regulation, water purification and waste management, pollination or pest control. Support services highlight the importance of ecosystems to provide habitat for migratory species and to maintain the viability of gene-pools. Cultural services include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation and aesthetic values⁸.

Various provisions relating to ecosystem services have been included in the Draft Plan.

The following natural capital and ecosystem services issues are relevant to this SEA and

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

have been taken into account in the provisions of the Local Area Plan and associated higher-tier Wicklow County Development Plan:

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

4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

4.6.1 Overview

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

Key ecological sensitivities within and surrounding the Plan area include:

- **The Poulaphouca Reservoir Special Protection Area, designated adjacent to the south and east of the Plan area.** The sensitive features of the Poulaphouca Reservoir Special Protection Area include greylag goose and lesser black-backed gull.
- **Non-statutorily proposed sites: Poulaphouca Reservoir proposed Natural Heritage Area partially within/adjacent to the Plan area and Red Bog Kildare proposed Natural Heritage Area** located c. 1 km to the north of the Plan area.
- Other designated sites surrounding the Plan area, including **Red Bog Kildare Special Area of Conservation located c. 1km to the north of the Plan area and Wicklow Mountains Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area** located 2 km to the south-east of the Plan area.
- **Locally important, non-designated habitats within the Plan area**, including **Glen Ding Hill and Forest**, various woodlands, mature trees, parks, gardens, hedgerows, old buildings/stone walls and lands used for agriculture within and surrounding the Plan area, providing habitats for flora and fauna and facilitating linkages and corridors to the surrounding countryside for the wildlife; and
- **Aquatic and riverine ecology** associated with rivers and streams and their tributaries and

riparian buffer zones, including the **River Liffey, Kings River, Blessington/Deerpark Stream.**

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

- Local Biodiversity Areas⁹;
- CORINE land cover mapping (including areas likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive)¹⁰;
- National Parks¹¹;
- Wildfowl Sanctuaries¹²;
- Trees, groups of trees and woodlands;
- Watercourses, wetlands and peatlands;
- Other relevant County Development Plans designations;
- The EPA's Framework National Ecological Network for Ireland¹³; and
- Other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance as identified by, for example, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (badger sets), relevant datasets from the National Biodiversity Data Centre and BirdWatch Ireland's 'Important Bird Areas' (Crowe et al., 2009)¹⁴.

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

⁹ Local Habitats – A number of areas within the Plan boundary have been the subject of previous studies. In 2006, a report by Natura Environmental Consultants was prepared in advance of the preparation of a local area plan at that time. This provided baseline information that remains worthy of consideration to this day. This report is available on wicklow.ie. On foot of these studies, several were identified as 'Local Biodiversity Areas' of varying levels of biodiversity value. While not a statutory designation, the identification of these areas has informed the crafting of the Plan as a guide to the creation of 'ecological corridors' within the Plan area.

¹⁰ The CORINE land cover mapping classifies land cover under various headings. This dataset allows for the identification of lands that are likely to be most valuable to biodiversity including those which are likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive e.g., natural grasslands, peat bogs, salt marshes. CORINE Land Cover is a map of the European environmental landscape based on interpretation of satellite images. Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface.

¹¹ National Parks are specially designated protected areas of unspoilt beauty and there are six located in Ireland. The primary purpose of the National Parks is the conservation of biodiversity and landscape; however, they also provide for recreational space for locals and visitors. **The Wicklow Mountains National Park is located c. 2 km to the south-east of the Plan area.**

¹² Wildfowl Sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68 sanctuaries in the State. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. **Poulaphouca (WFS-59) Wildfowl Sanctuary is adjacent to the Plan area**, as seen on Figure 4.7.

¹³ The EPA's Framework National Ecological Network provides a classification of the relative importance of areas by virtue of the biodiversity and flora that they contain and the connectivity they provide. Many of the areas identified are corridors.

¹⁴ Including: available habitats mapping at a suitable scale; trees; groups of trees and woodlands; and hedgerows.

rivers/streams, which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range. They are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna particularly for mammals, especially for bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, the non-designated surrounding countryside and urban areas.

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

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

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

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

4.6.2 European Sites

European sites comprise Special Areas of Conservation¹⁵ (SACs) and Special Protection

Areas¹⁶ (SPAs). Such sites within a 15 km buffer around the Plan area are mapped Figure 4.1 There are a total of five European sites (three SACs and two SPAs) designated within 15 km of the Plan boundary (as listed below and shown on Figure 4.1):

- Red Bog Kildare SAC (Site Code: 000397)¹⁷;
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (Site Code: 002122)¹⁸;
- Glenasmole Valley SAC (Site Code: 001209)¹⁹;
- Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (Site Code: 004063)²⁰; and
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (Site Code: 004040)²¹.

One of these sites, the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, is situated adjacent to the Plan area, as mapped Figure 4.2.

There are five additional hydrologically connected European sites within the wider region beyond a 15 km buffer zone (i.e. downstream of the Plan boundary), as shown on Figure 4.3:

- South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code: 000210)²²;
- North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code: 000206)²³;

member state to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

¹⁶ SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

¹⁷ Sensitive features comprise transition mires and quaking bogs.

¹⁸ Sensitive features comprise: natural dystrophic lakes and ponds; Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Alpine and Boreal heaths; European dry heaths; blanket bogs; Calaminarian grasslands of the *Violetalia calaminariae*; calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains; otter; siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe; and siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels.

¹⁹ Sensitive features comprise: semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates; *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils; and petrifying springs with tufa formation.

²⁰ Sensitive features comprise lesser black-backed gull and graylag goose.

²¹ Sensitive features comprise merlin and peregrine falcon.

²² Sensitive features comprise: annual vegetation of drift lines; embryonic shifting dunes; *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; and mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide.

²³ Sensitive features comprise: Mediterranean salt meadows; fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes; embryonic shifting dunes; *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; humid dune slacks; shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* - white dunes; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Atlantic salt meadows; annual vegetation of drift lines; and petalwort.

¹⁵ SACs have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each

- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (Site Code: 004024)²⁴;
- North Bull Island SPA (Site Code: 004006)²⁵;
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (Site Code: 004236)²⁶.

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

4.6.3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

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

There are a total of 16 pNHAs designated within and within a 15 km buffer of the Plan area (as mapped on Figure 4.4 and listed on Table 4.1), out of which one site, namely Poulaphouca Reservoir pNHA (Site Code: 000731) is situated partially within/adjacent to the Plan area (as mapped on Figure 4.5.). There are no NHAs designated within or within a 15 km buffer of the Plan area.

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

Designation	Site Code	Site Name
pNHA	000731	Poulaphouca Reservoir
	000397	Red Bog, Kildare
	001394	Kilteale Wood
	000393	Liffey Valley Meander Belt
	000211	Slade Of Saggart And Crooksling Glen
	001759	Newtown Marshes
	002104	Grand Canal
	002053	Hollywood Glen
	001395	Liffey At Osberstown
	001209	Glenasmole Valley
	001212	Lugmore Glen
	001750	Ballinagee Wood
	001396	Liffey Bank Above Athgarvan
	001772	Dunlavin Marshes
	000991	Dodder Valley
	001755	Glencree Valley

4.6.4 Land Cover

Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface. The CORINE 2018²⁷ mapping (shown on Figure 4.6) identifies the land cover of central parts of the Plan area as urban fabric with adjacent areas of mineral extraction sites and surrounding lands identified as pastures, coniferous forests and traditional woodland shrub. An area of a large water body (Poulaphouca Reservoir) is identified adjacent to the south and east of the Plan area.

Categories from CORINE mapping that may indicate areas with the potential for Annex I habitats (Figure 4.7) partially situated within and adjacent to the Plan area comprise water bodies.

²⁴ Sensitive features comprise: common tern; roseate tern; ringed plover; grey plover; redshank; light-bellied brent goose; oystercatcher; bar-tailed godwit; knot; dunlin; wetland and waterbirds; sanderling; Arctic tern; and black-headed gull.

²⁵ Sensitive features comprise: shoveler; shelduck; black-tailed godwit; grey plover; turnstone; light-bellied brent goose; oystercatcher; curlew; redshank; bar-tailed godwit; wetland and waterbirds; teal; black-headed gull; golden plover; sanderling; knot; pintail; and dunlin.

²⁶ Sensitive features comprise: common scoter; black-headed gull; little tern; red-throated diver; cormorant; common gull; puffin; guillemot; shag; little gull; common tern; Arctic tern; great northern diver; manx shearwater; lesser black-backed gull; fulmar; roseate tern; herring gull; great black-backed gull; kittiwake; and razorbill.

²⁷ The CORINE (Co-ordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data series was devised as a means of compiling geo-spatial environmental information in a standardised and comparable manner. CORINE has become a key data source for informing environmental and planning policy on a national and European level. The main land cover type in Ireland is agricultural land including forestry, which accounts for two-thirds of the national landmass. Most of this is permanent grassland pastures. Peatlands and wetlands are the second most widespread land cover type, covering almost one-fifth of the country. While forested areas cover about one-tenth of the country. Despite rapid development in the past two decades, Ireland's landscape is predominantly rural and agricultural.

4.6.5 Register of Protected Areas

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

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

4.6.6 Existing Problems

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

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

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

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

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

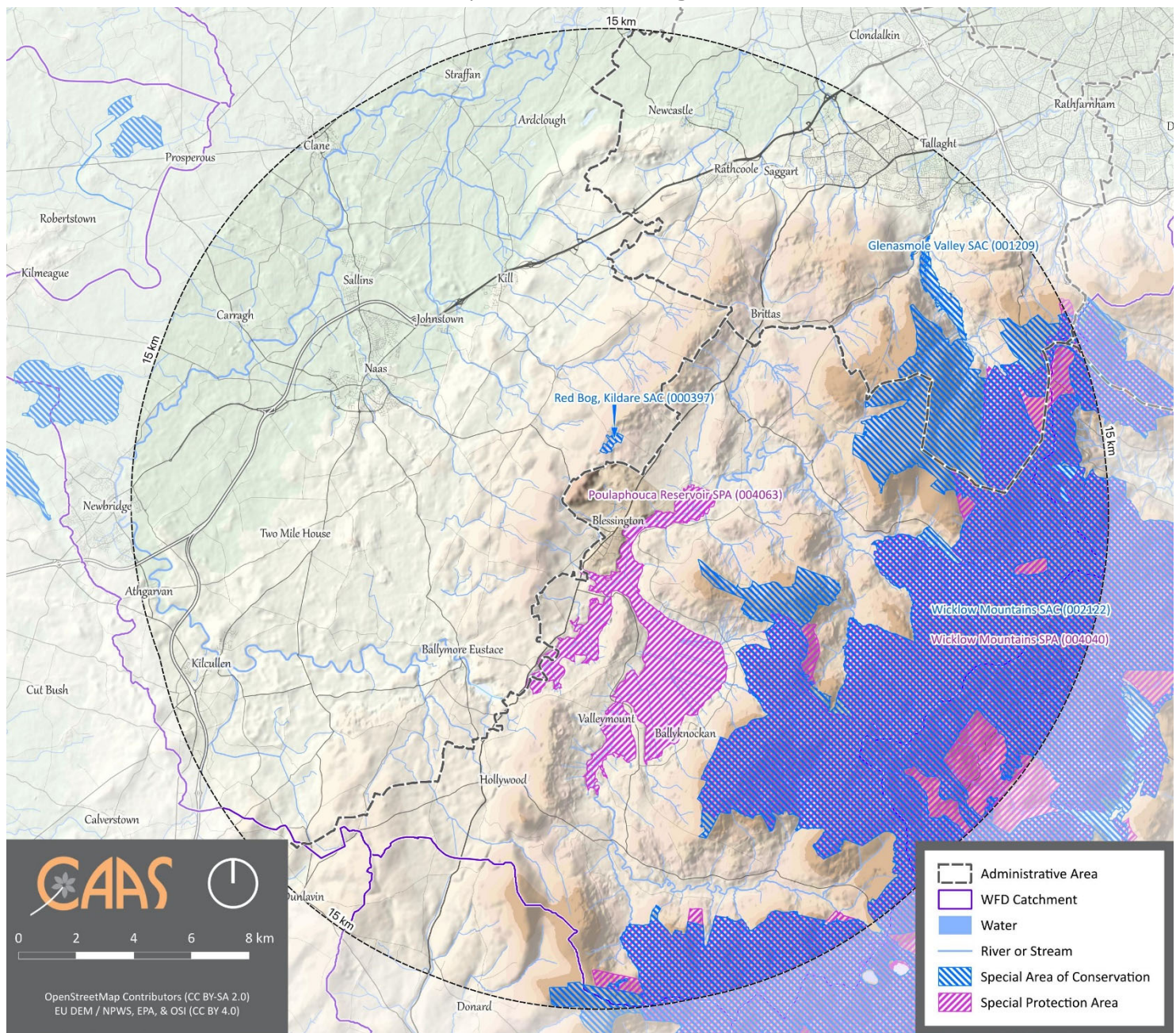


Figure 4.1 European sites within and within a 15 km buffer of the Blessington Plan area

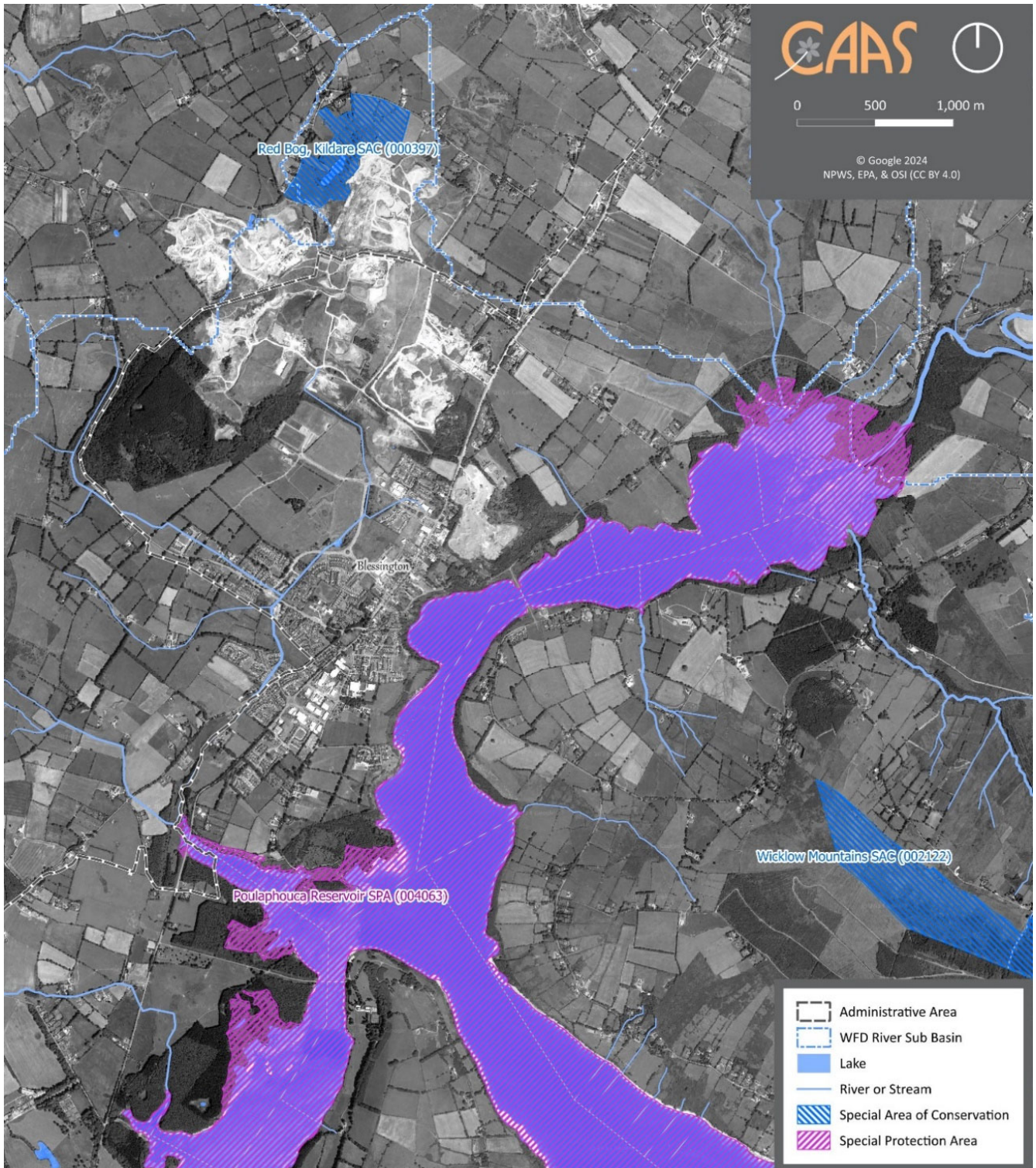


Figure 4.2 SACs and SPAs adjacent to the Blessington Plan area

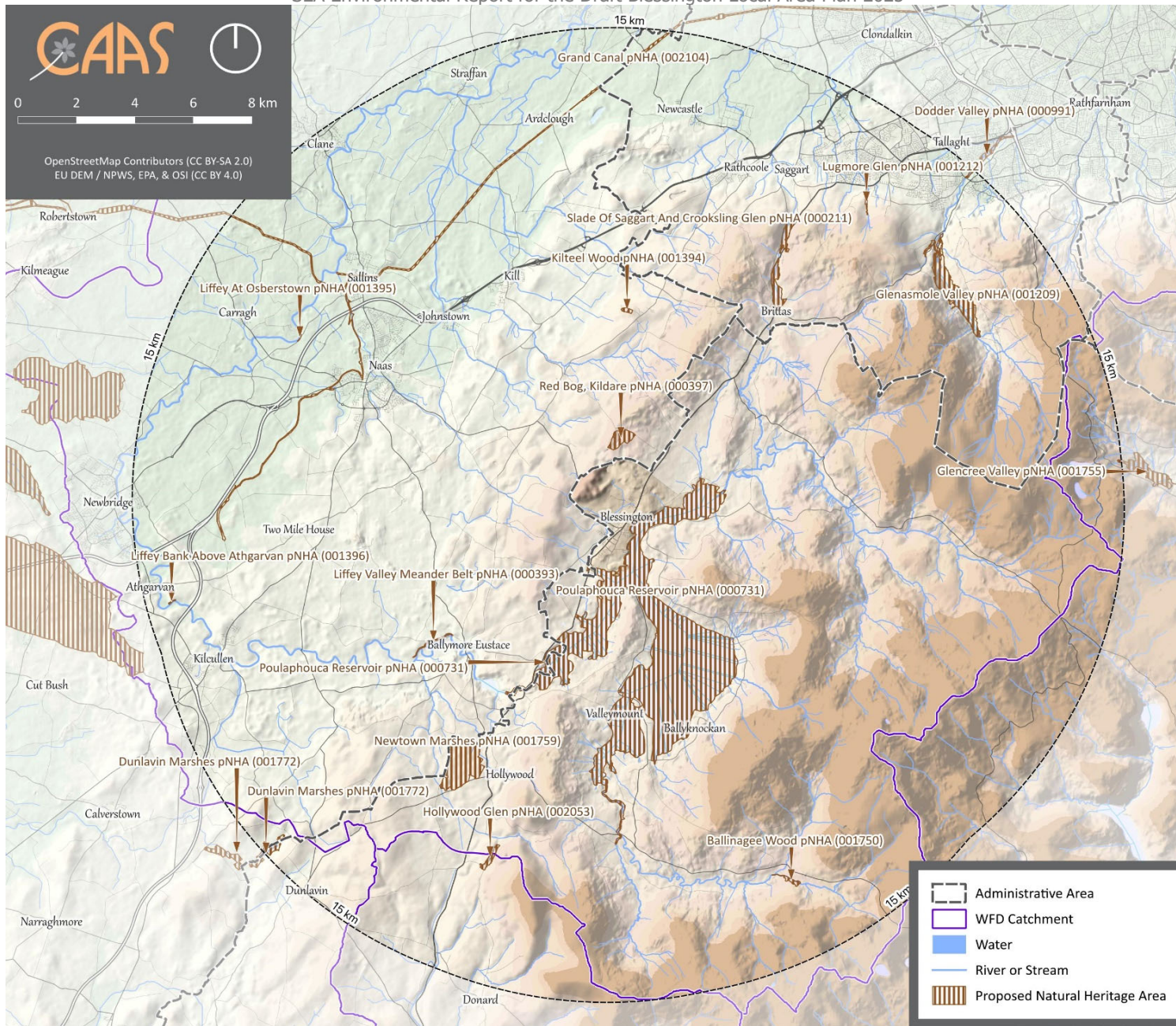


Figure 4.4 pNHAs within and within a 15 km buffer to the Blessington Plan area

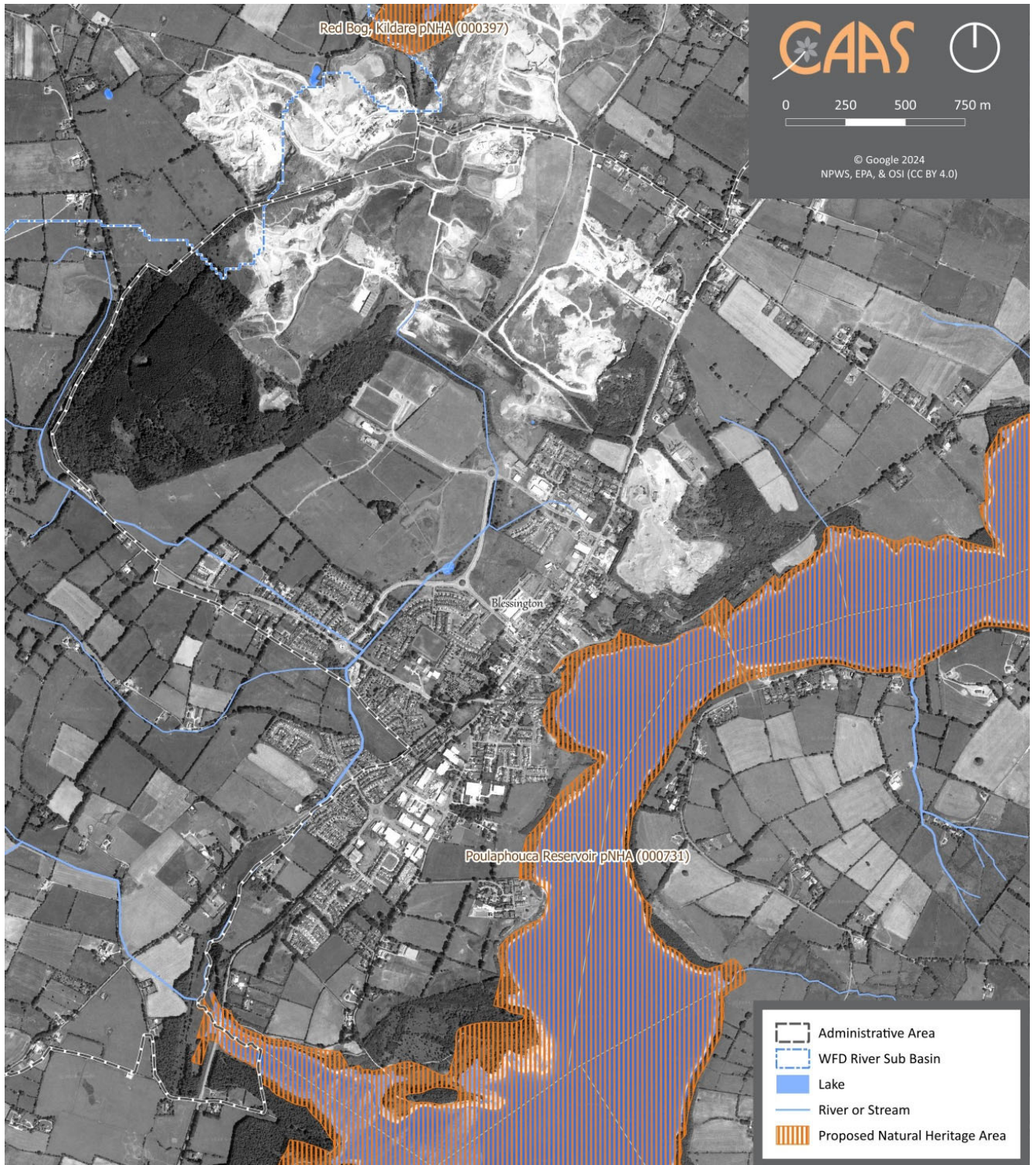


Figure 4.5 pNHAs partially within/adjacent to the Blessington Plan area

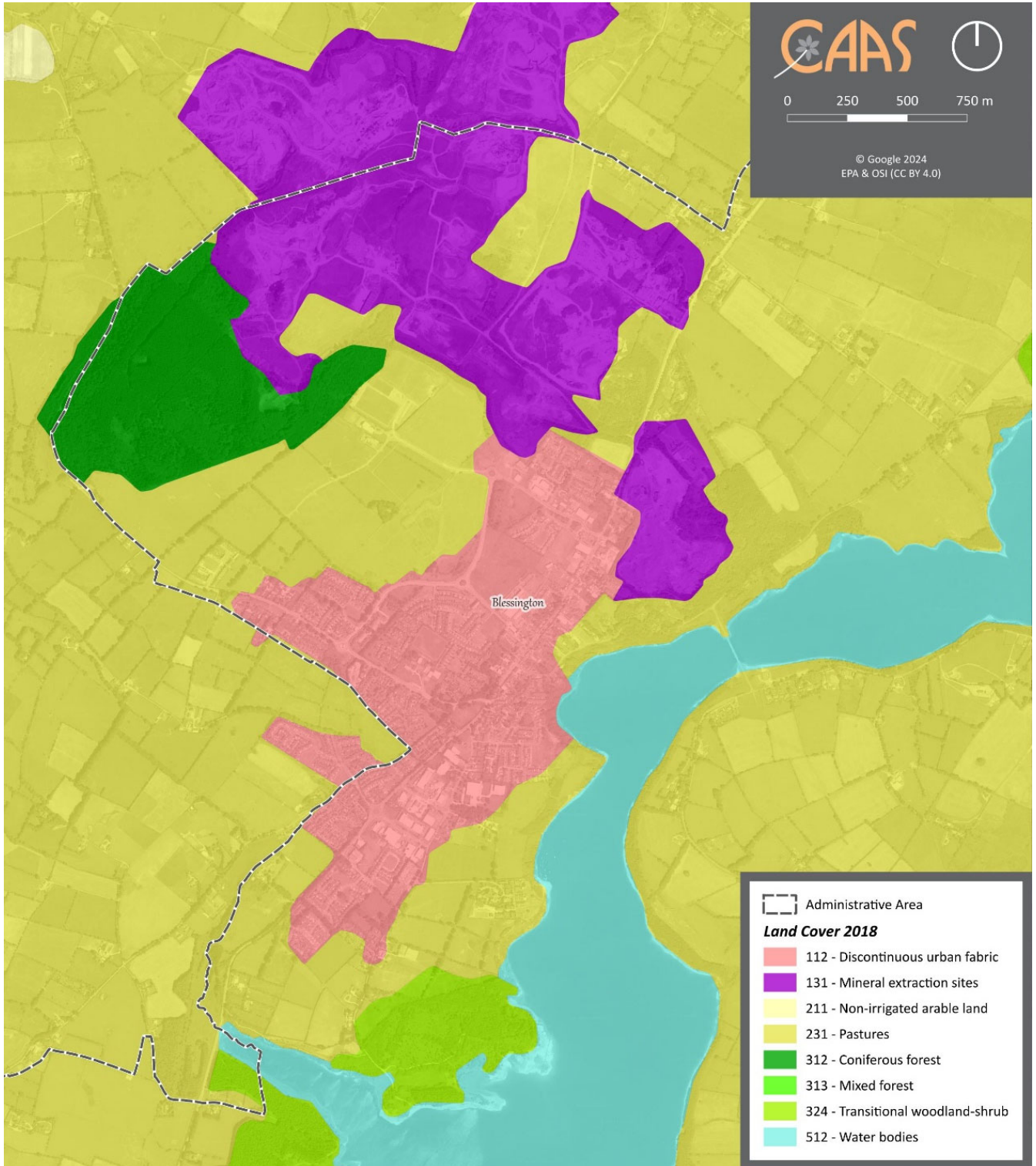


Figure 4.6 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018

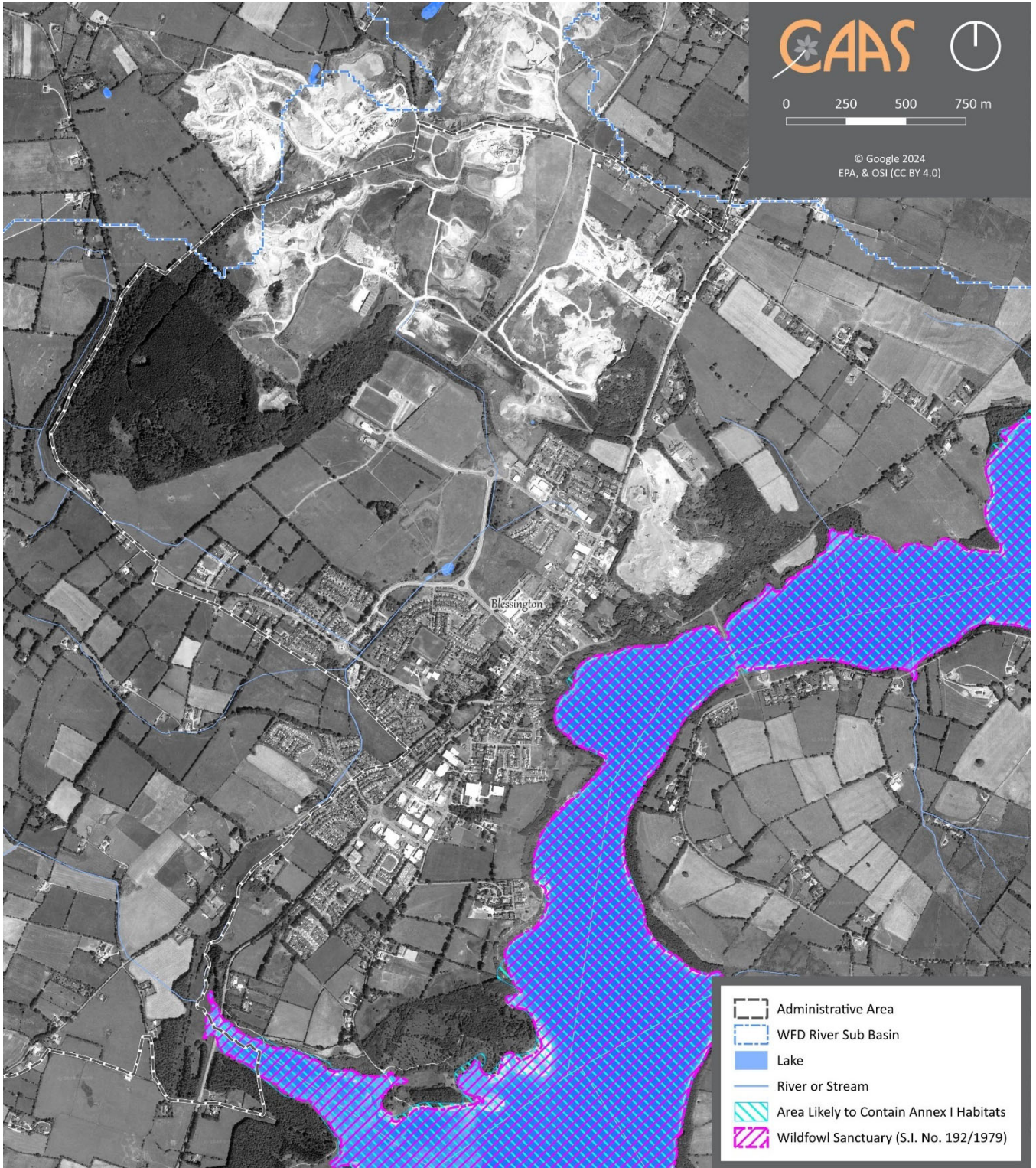


Figure 4.7 Other ecological designations

4.7 Population and Human Health

4.7.1 Population

The results of Census 2022 within the CSO boundary of Blessington recorded a population of 5,611 persons.

The Core Strategy in Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied) provides for a population growth in Blessington up to 6,145 persons by 2028 and 6,313 persons by 2031.

Blessington acts as the service centre for a wide rural catchment including the villages of Hollywood, Manor Kilbride, Lackan, Ballyknockan, Dunlavin, Donard and Vallemount (in County Wicklow), Rathmore, Eadestown, Ballymore (in County Kildare) and Brittas in County Dublin.

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

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

4.7.2 Human Health

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

Emission limits for discharges to air, soil and water are set with regards to internationally recognised exposure limit values. These are

generally set to be many times under the safe exposure limit - in order to provide protection. In the event that a plan or programme began to have adverse health effects on surrounding populations it is likely that it would have been identified as being in breach of such emission standards at a very early stage - and long before the manifestation of any adverse health effects in the population.

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

4.7.3 Soil

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

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

4.7.4 Existing Problems

The number of homes within the Plan area with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country²⁸.

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

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

²⁸ The greatest health risk from radiation in Ireland is caused by radon. The presence of radon gas, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils, occurs across the country. It accounts for more than half of the total radiation dose received by the Irish population. As a known carcinogen, in the same category as tobacco smoke and asbestos it is a cause of lung cancer. Exposure to radon for long periods or at high concentrations can lead to lung cancer. Mapping available at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap>

4.8 Soil

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

To date, there is no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources. However, the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 sets out a framework and concrete measures to protect and restore soils, and ensure that they are used sustainably. It sets a vision and objectives to achieve healthy soils by 2050, with concrete actions by 2030. In 2023, the EU proposed a new Soil Monitoring Law to protect and restore soils and ensure that they are used sustainably.

4.8.1 Soil Types

Main soil types²⁹ (Figure 4.8) surrounding the built-up areas³⁰ of Blessington are: luvisol soils (generally fertile, widely used for agriculture and associated with significant accumulation of clay); brown earths (well-drained mineral soils, associated with high levels of natural fertility); and alluvial soils (associated with alluvial clay, silt or sand river deposits).

The GSI (Geological Survey Ireland) have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual

projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:

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

4.8.2 County Geological Sites

Geological Survey Ireland coordinate the Irish Geological Heritage Programme, whereby an objective has been set to identify and select sites of geological interest within each county across the country. County Geological Sites (CGSs) do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. The audit of CGSs in County Wicklow was completed in 2014, which identified 62 CGSs in County Wicklow. The audit of CGSs in County Kildare was completed in 2005, which identified 22 CGSs. There are three designated County Geological Sites occurring within or partially within the Plan area, as shown on Figure 4.9: two Glen Ding CGSs (Site Code: KE006 and Site Code: WW022); and Blessington Delta CGS (Site Code: WW012).

4.8.3 Landslides

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

The GSI have identified³¹ the Plan area as having mainly low, with moderately low and moderately high levels of landslide susceptibility occurring to the north-west and along water courses to the east and south (mapped on Figure 4.10).

²⁹ All soil types belong to a Sub-Group and so in turn to one of the 11 soil Great Groups. Great Groups and Sub-Groups are a hierarchical arrangement of soils used for taxonomical classification (<http://gis.teagasc.ie/soils/soilguide.php>).

³⁰ The built-up areas are mainly made up of urban soils. Urban soils are soils, which have been disturbed, transported or manipulated by human activity in the urban environment and are often overlain by a non-agricultural, man-made surface layer that has been produced by mixing, filling or by contamination of land surfaces in urban and suburban areas.

³¹ <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/geohazards/projects/Pages/Landslide-Susceptibility-Mapping.aspx>

4.8.4 Source Protection Areas

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

Public Supply Source Protection Areas are managed by Uisce Éireann to supply Public Water Supply Schemes across Ireland. Source Protection Areas provide protection by placing tighter controls on activities within all or part of the zone of contribution of the source. There are two Source Protection Areas (an Inner and an associated Outer Area) identified within the Plan area, as mapped on Figure 4.11.

Groundwater bodies are important water supply sources for private wells, group schemes and local authority supplies and for use in a range of commercial activities. This is particularly the case in rural areas that are not served by public or group water schemes, with private bored wells being the only source of supply.

4.8.5 Potentially Contaminated Lands and Landfill Sites

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

4.8.6 Existing Problems

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

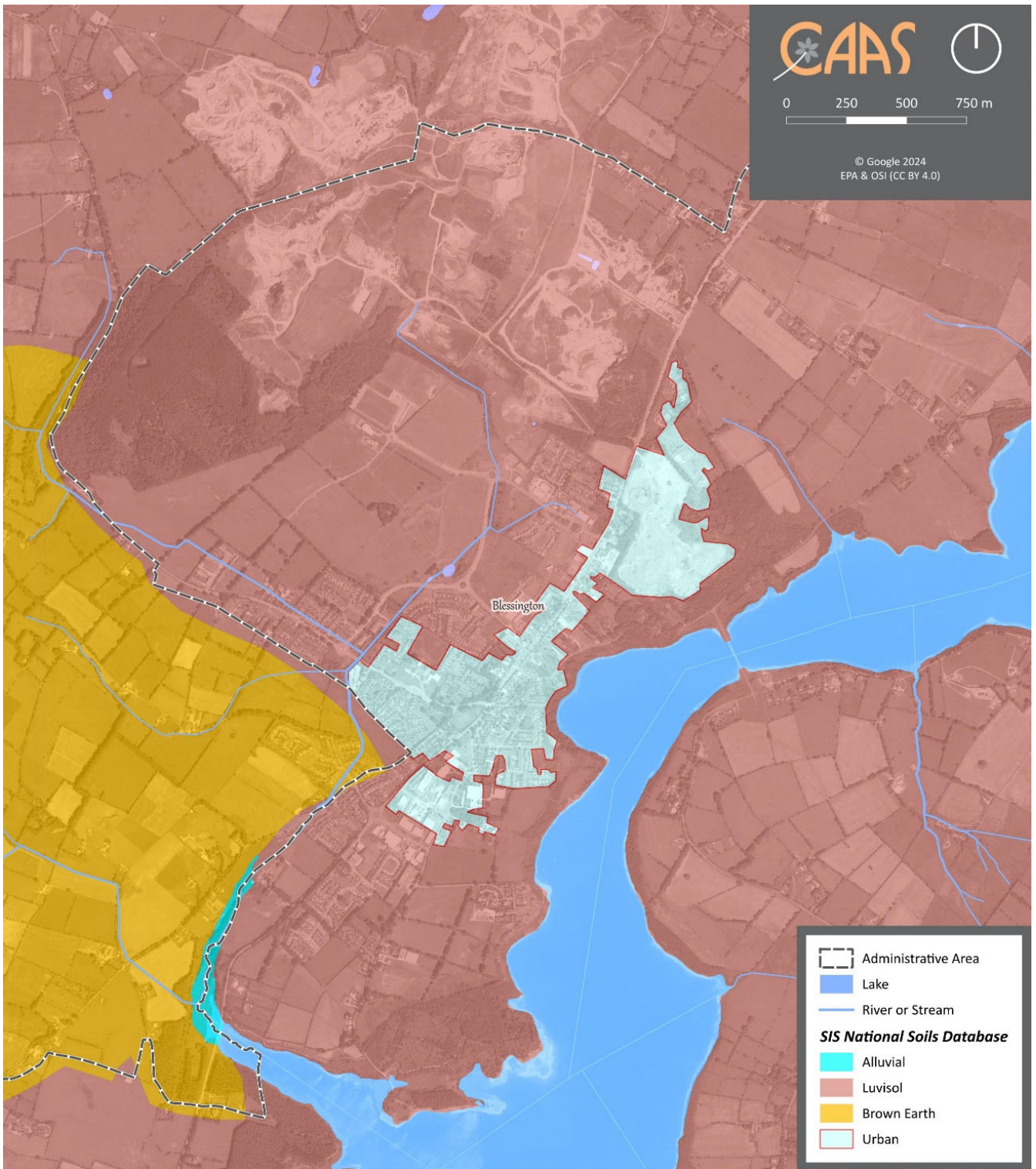


Figure 4.8 Soil Types

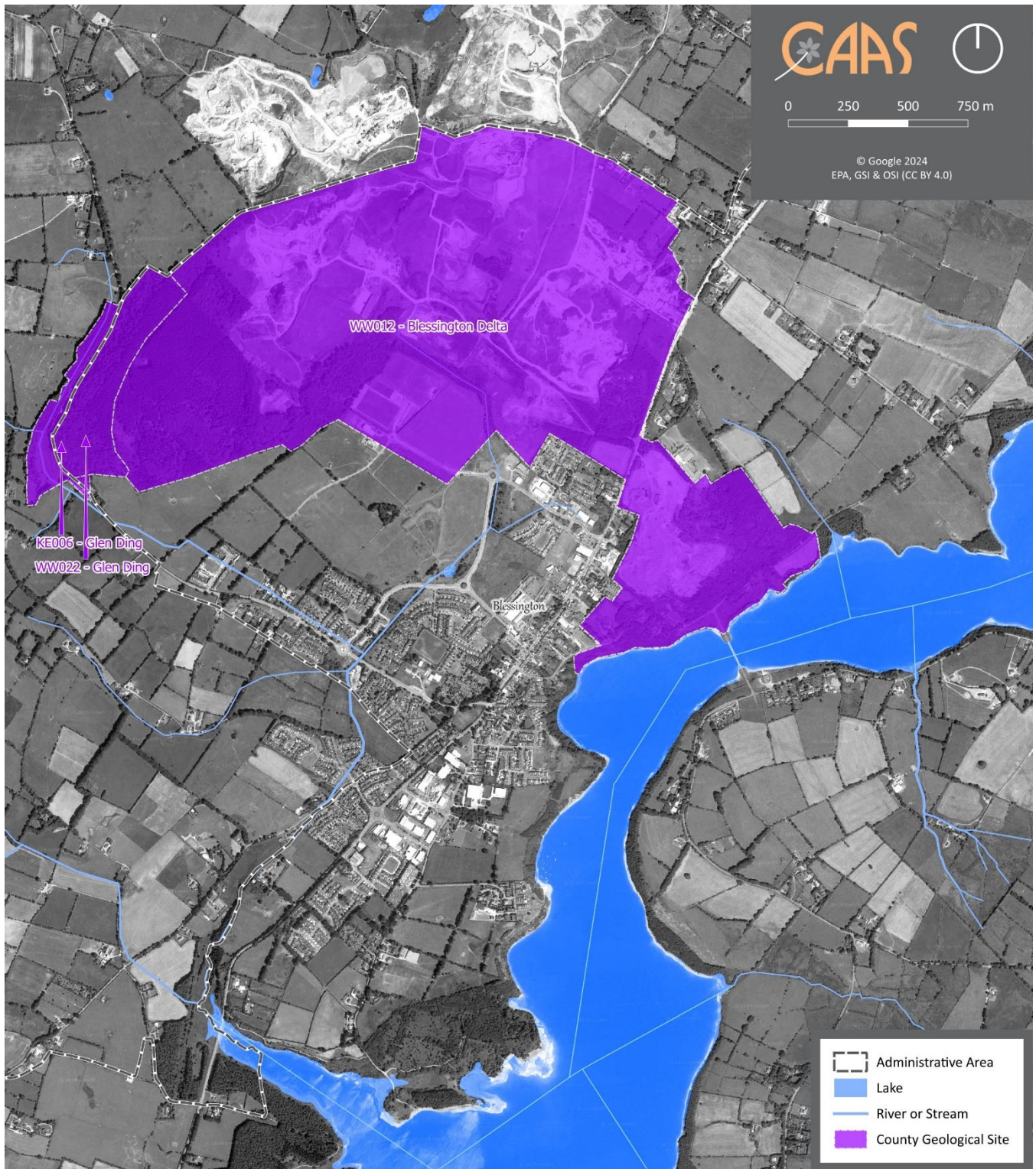


Figure 4.9 County Geological Sites

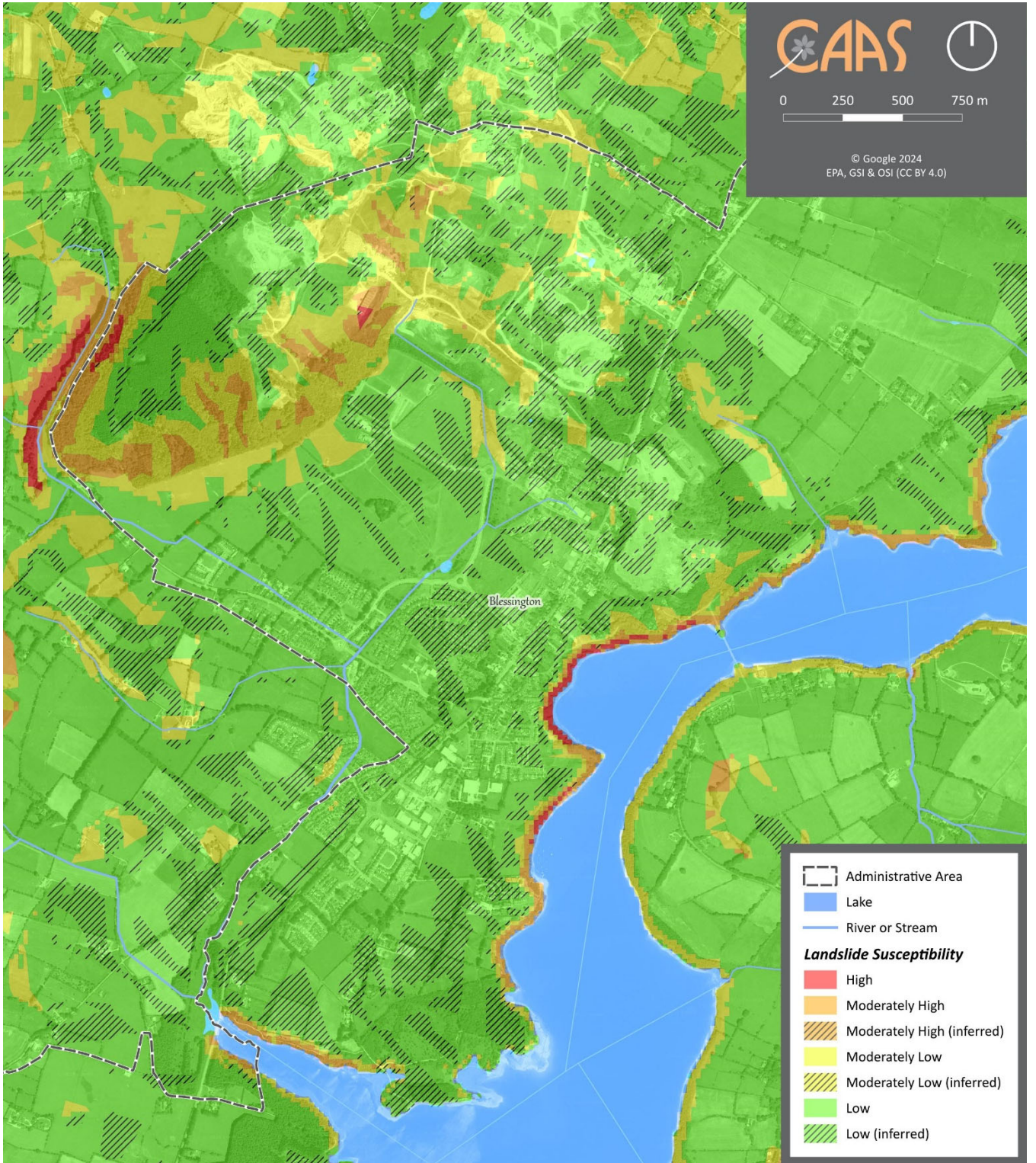


Figure 4.10 Landslide Susceptibility

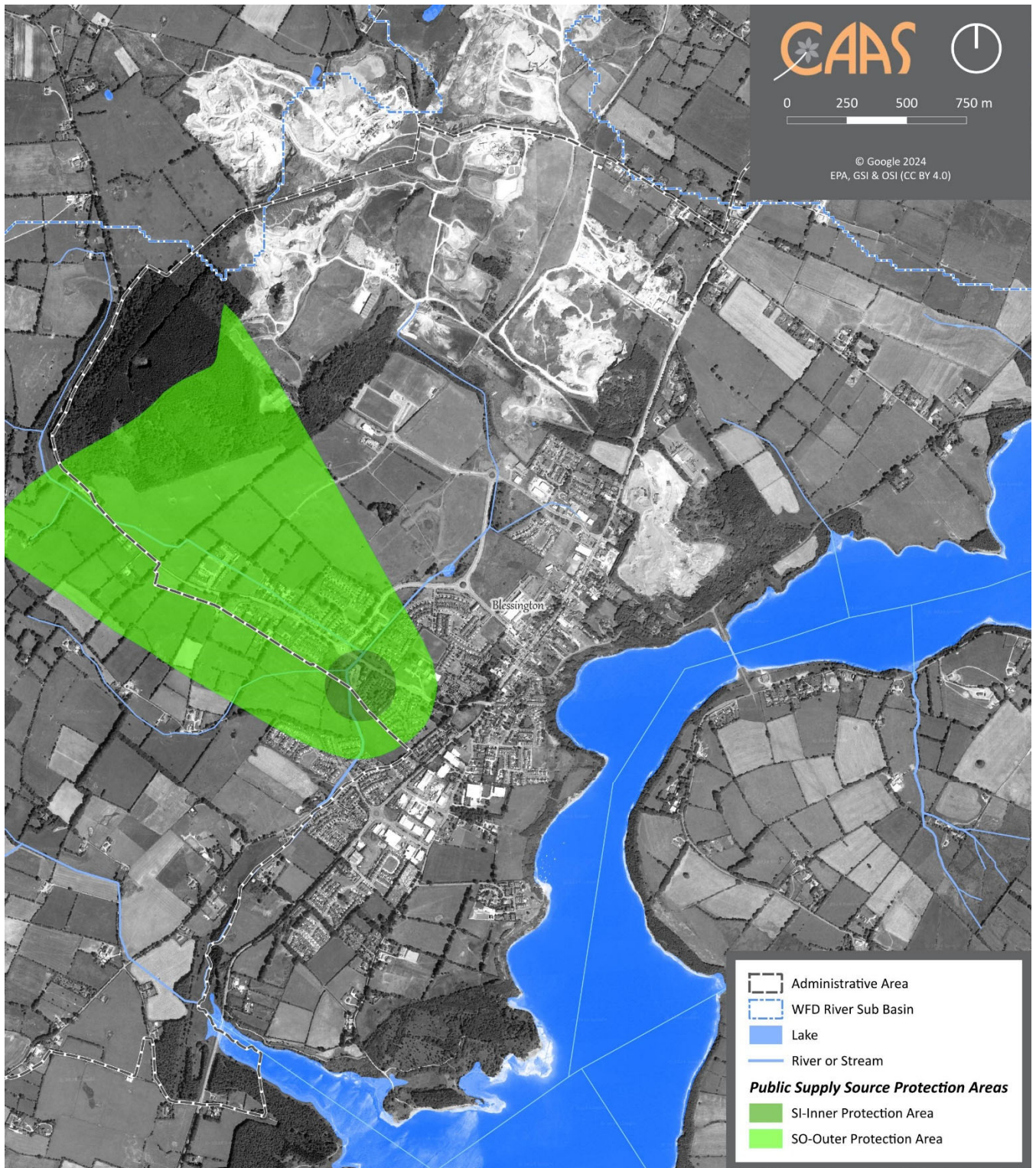


Figure 4.11 Source Protection Areas

4.9 Water

4.9.1 The Water Framework Directive

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

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

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

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

4.9.2 Zone of Influence

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

4.9.3 Surface Water Drainage

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

Poulaphouca Reservoir to the south and east of Blessington is a man-made lake created in 1944 by the damming of the River Liffey at Poulaphouca waterfall, to the south of the town. Poulaphouca Reservoir is hydraulically connected to the aquifers that underlie Blessington and its surrounds. Surface water at and around Blessington is channelled by several rivers and streams. The reservoir receives water from the River Liffey, at the northern end, and the Kings River, at the southern end. The exit is into the River Liffey gorge at the western end. The Blessington/Deerpark Stream has its source in Deerpark and feeds into the pond in Blessington Demesne before it flows through the west of the town and into Poulaphouca Reservoir at the Burgage More to the immediate south of the Town.

4.9.4 Surface Water Status

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

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

Chemical Status is a pass/fail assignment with a failure defined by a face-value exceedance of an Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) for one or more Priority Action Substances (PAS) listed in Annex X of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The EQS values for individual PAS substances are set at European level. Good surface water chemical

status means that concentrations of pollutants in the water body do not exceed the environmental limit values specified in the Directive.

The current WFD (2016-2021) status³² of the rivers and streams draining the Plan area is *good* (identified by the EPA as: Liffey_040; and Goldenhill_010). The status of the lakes (2016-2021) within and adjacent to the Plan area is identified as *good* (identified by the EPA as: Poulaphouca and Red Bog). Figure 4.12 illustrates the WFD surface water status within and surrounding the Plan area.

4.9.5 Groundwater Status

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

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

The WFD status (2016-2021) of all groundwater underlying the Plan area (mapped on Figure 4.13) is currently identified as being of *good* status, meeting the objectives of the WFD.

4.9.6 Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

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

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The aquifers underlying

most of the Plan area (mapped on Figure 4.14) are classified mainly as being of "high" and "moderate" vulnerability, while an "extreme", "extreme (rock at or near surface or karst)" and "low" vulnerability are identified in some parts within and adjacent to the Plan area.

The GSI also rates aquifers based on the hydrogeological characteristics and on the value of the groundwater resource. This is referred to as aquifer productivity and is mapped on Figure 4.15. Aquifers in the vicinity of the Plan area are classified as 'Poor Aquifer - Bedrock which is Generally Unproductive except for Local Zones', 'Poor Aquifer Bedrock which is Generally Unproductive' and 'Locally Important Gravel Aquifer'.

4.9.7 WFD Registers of Protected Areas

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

The WFD requires that these RPAs contain: areas from which waters are taken for public or private water supply schemes; designated shellfish production areas; bathing waters; areas which are affected by high levels of substances most commonly found in fertilizers, animal and human wastes - these areas are considered nutrient sensitive; areas designated for the protection of habitats or species e.g. Salmonid areas; Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); and, Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Also refer to Section 4.6.5.

The groundwater underlying the Plan and surrounding areas are used for drinking water abstraction in accordance with European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278/2007) and are identified on the RPAs for Rivers and Groundwater for Drinking Water, as mapped on Figure 4.16.

4.9.8 Flooding

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) document accompanies this SEA Environmental Report and the Draft Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk

³² As per EPA's WFD Status 2016-2021 classification (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>).

Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014.

Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied) and related provisions have been integrated into the LAP. In addition, land use zoning contained within the Draft Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones.

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

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

4.9.9 Existing Problems

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

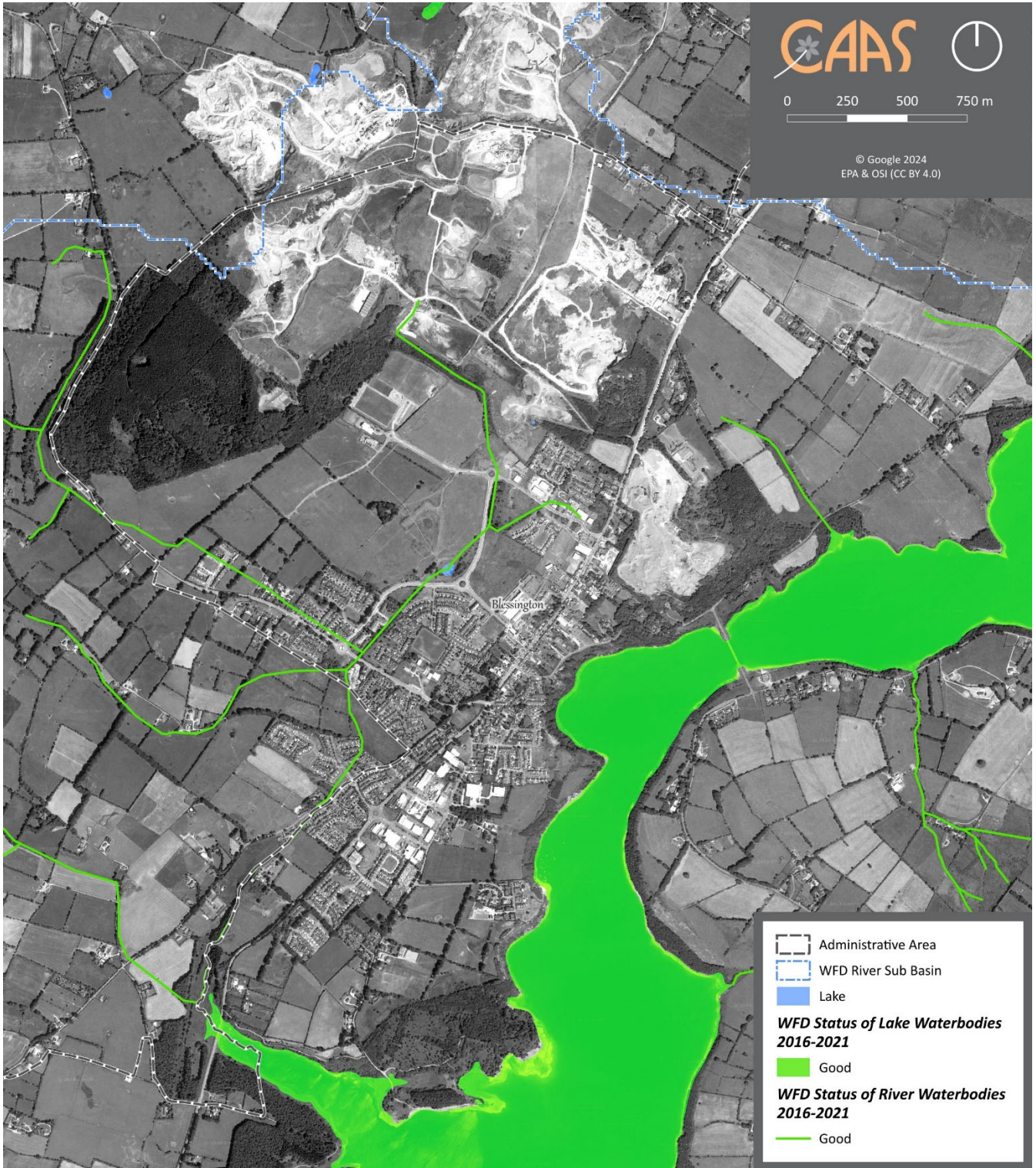


Figure 4.12 WFD Status of Surface Waterbodies (2016-2021)

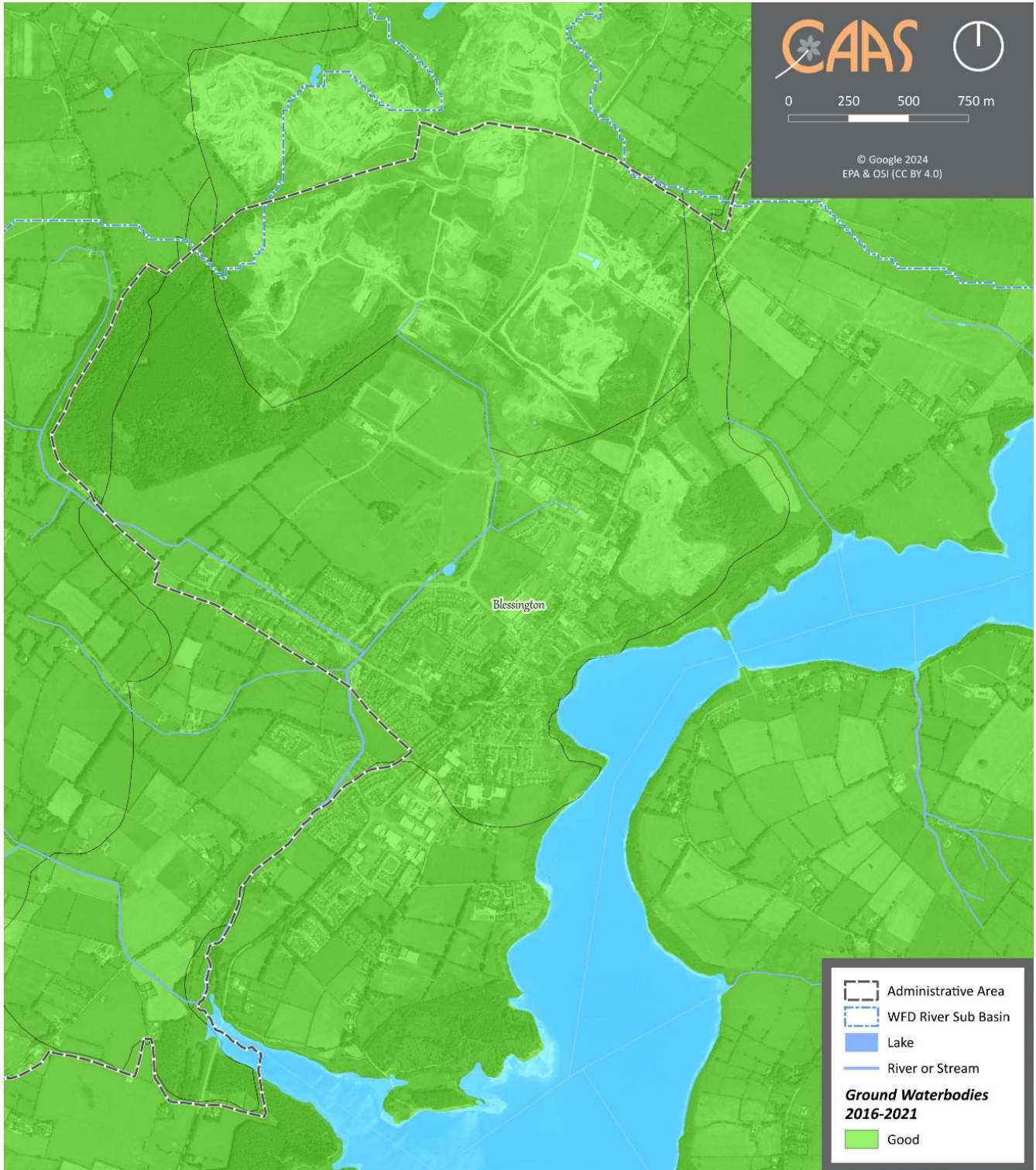


Figure 4.13 WFD Groundwater Status (2016-2021)

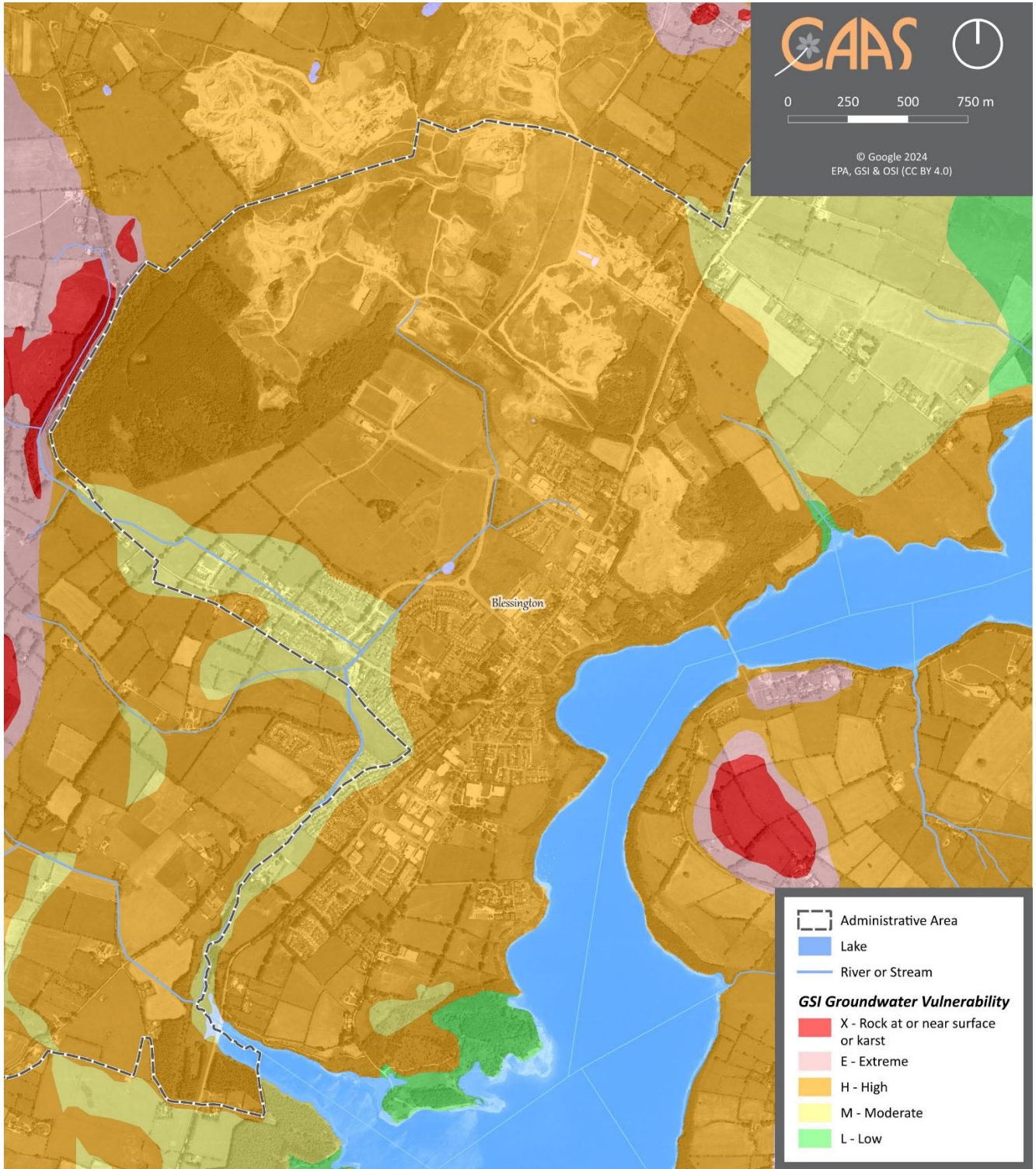


Figure 4.14 Groundwater Vulnerability

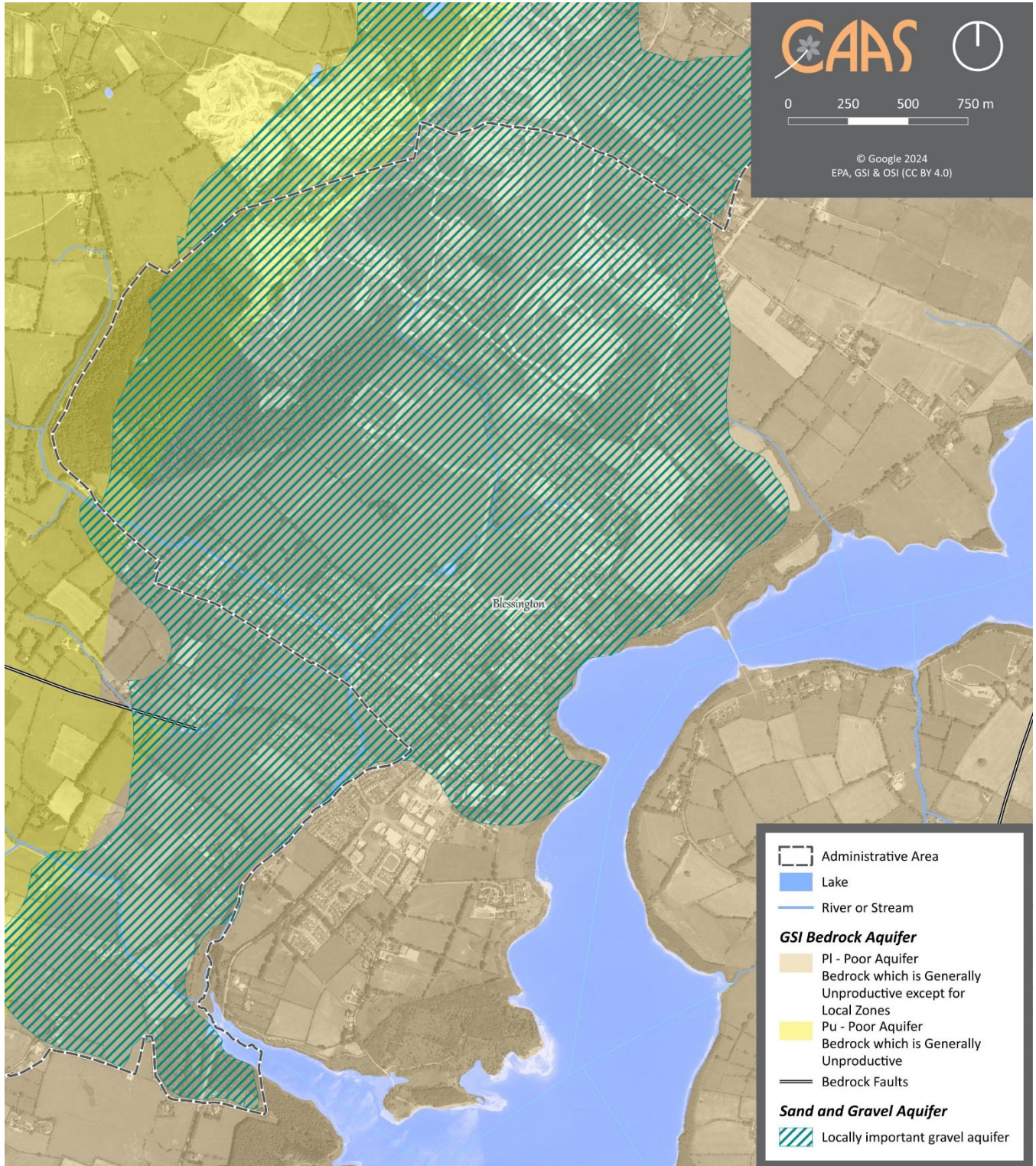


Figure 4.15 Groundwater Productivity

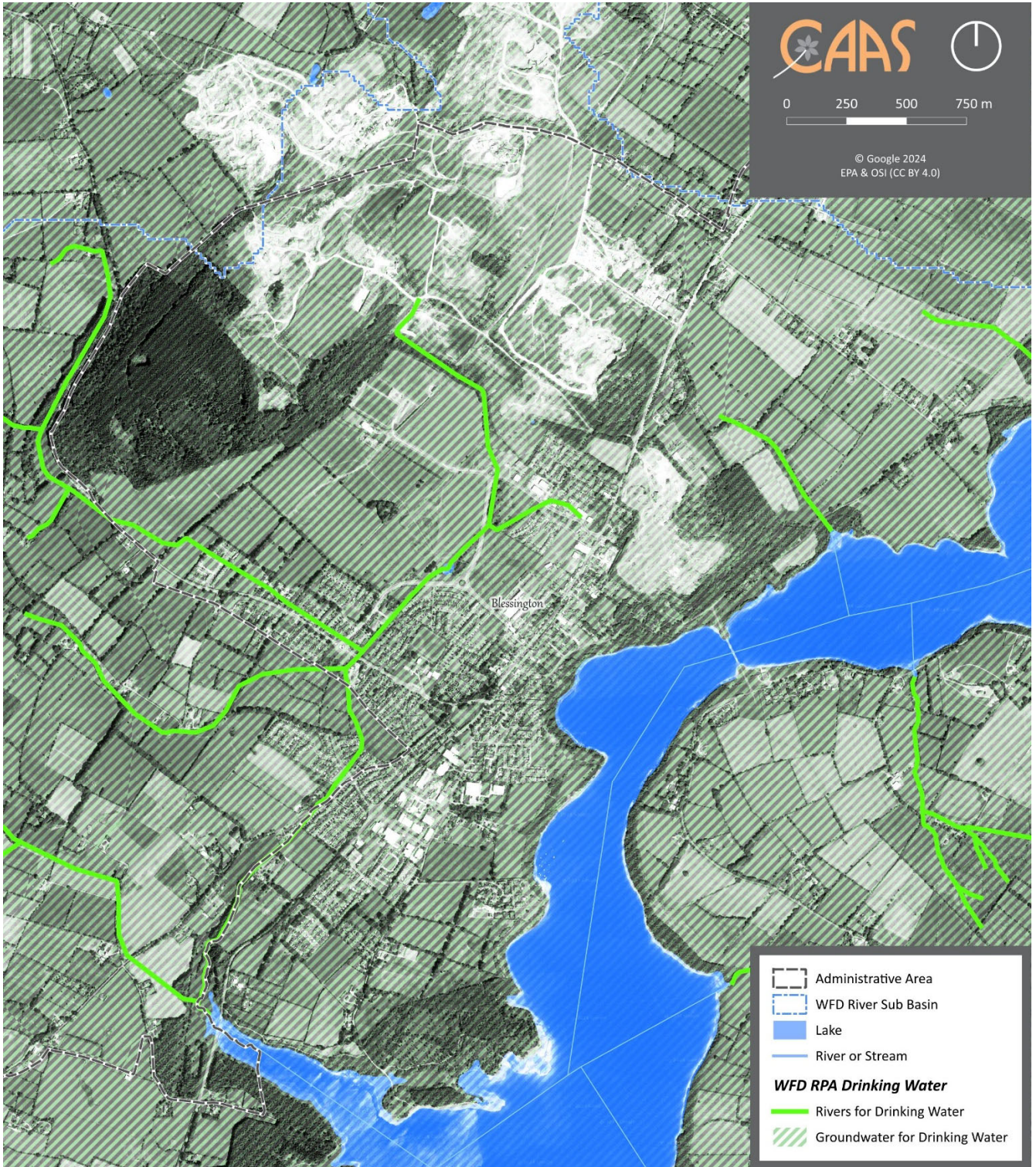


Figure 4.16 WFD RPA Drinking Water

4.10 Air and Climatic Factors

4.10.1 Climatic Factors³³

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

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

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

In 2023, emissions in the stationary ETS¹ emissions (covering emissions from sectors including Agriculture, Transport, Energy, Industries, Residential, Manufacturing Combustion and Industrial Processes) decreased by 17%. When land use, land-use change and forestry is included, total national emissions decreased by 3.8%.

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

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

The Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (see also subsection 4.10.2 below) provides

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

information on the breakdown of emissions from County Wicklow:

- In 2018, the baseline year, Ireland's national greenhouse gas emissions were approximately 70,235 ktonnes CO₂ eq.
- GHG emissions within the Wicklow County Council area are estimated to have been 1,101 ktonnes CO₂ eq in 2018.
- Of total emission in County Wicklow, the agriculture sector accounted for 40%, the residential sector for 25%, the transport sector for 24%, the Commercial and Public Sector for 9%, the Municipal sector for 1% and the Waste sector for 1%.

The EPA's 2024 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2023-2040* provides an updated assessment of Ireland's total projected greenhouse gas emissions to 2040, using the latest Inventory data for 2021 as the starting point. The report provides an assessment of Ireland's progress towards achieving its national ambitions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and EU emission reduction targets for 2030 as set out under the Effort Sharing Regulation³⁴. Key findings identified as part of the report are that:

- Ireland is not on track to meet the 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections, which include most 2024 Climate Action Plan measures.
- The first two carbon budgets (2021-2030), which aim to support the achievement of the 51% emissions reduction goal, are projected to be exceeded by a significant margin of between 17% and 27%.
- Sectoral emissions ceilings for 2025 and 2030 are projected to be exceeded in almost all cases, including agriculture, electricity, industry, and transport.
- Ireland will not meet its non-ETS³⁵ EU targets of a 42 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 under the With Additional Measures Scenario.
- Emissions in the 'Planned Additional Measures' scenario are projected to be 29% lower in 2030 (compared with 2018) whereas in the 'Implemented Existing Measures' scenario the emissions reduction is projected to be 11%.

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

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

There has been no improvement in these figures since EPA projections published in 2023.

- Faster implementation of measures is necessary to meet both National and EU targets. The pace at which planned policies and measures are implemented needs to be accelerated.
- Total emissions from the agriculture sector are projected to decrease by between 1% and 18% over the period 2022 to 2030. Savings are projected from a variety of measures including limiting usage and switching to different fertilisers, methane reductions measures and water table management.
- Transport emissions are projected to decrease by 5% to 26% over the period 2022-2030. Measures that are projected to contribute to greater emissions reductions include 945,000 EVs by 2030, a 20 per cent biodiesel blend rate by 2030 and avoid/shift measures such as 50% increase in daily active travel journeys and a 130% increase in daily public transport journeys.
- Emissions from the Energy Industries sector are projected to decrease by between 57% to 62% over the period 2022 and 2030. Renewable energy generation at the end of the decade is projected to range from 69% to 80% of electricity generation as a result of a projected rapid expansion in wind energy and other renewables.
- Emissions from the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector have been revised significantly to reflect new science. Total emissions from the LULUCF sector are projected to increase over the period 2022 to 2030. It is unlikely with the currently planned measures that the target set under the EU LULUCF Regulation and included in the Climate Action Plan 2024 will be met.

4.10.2 Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

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

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

Climate adaptation is a change in natural or human systems in response to the impacts of

climate change. These changes moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities and can be in response to actual or expected impacts.

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

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

The Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 will contribute towards addressing the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation, and strengthening the alignment between national climate policy and the delivery of local climate action. The local objectives of Wicklow County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 are grouped under five thematic areas as follows:

Governance and Leadership

- Integrate Climate Action into all policy and programme development.
- Ensure planned development considers long term outcomes and pathways for a net zero economy by 2050
- Ensure adaptation to climate is considered in decision making, policy and planning
- Build capacity of staff and elected representatives to embed climate action across all functions of the organisation.
- Demonstrate leadership on decarbonizing our buildings and operations.
- Develop partnerships to strengthen delivery of climate action

Built Environment and Transport

- Reduce carbon emissions from buildings, fleet and operations by 51%
- Implement energy efficiency measure to achieve target of 50% improvement in energy efficiency
- Measure performance on reducing carbon emissions.
- Ensure emissions from new buildings are minimized and offset by further reductions

in energy use elsewhere to achieve targets.

- Retrofit our housing stock to a minimum of B2 BER and build to a minimum of A2 BER.
- Support a shift in modal transport from cars to active travel for shorter journeys
- Support the development of public transport in County Wicklow working with service provider to increase access.
- Enable the roll out of EV charging infrastructure ensuring local needs are met.
- Raise awareness on the benefits of a change in modal transport options.

Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

- Ensure business continuity in the face of changing climate and preparedness for extreme weather events.
- Maintain roads and infrastructure in good state
- Protect communities and infrastructure from the risk of flooding
- Protect communities from the risk of coastal erosion
- Harness the capacity of nature to assist in building resilience, protecting and restoring natural systems including biodiversity, water, soils and air.
- Raise awareness on the risk from climate change
- Build collaboration with stakeholders to increase participation in measures to protect resources and communities from the impact of climate change.

Community Resilience and Transition

- Ensure that funding to communities considers climate impact and prioritises projects delivering climate action
- Support community projects through the Climate Action Fund, seeking projects that deliver a measurable benefit which can be replicated elsewhere
- Develop awareness and active citizen participation in climate action harnessing the participation of key stakeholders
- Support youth participation in climate action
- Build capacity for collaboration on climate action
- Support sectors and communities vulnerable to the regressive effects of climate change and/or the impacts of climate policy.
- Identify and implement measures to support impacted sectors and communities
- Ensure that actions for decarbonisation, adaptation and climate resilience are designed to improve the health and wellbeing of all.
- Address fuel poverty in social housing.

Sustainable Resource Management

- Promote engagement in resource efficiency programme.
- Develop collaboration and sharing of experience, promoting economic opportunities that arise from climate action
- Promote climate action and green skills in training and education in partnership with

Education and Training Boards and Local Enterprise Offices.

- Develop local strategy and raise awareness for the Circular Economy.

4.10.3 Alternative Fuels and Renewable Electricity Generation Targets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.10.4 Ambient Air Quality

In order to protect human health, vegetation and ecosystems, EU Directives set down air quality standards in Ireland and the other Member States for a wide variety of pollutants. These pollutants are generated through fuel combustion, in space heating, traffic, electricity generation and industry and, in sufficient amounts, could affect the well-being of the areas inhabitants. The EU Directives include details regarding how ambient air quality should be monitored, assessed and managed.

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

In order to comply with the directives mentioned above, the EPA measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. For the purposes of monitoring in Ireland, four zones are defined in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 271 of 2002).

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

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

The report further identifies the critical role of local authorities in the enforcement and implementation of existing plans and investment in infrastructure to encourage cleaner and healthier air quality choices, including:

- Local authorities must provide more resources to implement the new solid fuel regulations and full implementation of air quality plans.
- Local authorities must prioritise resource allocation of resources to advance enforcement.

- Investment in clean public transport infrastructure across the country must be maintained and increased.
- More safe footpaths and cycle lanes must be created to continue to increase active travel as a viable and safe alternative to car use and associated NO₂ emissions.

In order to apply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at monitoring stations across the country.³⁹ There is no such station within the Plan area and the closest station is in Naas, County Kildare, 9 km to the north-west of the Plan area.

4.10.5 Noise

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

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

Under the EU Environmental Noise Directive, which was transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (as amended), Strategic Noise Maps and Noise Action Plans are required to be made or revised every five years. The Dublin Agglomeration Noise Action Plan 2024 - 2028 has been prepared jointly by the local authorities of the Dublin Agglomeration (Dublin City Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, Wicklow County Council and Kildare County

³⁹ For more detail on current daily air quality data for the Plan refer to: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>.

Council). The Plan has been informed by and is based on the Strategic Noise Maps, which were prepared for the agglomeration of Dublin in 2022 and which cover transport (road and rail) and industry related environmental noise sources. The purpose of the Noise Action Plan is to avoid, prevent and reduce, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance due to the long-term exposure to environmental noise.

4.10.6 Existing Problems

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

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

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

4.11 Material Assets

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

4.11.1 Public Assets and Infrastructure

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

4.11.2 Land

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

4.11.3 Green Infrastructure

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

4.11.4 Woodland

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

4.11.5 Transport

Blessington is served by the N81 that transverses the Plan area and provides transport routes to Dublin, Baltinglass and Tullow. Blessington is also served by secondary roads, including the R410, which links Blessington to Naas. Other local roads provide links to Ballymore Eustace and Manor Kilbride. In addition, bus services are provided by Local Link (with services to Sallins, Naas, Wicklow Town and Arklow), Bus Éireann (with routes to Dublin and Rosslare Europort) and Dublin Bus (with routes including to Dublin). National, regional and local roads provide vital links between the town and retail, service and employment centres throughout the County and to adjoining counties.

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

4.11.6 Minerals and Aggregates

Significant amounts of sand and gravel quarrying have taken place in close proximity to the town, largely on the 'Blessington Delta' CGS in an arc around the northern part of the town. These quarrying lands could provide redevelopment opportunities as aggregate resources are depleted and quarry remediation takes place.

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

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

Mineral localities can be identified on Figure 4.17.

4.11.7 Water Services

4.11.7.1 Wastewater

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

- 10 large urban areas that did not meet European Union treatment standards in 2023 require improvements to comply with these standards and protect the environment;

- 16 towns and villages discharging raw sewage into the environment every day must be connected to wastewater treatment plants;
- 6 collecting systems (sewers) were subject to a judgement from the Court of Justice of the European Union and must be prioritised;
- 34 priority areas require improvements to protect rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters that are adversely impacted by wastewater;
- 3 collecting systems must be upgraded to prevent sewage pollution at bathing waters that were classified as having poor water quality; and
- 12 areas need improvements in wastewater treatment to protect endangered freshwater pearl mussels.

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

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

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

Uisce Éireann have recently completed an upgrade to Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant to c. 9,000 population equivalent, which would serve the level of growth envisioned by the Wicklow County Development Plan Core Strategy over the plan period.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

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

4.11.7.2 Wastewater Infrastructure

The Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) serving the Plan area is currently not listed as a priority area⁴¹ (such areas are those where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues).

The Blessington WWTP has a design capacity of 9,000 Population Equivalent (PE), with current load of 6,919 PE.⁴² As indicated by Uisce Éireann, there is spare capacity available.⁴³

The Blessington WWTP (Registration No. D0063-01) is currently fully compliant with the Emission Limit Values (ELVs) set in the Wastewater Discharge Licence in the most recent available Annual Environmental Report 2023 (published in April 2024).⁴⁴

4.11.7.3 Water Supply

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

Blessington is located within the Greater Dublin Area Water Resource Zone⁴⁵ and, as

identified by Uisce Éireann, there is capacity available to meet targeted population growth by 2032, although an improvement in level of service is required.⁴⁶

The Water Supply Schemes for the Plan area include the Blessington Water Supply Scheme (WSS). The Blessington WSS is supplied by Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant, which receives its water from the Poulaphouca Reservoir⁴⁷, and produces approximately 320,000 m³/day of water⁴⁸.

Under Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, the EPA is required to collect and verify monitoring results for all water supplies in Ireland covered by the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. The EPA publishes their results in annual reports that are supported by Remedial Action Lists (RALs). The RAL identifies water supplies that are not in compliance with the Regulations mentioned above. The most recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q2 of 2024, published in February 2024)⁴⁹ does not include any water scheme that supplies the Plan area.

4.11.7.4 Surface Water Drainage

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

⁴¹ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/waste-water/Priority-areas-for-website-April-2024.pdf>

⁴² https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/docs/aers/2023/D0063-01_2023_AER.pdf

⁴³ Uisce Éireann: Settlements with Waste Water Discharge Authorisations - *Wastewater Treatment Capacity Register*. The register provides an indication of available wastewater treatment capacity based on loads received in 2021 and available treatment plan capacity now or by completion of a project by 2024 (where relevant). Available at:

<https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/wastewater-treatment-capacity-register/wicklow/> (Published in June 2023).

⁴⁴ https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/docs/aers/2023/D0063-01_2023_AER.pdf

⁴⁵ A Water Resource Zone (WRZ) is an independent water supply system serving a region, city, town or village and is governed by topography or the extent of the water distribution network in an area. A WRZ may include multiple Water Treatment Plants and/or sources.

⁴⁶This may take the form of leakage reduction and/or capital investment to maintain/improve levels of service as the demand increases. Proposed solutions will be developed and prioritised through the National Water Resources Plan and investment planning process. Source:

<https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/water-supply-capacity-register/wicklow/> (Published in June 2023).

⁴⁷The Poulaphouca Reservoir is a man-made lake created in the 1940's by the damming of the River Liffey at Poulaphouca waterfall, to the south of the town. Hydroelectricity is generated at the dam, and the reservoir also supplies water to the Dublin region. Source: Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2029

⁴⁸ https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/audit-reports/dublin-city/Ballymore-Eustace_22-02-23.pdf

⁴⁹ Available at: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/Q2-2024-RAL-for-public-drinking-water-supplies-FINAL.pdf>

4.11.8 Waste Management

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

4.11.9 Existing Problems

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

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

4.12 Cultural Heritage

4.12.1 Archaeological Heritage

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

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

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

The term 'monument' includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. All monuments in existence before

1700 A.D. are automatically considered to be historic monuments within the meaning of the Acts. Monuments of architectural and historical interest also come within the scope of the Acts. Monuments include: any artificial or partly artificial building, structure or erection or group of such buildings, structures or erections; any cave, stone or other natural product, whether or not forming part of the ground, that has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the place where it is) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position; any, or any part of any, prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, or, ritual, industrial or habitation site; and any place comprising the remains or traces of any such building, structure or erection, any such cave, stone or natural product or any such tomb, grave, burial deposit or ritual, industrial or habitation site, situated on land or in the territorial waters of the State', but excludes 'any building or part of any building, that is habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes' (National Monuments Acts 1930-2004). A recorded monument is a monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the RMP set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Notification within which requirements for notifications of proposed works apply.

There are various entries to RMP within the Plan area, including two Major Sites of Archaeological Importance in Wicklow in State Ownership: St. Mark's Cross at Burgage More in Burgage Cemetery (a High Cross dating from the 12th Century and originally located at an ancient church, which is now submerged in the lake) and Rath Turtle Moat located near the top of Glen Ding woodland. Figure 4.18 shows the spatial distribution of Recorded Monuments within and beyond the Plan area, their associated zones of notification. There is no Area of Archaeological Significance or Potential within the boundary of the Plan area. However, an Area of Archaeological Significance and Potential is located at the deserted medieval borough of Burgage, immediately adjacent to the south of the Plan boundary, as shown on Figure 4.18.

The Underwater Archaeology Unit was established within the National Monuments

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

The Poulaphuca Reservoir was created in the 1940s as part of a hydroelectric scheme to generate power and provide water supply. The construction involved flooding a significant area, which submerged various structures, including the remnants of ancient farms and roads.

4.12.2 Architectural Heritage

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

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

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

- The interior of the structure;
- The land lying within the curtilage⁵⁰ of the structure;
- Any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors; and,
- All fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii).

There are a total of 7 entries in the RPS within the Plan area, as set out in Appendix 4 of Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied) and listed below:

- The Rectory;
- Main Street Ulster Bank;
- Main Street Downshire Hotel;
- Main Street Credit Union House;
- Main Street Church of Ireland Church;
- Main Street Former Catholic Church; and
- Main Street 'Dempsey'.

Clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within the town's centre, as shown on Figure 4.19. Notable Protected Structures include: the Rectory, Blessington; and Blessington Church of Ireland Church. Many of these Protected Structures are located within central parts of Blessington and within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of a Protected Structure. An ACA may or may not include Protected Structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. There is currently one ACA designated within the Plan area, namely the Blessington ACA (shown on Figure 4.19).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a State initiative under the administration of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and was

⁵⁰ Curtilage is normally taken to be the parcel of ground immediately associated with the Protected Structure, or in use for the purposes of the structure. Protection extends to the buildings and land lying within the curtilage. While the curtilage sometimes coincides with the present property boundary, it can originally have included lands, features or even buildings now in separate ownership, e.g. the lodge of a former country house, or the garden features located in land subsequently sold off. Such lands are described as being attendant grounds, and the protection extends to them just as if they were still within the curtilage of the Protected Structure.

established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the local authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH includes historic gardens and designed landscapes. Figure 4.19 shows entries to NIAH in the Plan area.

4.12.3 Existing Problems

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



Figure 4.17 Mineral Localities

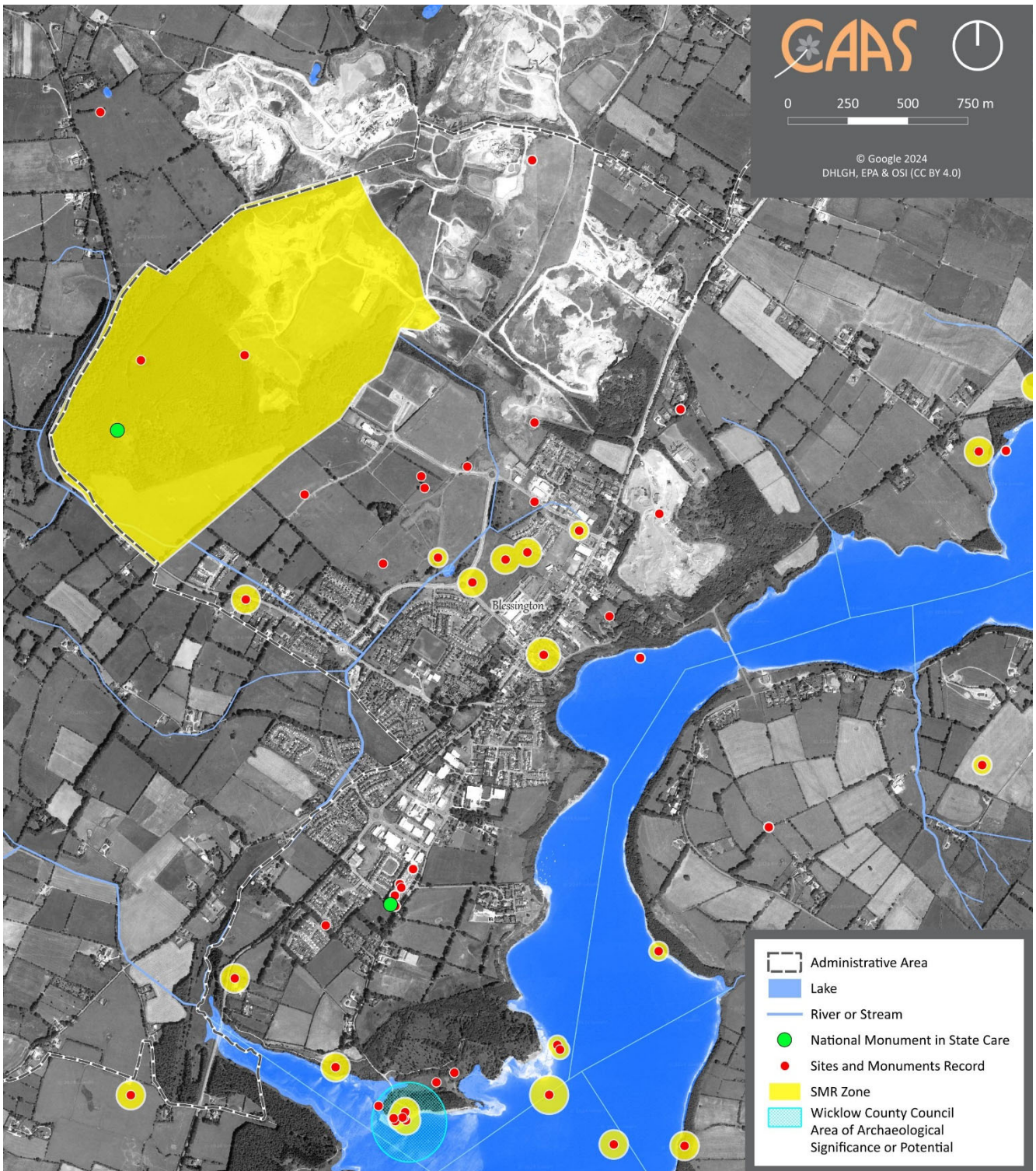


Figure 4.18 Archaeological Heritage



Figure 4.19 Architectural Heritage

4.13 Landscape

4.13.1 Introduction

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

Blessington is surrounded by various hills to the north and west, the Poulaphouca Reservoir to the east and south and the Wicklow Mountains to the east. The land surrounding the town is predominantly made up of agricultural land and an area of woodland (Glen Ding Wood) to the north-west of the Plan area, bounded by an adjacent existing quarry. The River Liffey flows into the Poulaphouca Reservoir to the east of the Plan area, exiting at Poulaphouca dam to the south west of the Plan area. The reservoir is an important recreational asset to the town and its surrounds.

4.13.2 Landscape Character Assessment

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

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

The existing Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied) identifies 15 Landscape Character Areas within six

Landscape Categories across the Council's administrative area.

The Plan area is located within the 'Western Corridor' Landscape Category (shown on Figure 4.20), immediately adjoining Blessington Lakes Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (shown on Figure 4.21) and within the 'Urban', 'Blessington Lakes' and 'N81 Corridor' Landscape Character Areas. There are no views, as listed in the Wicklow County Development Plan (as varied), currently within the Plan area. However, View No. 33, immediately south of the Plan boundary, originating from the N81 at Burgage More includes views of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and inlet (shown on Figure 4.21).

The Draft Plan provides for the protection of the following additional views:

- From St. Mary's Church to Bastion Wood and Glen Ding Forest.
- From side streets/laneways east (to the Poulaphouca Reservoir/Wicklow Mountains) and west (to Glen Ding) from Blessington Main Street.

4.13.3 Landscape Designations in Adjacent Counties

Planning applications within the Council's administrative area have the potential to affect landscape designations in the administrative area of County Kildare, located adjacent to the west of County Wicklow. There are 16 Landscape Character Areas identified within County Kildare. The Eastern Uplands Landscape Character Area, as shown on Figure 4.20, is located adjacent and surrounding the Blessington Plan area and is of 'Medium Sensitivity'.

4.13.4 Existing Environmental Problems

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

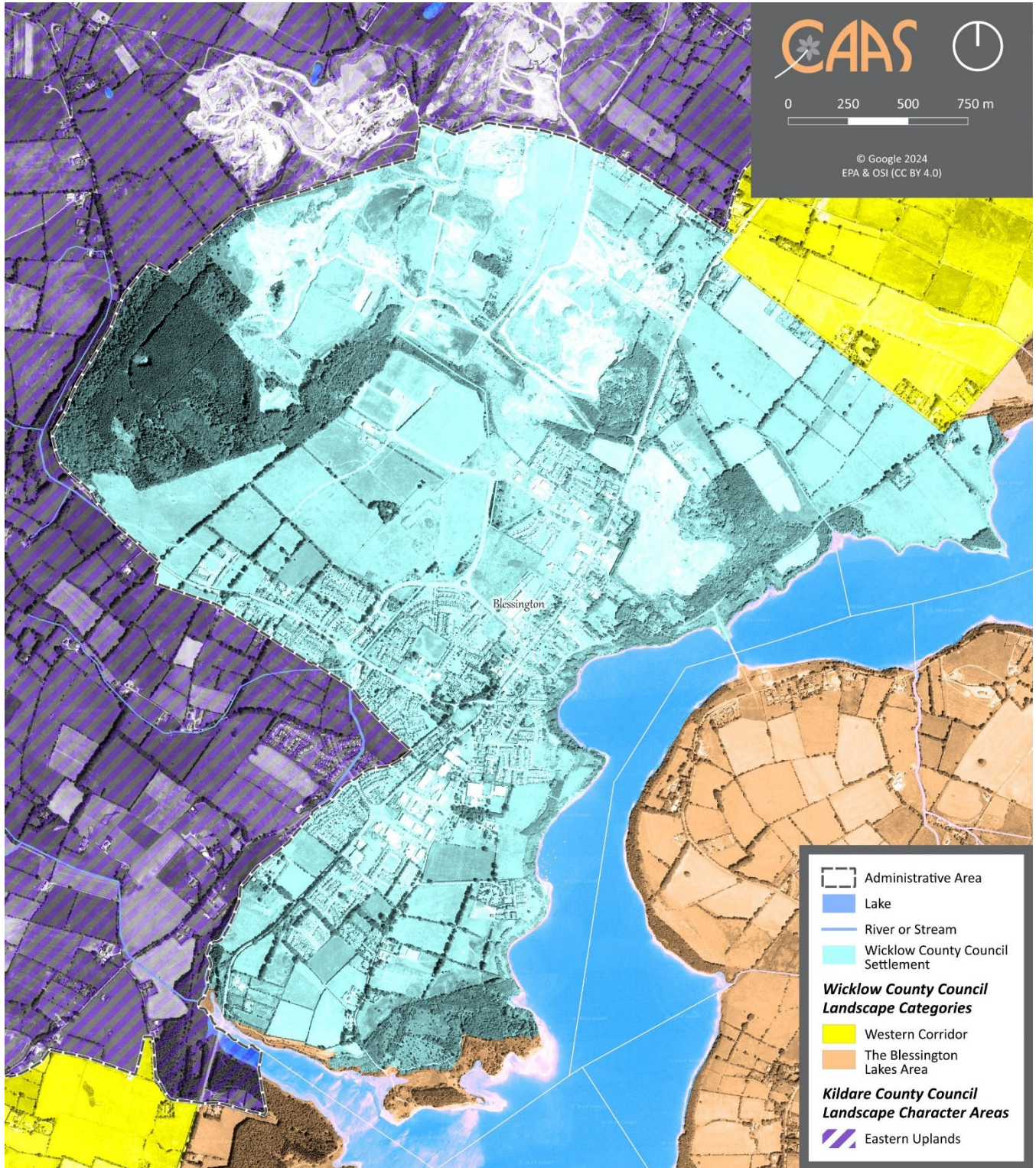


Figure 4.20 Landscape Categories⁵¹

⁵¹ Please note that the Settlement boundary is proposed to be changed as part of the Draft Local Area Plan and associated Proposed Variation No.3 to the Wicklow County Development Plan.

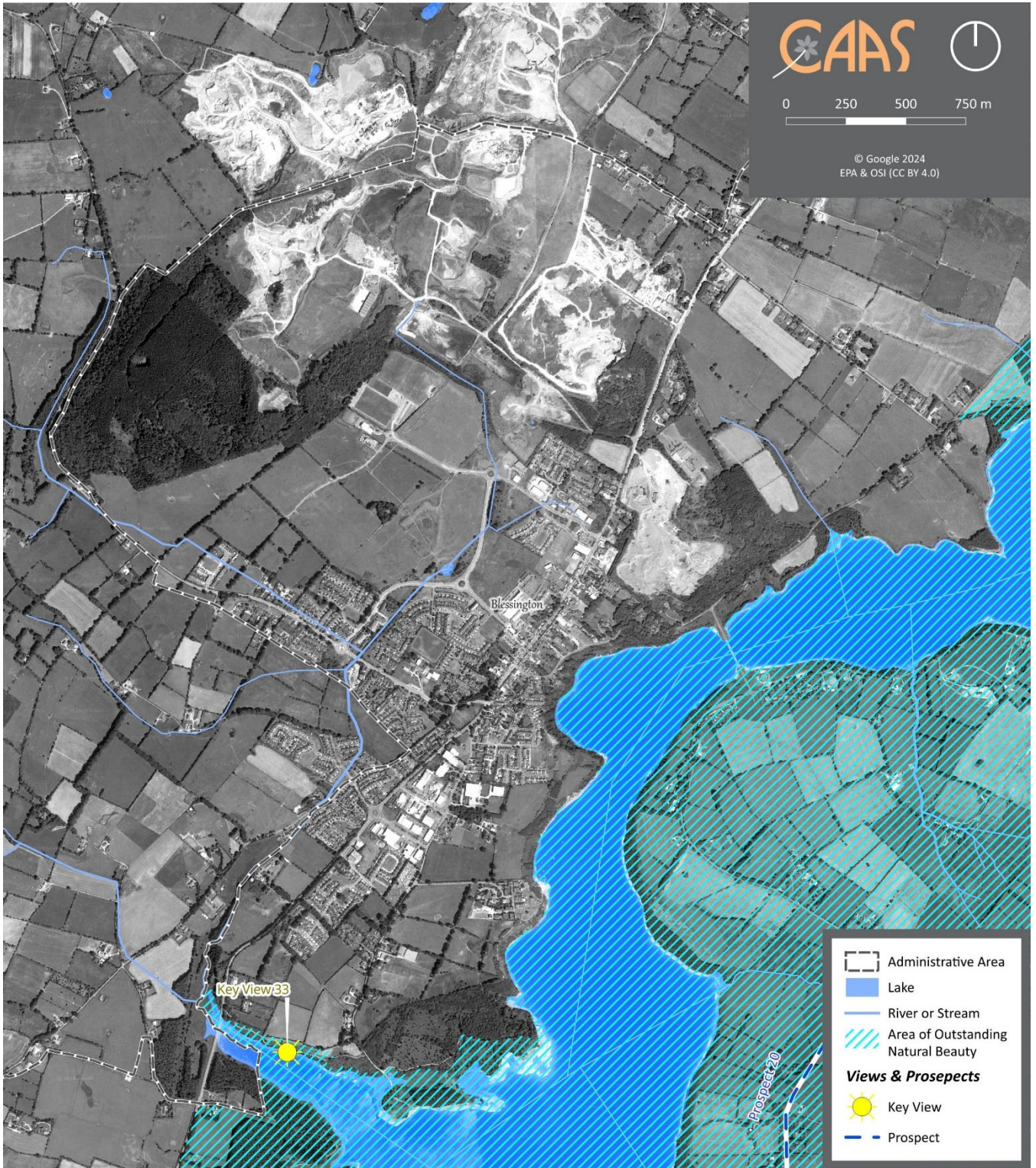


Figure 4.21 Other Landscape Designations

4.14 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivity Mapping

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

Figure 4.22 provides an Overlay of Environmental Sensitivities in the Plan area. Environmental sensitivities are indicated by colours which range from higher to lower sensitivity. The map was prepared using Geographical Information System software that allowed for a weighting system to be applied with differentiation in certain layers as follows:

- European Sites – SACs and SPAs (10 points);
- Other Ecological designations – pNHAs (5 points);
- Sensitive Landcover Categories, including Forestry & Woodland (Tailte Éireann, as shown on Draft LAP Map No. 3 Green Infrastructure) (10 points);
- Groundwater vulnerability (aquifers which are extremely vulnerable, 10 points; and highly vulnerable, 5 points);
- Source Protection Areas (Inner Protection Area and Outer Protection Area, 10 points);
- County Geological Sites (10 points);
- GSI Landslide Susceptibility (High or High Inferred, 10 points; Moderately High or Moderately High Inferred, 5 points);
- WFD RPA Rivers for Drinking Water (10 points);
- Indicators of Elevated Flood Risk (10 points);
- Archaeological Heritage including: National Monuments in State Care, National Monuments, SMR Zones of Notification and Wicklow County Council Area of Archaeological Significance or Potential (10 points);
- Architectural Heritage including: Architectural Conservation Areas, entries to the Record of Protected Structures, entries to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (10 points); and
- Scenic Routes and Visually Vulnerable Views (10 points); Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (15 points); and Sensitive Rural Landscapes (10 points).

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

need to be complied with in order to ensure that the implementation of the Plan contributes towards environmental protection.

The overlay mapping shows that environmental sensitivities are not evenly distributed throughout the Plan area.

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

The most sensitive areas in the Plan area include:

- Various locations and areas within the existing built-up footprint of Blessington, on account of cultural heritage designations, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, Entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas;
- Glen Ding Hill and Forest; and
- Area within and surrounding the Poulaphouca Reservoir, rivers, streams and lakes, on account of ecological and visual sensitivities and elevated levels of flood risk.

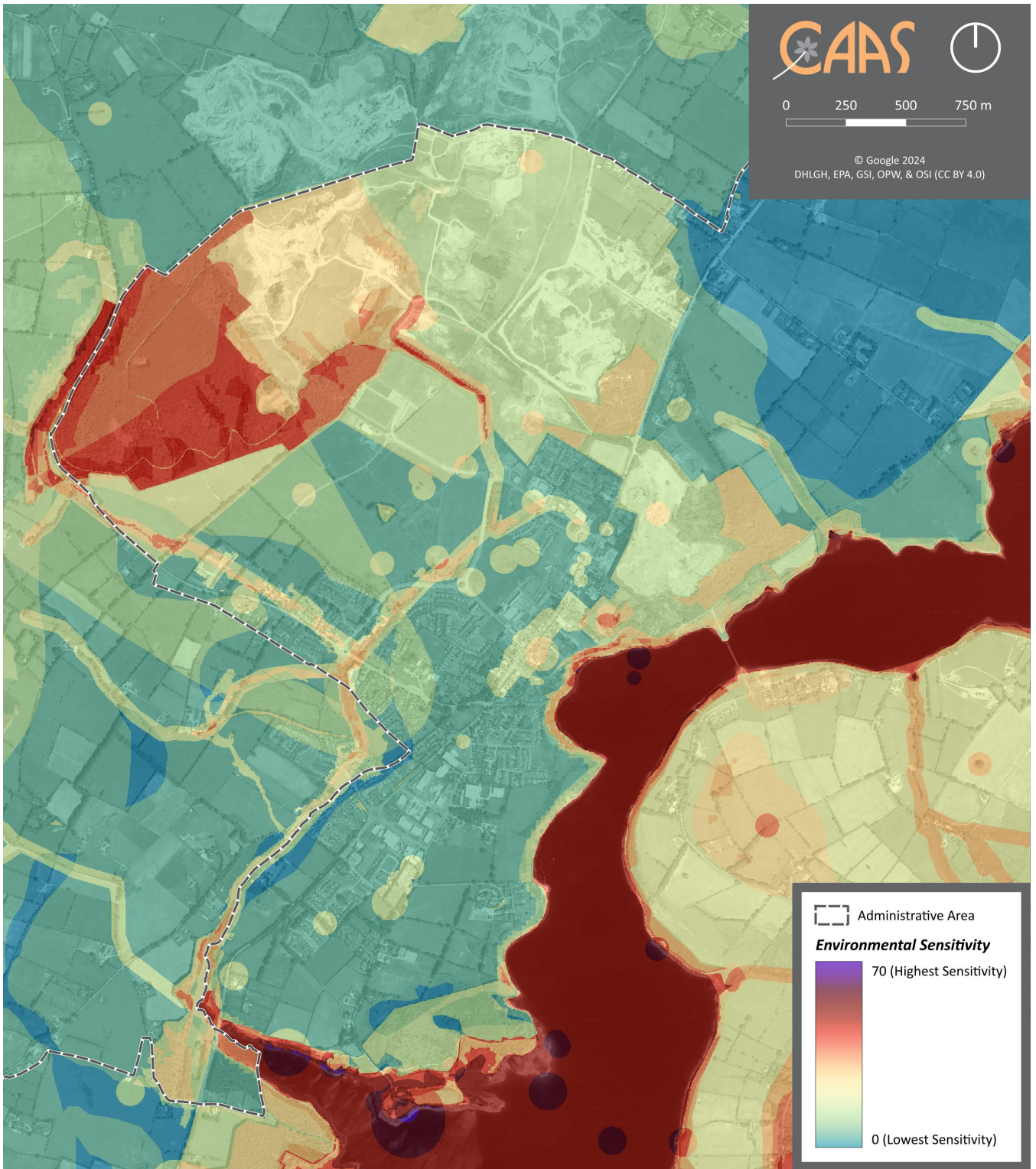


Figure 4.22 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivity

Section 5 Strategic Environmental Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

The monitoring measures identified below as part of the Blessington Local Area Plan SEA are consistent with the measures that were identified by the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 SEA. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

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

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Confirmation of compliance with Plan provisions relating to the protection of European Sites and sustaining resources
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 17 “Natural Heritage and Biodiversity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 17 “Natural Heritage and Biodiversity”
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic Development” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic Development”
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, cities and grids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in-combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel
Air	A	Support clean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
		air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<p>human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency • Promote continuing improvement in air quality • Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution • Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive • Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels 	<p>fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<p>compared to previous levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel
Climatic Factors ⁵²	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses • Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) • Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets • Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change • Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse gas emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures

⁵² Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan

Section 6 Description of Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment.

Six alternatives for the Local Area Plan are identified and presented here, and assessed in Section 7, under a number of different future development scenarios. The six alternatives are:

1. Maximum Environmental Protection
2. Sustainable Transportation
3. Compact Growth
4. Housing Market Driven
5. Community Driven
6. Extractive Industry and Economy Driven

6.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be consistent with the existing, already in force, Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan.

The alternatives available for the Plan are significantly limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, which are not wholly consistent with each other, including those of the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, Minister Guidelines and the County Plan. These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan, including on topics such as population, land use zoning and proper planning and sustainable development.

6.3 Alternative 1: Maximum Environmental Protection

This alternative sets out a development strategy that aims to achieve the maximum level of protection to the environment. This alternative is consistent with the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and is consistent with the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The key components of it are described below:

- Maximise the protection to European Sites (SAC and SPA) and NHAs. Include a significant conservation buffer surrounding all sites to enhance the protection of SAC, SPA and NHA sites.
- Restrict any significant development outward from the existing built-up area in the direction of the Poulaphouca Reservoir.
- Protect all mature trees and hedgerows where they are not on the TPO list.
- Maximise protection of watercourses in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' 2020 and in particular zone all lands within 50m of watercourses for Natural Areas (OS2) only.
- Protection of landscape - all lands visible from the Poulaphouca Reservoir, and lacking in adequate tree cover/screening, are designated as Greenbelt to protect land that is highly visible.
- Enhance the protection of views and prospects with restricted development within the view/prospect.

- Restrict significant development between the existing sections of the Blessington Inner Relief Road and Glen Ding to preserve views between the existing built-up area and the surrounding landscape to the west.
- Restrict additional development to Protected Structures, with maintenance proposals considered.
- Restrict development at all designated archaeological sites.
- Rezone all lands zoned 'EX – Extractive industry' within the Local Area Plan boundary, in favour of land use zonings that may facilitate the rehabilitation of quarry lands adjacent to the settlement.
- Rezone all lands identified as 'Local Biodiversity Areas' as Natural Areas (OS2) or Open Space (OS1).
- Maximise the protection of County Geological Sites within the Local Area Plan boundary.

6.4 Alternative 2: Sustainable Transportation

This alternative sets out a development strategy which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to the more sustainable modes of walking, cycling and using public transport. This alternative is consistent with the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and is consistent with the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The key components of it are described below:

- High density residential zones within 12-minute walking distance of all bus stop areas.
- Downzone all undeveloped greenfield land that is not within 12-minute walking distance of public transport.
- Pedestrianisation in town centre.
- The significant reduction, or removal, of through traffic through the town centre.
- A reallocation of road space in the town centre from car parking to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Include enhanced pedestrian connections throughout the settlement.
 - Include new pedestrian/cycling links between the existing built-up area and Glen Ding Forest.
 - Expand the Blessington Greenway around Poulaphouca Reservoir.
 - Increase pedestrian/cyclist permeability between Blessington Main Street and adjacent areas of the built-up area and other areas of zoned land (e.g. Kilbride Road, existing residential areas to west, Doran's Pit, etc.).
- Enhanced cycle routes and connections throughout the settlement in line with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network 2022, and where required elsewhere.
- Include a 'Park and Ride' site to the north of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant.

6.5 Alternative 3: Compact Growth

This alternative sets out a development strategy which focuses on compact growth focusing on the existing settlement centre of Blessington. This alternative is consistent with the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and is consistent with the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The key components of it are described below:

- Downzone all undeveloped greenfield land (the lands revert to open countryside) beyond the established built-up area boundary, other than the consolidation of the built-up area between Newtown Square and the under-construction town park.
- Zone those lands between Newtown Square and the under-construction town park, to the immediate west of the town centre development, for mixed use, high density residential development.
- All Town Centre/ Neighbourhood Centre sites are zoned for high density mixed use.
- Infill sites zoned for employment uses within the built-up area are zoned mixed use, high density residential, insofar as would be consistent with core strategy housing targets as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

6.6 Alternative 4: Housing Market Driven

This alternative sets out a development strategy which focuses on residential development focusing on phased development of residential zoned land. This alternative has regard to the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and has regard to the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The key components of it are described below:

- The life of this plan is in effect for 10 years as opposed to 6 years.
- Provide enough zoned land to meet the housing needs for 10 years in line with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan as 'Priority 1' lands.
 - Provide for 10% extra housing units above that of the Core Strategy as 'Priority 2' on the next best lands.
 - Provide for an additional 10% extra housing units above that of the Core Strategy on 'Priority 2' and 'Priority 3' lands.
- Densities of New Residential lands will be set at 20 units to the hectare, generally providing standard 3 and 4 bed family homes, detached and semi-detached, with generous private garden plots.
- Each housing development will have a minimum of 20% of the site dedicated to landscaped public open space areas.
- New access and distribution roads, throughout the settlement, will be included to serve the car-based occupants of the residential developments.
- All serviced land is zoned for residential development.
- Lands between the existing built-up area and the Poulaphouca Reservoir are zoned for residential development to capitalise on the value added by lake views/lakeside living.
- Community & Education zones, Employment zones, Active Open Space Zones are on the periphery of the residential zoned lands.

6.7 Alternative 5: Community Driven

This alternative sets out a development strategy which focuses on healthy communities, where residents have all necessary facilities and services within short walking/cycling distance of their homes. This alternative is consistent with the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and is consistent with the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The key components of it are described below:

- Extra lands, above the minimum requirement for new schools are zoned close to residential areas.
- Extra lands, above the minimum requirement for recreational/ sports / community facilities are zoned for Tourism / Recreation (TR), Community Education (CE) and Active Open Space (AOS) (e.g. for playing pitches, leisure centres/swimming pools, community halls, theatres, cultural facilities, running tracks, landscaped parks, dog parks, all other recreation/ sports. etc).
- New walking routes / cycling routes are designated throughout the settlement, along with routes around the Poulaphouca Reservoir, routes to Glen Ding Forest and to Russborough House.
- Extra lands are zoned for employment to facilitate people working locally. These will include the development of co working hubs.
- There will be additional lands zoned for childcare facilities (Crèches, Montessori, playgrounds, etc) throughout the settlement.
- There will be additional lands zoned for healthcare facilities (extra GP's, health centres, dentists, holistic centres, etc) throughout the settlement.
- The town centre will be strengthened with a larger Town Centre zoning with more opportunity sites for redevelopment of brownfield sites. This will help to improve the retail offer in the area, facilitate outdoor dining, etc.

6.8 Alternative 6: Extractive Industry and Economy Driven

This alternative sets out a development strategy which focuses on taking advantage of the aggregate quarrying resources available within the Local Area Plan boundary, and maximising the potential for growth of jobs locally. This alternative is consistent with the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and is consistent with the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The key components of it are described below:

- All current quarry lands are zoned 'EX – Extractive Industry', e.g. Doran's Pit, to maximise the potential of employment generation from the existing local extractive industry.
- Remove local road objectives that would pass through quarry lands.
- Extra lands, above the minimum requirement to meet a 0.7 jobs ratio, are zoned for employment purposes to maximise the potential for resident workers to work in the settlement, maximise the potential for strategic employment uses to relocate to the settlement, and thus reduce commuting times and unemployment.
- Lands in proximity to public transport are prioritised for employment use to facilitate the sustainable commuting of workers into Blessington.
- All land between the existing built-up area and the Poulaphouca Reservoir are zoned for a mixture of 'T – Tourism' and 'Park and Ride' uses, with a 25m buffer from the SPA boundary, to capitalise on the attraction provided by the Blessington Greenway, and to provide the maximum possible level of accommodation for tourists in an area of lakeside high amenity.

Section 7 Evaluation of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

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

7.2 Methodology

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

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

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects:

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

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

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

Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁵³

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

⁵³ See also Section 5.

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

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Climatic Factors ⁵⁴	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention

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

Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
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7.3 Detailed Assessment of Alternatives

7.3.1 Effects Common to all Alternatives

Each of the alternatives would be part of a wider Plan envisaging – in compliance with the robust policy framework in place at national, regional and local level – sustainable development and compact growth in County Wicklow generally. As such, common environmental effects (as detailed on Table 7.2) would be present under Plans adopting each of the different alternatives, albeit often to varying degrees.

⁵⁴ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

Table 7.3 Effects common to Plans adopting each of the different alternatives

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

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

7.3.2 Overall Comparative Assessment of Alternatives

An overall comparative assessment of the alternatives against SEOs is provided on Table 7.10. The basis of this assessment is provided under subsections 7.3.3 to 7.3.8 below. A localised assessment of the individual key components of each alternative under these subsections is also provided.

7.3.3 Assessment of Alternative 1: Maximum Environmental Protection

Overall Assessment of Alternative 1

By limiting development within parts of the Plan area, including those that are most sensitive to development, this alternative would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects to occur

from development within the Plan area⁵⁵ (although this potential would remain, albeit to a reduced degree) and benefit the protection and management of following environmental components within the Plan area⁵⁶:

- Biodiversity and flora and fauna (including through: applying a buffer around designated sites; restricting any significant development outward from the existing built-up area in the direction of the Poulaphouca Reservoir; rezoning all lands identified as 'Local Biodiversity Areas' as Natural Areas or Open Space; facilitating the rehabilitation of quarry lands adjacent to the settlement; and protecting all mature trees and hedgerows)
- Population and human health (limiting development in certain locations would reduce potential for interactions with human health)
- Soil (as a result of: limiting greenfield development in certain locations; facilitating the rehabilitation of quarry lands adjacent to the settlement; and maximising the protection of County Geological Sites)
- Air (limits in increases in traffic as a result of limiting development in certain locations)
- Water (including as a result of: limiting development in certain locations; and zoning all lands within 50m of watercourses for Natural Areas only)
- Cultural heritage (through: restricting additional development to Protected Structures; and restricting development at all designated archaeological sites)
- Landscape (including as a result of: designating lands visible from the Poulaphouca Reservoir, and lacking in adequate tree cover/screening, as Greenbelt; restricting significant development between the existing sections of the Blessington Inner Relief Road and Glen Ding to preserve views between the existing built-up area and the surrounding landscape to the west; protecting views and prospects with restricted development within the view/prospect; and facilitating the rehabilitation of quarry lands adjacent to the settlement).

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁵⁷. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁵⁸.

By allowing for development targets to be met within the Plan area, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a moderate degree⁵⁹. New development would have to be accompanied by appropriate levels of infrastructure and services⁶⁰.

Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 1

A localised assessment of key components of Alternative 1 "Maximum Environmental Protection" against SEOs is provided on Table 7.4. Once there is capacity to accommodate growth in less environmentally sensitive, well-serviced and well-connected areas within the Plan area, the key

⁵⁵ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁵⁶ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁵⁷ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁵⁸ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁵⁹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶⁰ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PHH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

components of Alternative 1 would benefit both environmental protection and sustainable development (**BFF PPH S W A C CH L** interactions in the “Likely to Improve status of SEOs” column). However, by limiting new development, the key components of this alternative could limit use of infrastructure and services at a site-specific/local level, including associated interactions with population (**MA PPH** interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column). Limiting development at designated cultural heritage sites could adversely affect the enhancement and long-term protection of these assets (**CH** interaction in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column).

Table 7.4 Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 1 against SEOs

Alternative 1 Key Components	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
Maximise the protection to European Sites (SAC and SPA) and NHAs. Include a significant conservation buffer surrounding all sites to enhance the protection of SAC, SPA and NHA sites	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Restrict any significant development outward from the existing built-up area in the direction of the Poulaphouca Reservoir.	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Protect all mature trees and hedgerows where they are not on the TPO list	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Maximise protection of watercourses in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' 2020 and in particular zone all lands within 50m of watercourses for Natural Areas (OS2) only	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Protection of landscape - all lands visible from the Poulaphouca Reservoir, and lacking in adequate tree cover/screening, are designated as Greenbelt to protect land that is highly visible	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Enhance the protection of views and prospects with restricted development within the view/prospect	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Restrict significant development between the existing sections of the Blessington Inner Relief Road and Glen Ding to preserve views between the existing built-up area and the surrounding landscape to the west.	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Restrict additional development to Protected Structures, with maintenance proposals considered	CH L BFF PPH S W A C	CH MA PPH
Restrict development at all designated archaeological sites	CH L BFF PPH S W A C	CH MA PPH
Rezone all lands zoned 'EX – Extractive industry' within the Local Area Plan boundary, in favour of land use zonings that may facilitate the rehabilitation of quarry lands adjacent to the settlement	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Rezone all lands identified as 'Local Biodiversity Areas' as Natural Areas (OS2) or Open Space (OS1)	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH
Maximise the protection of County Geological Sites within the Local Area Plan boundary	BFF PPH S W A C CH L	MA PPH

7.3.4 Assessment of Alternative 2: Sustainable Transportation

Overall Assessment of Alternative 2

By focusing on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to the more sustainable modes of walking, cycling and using public transport, and by providing for higher

densities, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a greater degree⁶¹ and conflict with these efforts to a lesser degree⁶².

Dezoning undeveloped greenfield lands, including parts of the Strategic Land Bank (SLB) that is not within 12-minute walking distance of public transport would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from development at these locations⁶³ (although the potential would remain elsewhere, including as a result of new and enhanced transport infrastructure) and benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape⁶⁴.

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁶⁵. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁶⁶.

Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 2

A localised assessment of key components of Alternative 2 "Sustainable Transportation" against SEOs is provided on Table 7.5. These components would generally benefit efforts to maximise both sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and the efficient use of transport infrastructure and services (including associated interactions with population) (**MA A C PPH** interactions in the "Likely to Improve status of SEOs" column). Down-zoning lands and limiting new development, would benefit the protection and management of various environmental components (**MA A C PPH BFF S W C L CH** interactions in the "Likely to Improve status of SEOs" column), while at the same time could limit use of infrastructure and services at a site-specific/local level, including associated interactions with population (**MA PPH** interactions in the "Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated" column).

Potential conflicts between new development (residential, community, enterprise and employment or open space related development, for example) on zoned lands and the protection of and management of the environment would occur (**BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L** interactions in the "Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated" column). The development of new connections (cycling routes and paths) present a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas, adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. New car parks and park and ride facilities can often take up significant space on greenfield sites and result in visual and other impacts.

⁶¹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶² See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶³ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶⁴ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶⁵ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶⁶ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

Although traffic reduction/ removal interventions, including reallocation of road space would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health (**MA A C PPH**), there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels (**MA A C PPH**).

Table 7.5 Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 2 against SEOs

Alternative 2 Key Components	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
High density residential zones within 12-minute walking distance of all bus stop areas	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
Downzone all undeveloped greenfield land that is not within 12-minute walking distance of public transport	MA A C PPH BFF S W C L CH	MA PPH
Pedestrianisation in town centre	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W CH L
The significant reduction, or removal, of through traffic through the town centre.	MA A C PPH	MA A C PPH
A reallocation of road space in the town centre from car parking to pedestrians and cyclists.	MA A C PPH	MA A C PPH
Include enhanced pedestrian connections throughout the settlement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include new pedestrian/cycling links between the existing built-up area and Glen Ding Forest. - Expand the Blessington Greenway around Poulaphouca Reservoir. - Increase pedestrian/cyclist permeability between Blessington Main Street and adjacent areas of the built-up area and other areas of zoned land (e.g. Kilbride Road, existing residential areas to west, Doran's Pit, etc.). 	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W CH L
Enhanced cycle routes and connections throughout the settlement in line with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network 2022, and where required elsewhere	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W CH L
Include a 'Park and Ride' site to the north of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C CH L

7.3.5 Assessment of Alternative 3: Compact Growth

Overall Assessment of Alternative 3

By allowing for development targets to be met within the Plan area, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a moderate degree⁶⁷. New development would have to be accompanied by appropriate levels of infrastructure and services⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁶⁸ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

Dezoning all undeveloped greenfield lands would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from development at these locations⁶⁹ (although the potential would remain elsewhere, including as a result of town and village centre development and mixed use, high density residential development on infill sites previously zoned for employment uses within the built-up area) and benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape⁷⁰.

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁷¹. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁷².

Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 3

A localised assessment of key components of Alternative 3 “Compact Growth” against SEOs is provided on Table 7.6. These components would benefit efforts to maximise both sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and the efficient use of infrastructure and services (including associated interactions with population) (MA A C PPH interactions in the “Likely to Improve status of SEOs” column).

Down-zoning all undeveloped greenfield land and limiting new development, would benefit the protection and management of various environmental components (MA A C PPH BFF S W C L CH interactions in the “Likely to Improve status of SEOs” column), while at the same time could limit use of infrastructure and services at a site-specific/local level (including associated interactions with population) (MA PPH interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column) while zoning these lands as open countryside would present reduced potential adverse effects from any developments occurring (BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column).

Potential conflicts between new development (town centre, village centre, mixed use and residential, for example) on zoned lands and the protection of and management of the environment would occur (BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column).

Table 7.6 Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 3 against SEOs

Alternative 3 Key Components	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
Downzone all undeveloped greenfield land (the lands revert to open countryside) beyond the established built-up area boundary, other than the consolidation of the built-up area between Newtown Square and the under-construction town park	MA A C PPH BFF S W C L CH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
Zone those lands between Newtown Square and the under-construction town park, to the immediate west of the town centre development, for mixed use, high density residential development.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L

⁶⁹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷⁰ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷¹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷² See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

All Town Centre/ Neighbourhood Centre sites are zoned for high density mixed use.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
Infill sites zoned for employment uses within the built-up area are zoned for mixed use, high density residential, insofar as would be consistent with core strategy housing targets as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L

7.3.6 Assessment of Alternative 4: Housing Market Driven

Overall Assessment of Alternative 4

As a plan developed from this alternative would be in effect for ten as opposed to six years, a fully comparative evaluation cannot be provided.

By providing for

- excesses in zoned land (above current targets) and lower densities of housing development
- facilitating increases in car dependency and
- providing for community and education, employment and active open space uses on the periphery of the residential zoned land,

this alternative would:

- benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a lesser degree⁷³; and
- conflict with these efforts to a greater degree⁷⁴.

This alternative would provide zoning for ten years of housing needs, unlike the other alternatives that would make provisions over a six-year lifespan and be reviewed towards the end of this six-year period. Furthermore, demand would be met through lower densities, requiring a greater extent of lands to be zoned for development. The extent of greenfield development provided and the lack of a focus on infill/regeneration development would present a greater potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from such development within the Plan area under this alternative⁷⁵ and consequently benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape, in the Plan area to a lesser degree⁷⁶.

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁷⁷. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁷⁸.

⁷³ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷⁴ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷⁵ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷⁶ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷⁷ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁷⁸ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 4

A localised assessment of key components of Alternative 4 “Housing Market Driven” against SEOs is provided on Table 7.7. All key components would result in potential conflicts between housing (and supporting) development and the protection of and management of the environment (**BFF PPH S W A C MA CH L** interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column).

The first key component of this alternative identified on the Table 7.7, to provide enough zoned land to meet the housing needs for 10 years in line with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, would have the potential to benefit efforts to maximise both sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and the efficient use of transport infrastructure and services (including associated interactions with population) (**MA A C PPH** interactions in the “Likely to Improve status of SEOs” column). The sixth key component of this alternative, to zone all serviced land for development, would have similar interactions, although it would provide for additional headroom above that which would be provided by the first key component.

Most other components of this alternative (providing for excesses in zoned land, having regard to higher-level population targets, and lower densities of housing development, facilitating increases in car dependency and providing for community and education, employment and active open space uses in more peripheral areas) would hinder efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) (**MA A C PPH** interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column).

Table 7.7 Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 4 against SEOs

Alternative 4 Key Components	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
Provide enough zoned land to meet the housing needs for 10 years in line with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan as 'Priority 1' lands.	MA A C PPH	BFF PPH S W A C MA CH L
Provide for 10% extra housing units above that of the Core Strategy on 'Priority 2' on the next best lands.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
Provide for an additional 10% extra housing units above that of the Core Strategy on 'Priority 2' and 'Priority 3' lands.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
Densities of New Residential lands will be set at 20 units to the hectare, generally providing standard 3 and 4 bed family homes, detached and semi-detached, with generous private garden plots.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
Each housing development will have a minimum of 20% of the site dedicated to landscaped public open space areas.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
New access and distribution roads, throughout the settlement, will be included to serve the car-based occupants of the residential developments.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
Lands between the existing built-up area and the Poulaphouca Reservoir are zoned for residential development to capitalise on the value added by lake views/lakeside living.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
All serviced land is zoned for residential development.	MA A C PPH	MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L
Community & Education zones, Employment zones, Active Open Space Zones are on the periphery of the residential zoned lands.		MA A C PPH BFF S W CH L

7.3.7 Assessment of Alternative 5: Community Driven

Overall Assessment of Alternative 5

By focusing on healthy communities, where residents have all necessary facilities and services within short walking/cycling distance of their homes, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a greater degree⁷⁹ and conflict with these efforts to a lesser degree⁸⁰.

Providing for a strengthened town centre and more opportunity sites for the redevelopment of brownfield sites would help to reduce demand for greenfield development within the Plan area and associated potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from such development⁸¹ (although the potential would remain) and benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape, especially in peripheral parts of the Plan area⁸².

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁸³. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁸⁴.

Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 5

A localised assessment of key components of Alternative 5 "Community Driven" against SEOs is provided on Table 7.8. These components, which provide for community, retail and economic infrastructure, development and services close to existing and new communities, would benefit efforts to maximise both sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and the efficient use of infrastructure and services (including associated interactions with population) (**MA A C PPH** interactions in the "Likely to Improve status of SEOs" column).

Potential conflicts between new development on zoned lands and the protection of and management of the environment would occur (**BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L** interactions in the "Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated" column). The development of new walking routes and cycling routes present a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas, adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.

⁷⁹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁸⁰ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁸¹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁸² See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁸³ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PHH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁸⁴ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

Table 7.8 Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 5 against SEOs

Alternative 5 Key Components	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
Extra lands, above the minimum requirement for new schools are zoned close to residential areas.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
Extra lands, above the minimum requirement for recreational/ sports / community facilities are zoned for Tourism / Recreation (TR), Community Education (CE) and Active Open Space (AOS) (e.g. for playing pitches, leisure centres/swimming pools, community halls, theatres, cultural facilities, running tracks, landscaped parks, dog parks, all other recreation/ sports. etc).	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
New walking routes / cycling routes are designated throughout the settlement, along with routes around the Poulaphouca Reservoir, routes to Glen Ding Forest and to Russborough House.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W CH L
Extra lands are zoned for employment to facilitate people working locally. These will include the development of co working hubs.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
There will be additional lands zoned for childcare facilities (Crèches, Montessori, playgrounds, etc) throughout the settlement.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
There will be additional lands zoned for healthcare facilities (extra GP's, health centres, dentists, holistic centres, etc) throughout the settlement.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
The town centre will be strengthened with a larger Town Centre zoning with more opportunity sites for redevelopment of brownfield sites. This will help to improve the retail offer in the area, facilitate outdoor dining, etc.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L

7.3.8 Assessment of Alternative 6: Extractive Industry & Economy Driven

By maximising the potential for growth of jobs locally (including prioritising lands in proximity to public transport for employment use to facilitate the sustainable commuting), where workers and resident workers would have all necessary facilities and services within short walking/cycling distance of their workplaces and homes, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a moderate degree⁸⁵ and conflict with these efforts to a moderate degree⁸⁶. Zoning all quarry lands for extractive industry uses would hinder the sustainable development of other mixed uses at some of these sites, such as Doran's Pit, while the loss of local road objectives through quarry lands, such as the link between Blessington Bridge and the N81, could hinder efforts to improve sustainable mobility.

Although there are environmentally sensitive locations within and adjacent to the Plan area, providing for the economic development of lands within the Plan area, including those associated with existing

⁸⁵ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

⁸⁶ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

industries (tourism and quarrying), would help to reduce demand for greenfield development elsewhere and associated potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from such development⁸⁷ (including effects that could arise in previously undeveloped areas that are more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁸⁸). As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁸⁹.

Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 6

A localised assessment of key components of Alternative 6 “Extractive Industry & Economy Driven” against SEOs is provided on Table 7.9. These components, providing for economic development within Blessington, would benefit efforts to maximise both sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and the efficient use of infrastructure and services (including associated interactions with population) (**MA A C PPH** interactions in the “Likely to Improve status of SEOs” column).

Potential conflicts between new development on zoned lands and the protection of and management of the environment would occur (**BFF PPH S W A C MA CH L** interactions in the “Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated” column). Quarries, tourism infrastructure and other economic development present a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

Extractive industries involve the removal of raw materials from the earth, their processing and distribution. They can impact upon the landscape character of an area and adversely effect landscape features, with residual visual impacts most likely on elevated and exposed sites. Extractive industries result in loss of habitats and soils and have the potential to impact upon water courses and downstream habitats, cultural heritage and geological heritage, if unmitigated. They are often energy intensive and involve movements of large vehicles to transport extracted material. However, they provide employment and produce the materials that are necessary for the sustainable development of other uses, including housing, employment developments, community buildings and infrastructure such as that related to sustainable mobility.

In comparison with dispersed tourism development further away from a settlement centre, orderly tourism development within the Plan area would be more likely to be served by infrastructure (including water services infrastructure and safe walking and cycling facilities) and more likely to protect the environment, including the status of ground and surface waters, water used for drinking water, human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the landscape. However, tourism development would contribute towards an increase in the number and dwell time of visitors and associated potential adverse effects. Such effects would include in-combination effects arising from associated services and infrastructure.

Poulaphouca Reservoir provides a man-made habitat for bird species, created in 1944 by the damming of the River Liffey for the purpose of generating electricity from hydropower. On account of its bird life, which can be sensitive to tourism related activities such as fishing and nautical sports, it is designated as a Special Protection Area. As well as being ecologically sensitive, areas close to the edge of the shore are also visually sensitive. Therefore, development in this area would have the potential to adversely affect ecological and visual sensitivities, if unmitigated.

⁸⁷ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PPH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.













⁸⁸ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **BFF PPH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.



⁸⁹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur common to all alternatives in Table 7.3 and **A C S BFF W PPH MA L CH** SEO interactions in Table 7.10.

Table 7.9 Localised Assessment of Key Components of Alternative 6 against SEOs

Alternative 6 Key Components	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -
All current quarry lands are zoned 'EX – Extractive Industry', e.g. Doran's Pit, to maximise the potential of employment generation from the existing local extractive industry.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
Remove local road objectives that would pass through quarry lands.		MA A C PPH
Extra lands, above the minimum requirement to meet a 0.7 jobs ratio, are zoned for employment purposes to maximise the potential for resident workers to work in the settlement, maximise the potential for strategic employment uses to relocate to the settlement, and thus reduce commuting times and unemployment.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L
Lands in proximity to public transport are prioritised for employment use to facilitate the sustainable commuting of workers into Blessington.	MA A C PPH	BFF S W CH L
All land between the existing built-up area and the Poulaphouca Reservoir are zoned for a mixture of 'T – Tourism' and 'Park and Ride' uses, with a 25m buffer from the SPA boundary, to capitalise on the attraction provided by the Blessington Greenway, and to provide the maximum possible level of accommodation for tourists in an area of lakeside high amenity.	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W A C MA CH L

Table 7.10 Overall Comparative Assessment of Alternatives against SEOs

Alternative	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -		
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree
Alternative 1: Maximum Environmental Protection	BFF PHH S W L CH - 	MA A C PPH		BFF PHH S W L CH - 	MA A C PPH	
Alternative 2: Sustainable Transportation	MA A C PPH 	BFF PHH S W L CH -		MA A C PPH 	BFF PHH S W L CH -	
Alternative 3: Compact Growth	BFF PHH S W L CH - 	MA A C PPH BFF PHH S W L CH -		BFF PHH S W L CH - 	MA A C PPH BFF PHH S W L CH -	
Alternative 4: Housing Market Driven	BFF PHH S W L CH - 		MA A C PPH BFF PHH S W L CH -	BFF PHH S W L CH - 		MA A C PPH BFF PHH S W L CH -
Alternative 5: Community Driven	MA A C PPH 	BFF PHH S W L CH -		MA A C PPH 	BFF PHH S W L CH -	
Alternative 6: Extractive Industry and Economy Driven	BFF PHH S W L CH - 	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W L CH -	BFF PHH S W L CH - 	MA A C PPH	BFF PHH S W L CH -

- = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area (directing incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas within the Plan area and focusing on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area)
- = These interactions relate to the potential for direct adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated (arising from development within the Plan area)
-  = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment beyond the Plan area (as a result of providing development within the Plan area)
-  = These interactions relate to adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, (arising from development occurring beyond the Plan area)

7.4 Selected Alternative for the Plan

The 'Selected Alternative' for the Plan integrates the following components from the six above evaluated alternative scenarios for the Plan:

- from "Alternative 1: Maximum Environmental Protection"
 - The protection to European Sites (SAC and SPA) and NHAs. Include a significant conservation buffer surrounding all sites to enhance the protection of SAC, SPA and NHA sites;
 - Restrict development outward from the existing built-up area in the direction of the Poulaphouca Reservoir;
 - Protect mature trees and hedgerows where they are not on the TPO list;
 - Protection of watercourses in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' 2020;
 - Protection of landscape;
 - Enhance the protection of views and prospects with restricted development within the view/prospect; and
 - Rezone the majority of lands identified as 'Local Biodiversity Areas' as Natural Areas (OS2) or Open Space (OS1).

- from "Alternative 2: Sustainable Transportation"
 - The Draft Plan facilitates the significant reduction, or removal, of through traffic through the town centre;
 - The Draft Plan facilitates a reallocation of road space in the town centre from car parking to pedestrians and cyclists;
 - The Draft Plan facilitates enhanced pedestrian connections throughout the settlement;
 - The Draft Plan facilitates new pedestrian/cycling links between the existing built-up area and Glen Ding Forest;
 - The Draft Plan facilitates the expansion of the Blessington Greenway around Poulaphouca Reservoir;
 - The Draft Plan facilitates an increase in pedestrian/cyclist permeability between Blessington Main Street and adjacent areas of the built-up area and other areas of zoned land (e.g. Kilbride Road, existing residential areas to west, Doran's Pit, etc.);
 - The Draft Plan facilitates enhanced cycle routes and connections throughout the settlement in line with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network 2022, and where required elsewhere; and
 - The Draft Plan facilitates a 'Park and Ride' site adjacent to Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant.

- from "Alternative 3: Compact Growth"
 - Zone those lands between Newtown Square and the under-construction town park, to the immediate west of the town centre development, for residential development; and
 - All Town Centre sites are zoned for high density mixed use.

- from "Alternative 4: Housing Market Driven"
 - Provide for extra housing units above that of the Core Strategy as 'Priority 2' on the next best lands.

- from "Alternative 5: Community Driven"
 - Extra lands, above the minimum requirement for new schools are zoned close to residential areas;

- Extra lands are zoned for Community Education (CE) and Active Open Space (AOS) (e.g. for playing pitches, leisure centres/swimming pools, community halls, theatres, cultural facilities, running tracks, landscaped parks, dog parks, all other recreation/sports etc.);
 - New walking routes / cycling routes are designated throughout the settlement, along with routes around the Poulaphouca Reservoir, routes to Glen Ding Forest; and
 - Extra lands are zoned for employment to facilitate people working locally.
- from “Alternative 6: Extractive Industry and Economy Driven”
 - Extra lands, above the minimum requirement to meet a 0.7 jobs ratio, are zoned for employment purposes to maximise the potential for resident workers to work in the settlement, maximise the potential for strategic employment uses to relocate to the settlement, and thus reduce commuting times and unemployment; and
 - Land between the existing built-up area and the Poulaphouca Reservoir are zoned for ‘T – Tourism’ uses, with a buffer from the SPA boundary, to capitalise on the attraction provided by the Blessington Greenway, and to provide accommodation for tourists in an area of lakeside high amenity.

These components emerged from the planning/SEA process having regard to both:

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

An assessment of the ‘Selected Alternative’ against SEOs is provided at Table 7.11. The ‘Selected Alternative’ will help to:

- Maximise the provision of land use zoning and the deliverance of associated travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to the more sustainable modes of walking, cycling and using public transport (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies to a greater degree (improving SEO interactions for **MA A C PPH**), conflicting with these to a lesser degree (potentially conflicting SEO interactions for **MA A C PPH**);
- Maximise positive effects on the protection and management of the environment beyond the Plan area as a result of providing development within the Plan area (improving SEO interactions for **BFF PHH S W L CH**), while helping to minimise adverse environmental effects (if unmitigated) arising from development occurring beyond the Plan area (potentially conflicting SEO interactions for **BFF PHH S W L CH**); and
- Maximise positive effects on the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area as a result of directing incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas within the Plan area and focusing on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area (improving SEO interactions for **BFF PHH S W L CH**), while helping to minimise adverse environmental effects (if unmitigated) arising from development occurring within the Plan area (potentially conflicting SEO interactions for **BFF PHH S W L CH**).

Table 7.11 Assessment of 'Selected Alternative' against SEOs

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +			Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -		
	to a Greater degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree
Selected Alternative for the Draft Plan	MA A C PPH BFF PHH S W L CH - BFF PHH S W L CH			MA A C PPH BFF PHH S W L CH - BFF PHH S W L CH		

- = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area (directing incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas within the Plan area and focusing on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area)
- = These interactions relate to the potential for direct adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated (arising from development within the Plan area)
- = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment beyond the Plan area (as a result of providing development within the Plan area)
- = These interactions relate to adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, (arising from development occurring beyond the Plan area)

Section 8 Evaluation of Draft Plan Provisions

8.1 Introduction

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

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

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects:

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

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

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

Table 8.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁹⁰

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

⁹⁰ See also Section 5

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency Promote continuing improvement in air quality Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health – Air Quality Directive Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended level
Climatic Factors⁹¹	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention

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

Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated -	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0
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⁹¹ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10 and Appendix I. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

8.2 Cumulative Effects⁹²

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

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

- Potential *intra-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. Where there are elevated levels of environmental sensitivities (such as those identified under Section 4), future development could result in environmental conflicts and lead to a deterioration in environmental integrity. The interrelationships between environmental components that help determine these potential effects are identified on Table 8.4 e.g. interrelationships between: human health and water quality; human health and air quality; human health and flood risk; and ecology and water quality.
- Potential *inter-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, developments, etc.

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

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

- Land use policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Wicklow County Development Plan and adjoining County Development Plans and Local Area Plans)
- Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plans of adjoining counties;
- Energy policy, plans and programmes (e.g. Grid25 and associated Implementation Programme and the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030);
- Climate related policy, plans and programmes (e.g. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Adaptation Framework 2024 and the Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029);
- Water services, waste management and transport infrastructure plans (e.g. Uisce Éireann's Water Services Strategic Plan and associated Capital Investment Plan, National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 and the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, 2022-2042); and
- Environmental protection and management plans (e.g. River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management Plans).

Potential cumulative/in combination effects include:

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

⁹² The EPA's guidance note 'Good Practice Guidance note on cumulative effects assessment in SEA' has been considered in the assessment.

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

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

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

8.3 Overall Evaluation

Wicklow County Council has integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA process into the Plan (see Section 9). Table 8.3 provides a detailed overall evaluation of the environmental effects arising from the Plan. The effects encompass all in-combination/cumulative effects arising from implementation of the Plan. The Plan would contribute towards the proper planning and sustainable development of the Plan area and the wider County and the effects are consistent with those identified by the SEA for the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The potentially significant adverse environmental effects (if unmitigated) arising from implementation of the Plan are detailed as are residual effects, taking into account mitigation integrated into both the Draft Plan and the Wicklow County Development Plan – see Section 9.

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

Table 8.3 Overall Evaluation – Effects arising from the Plan

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

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

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

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Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Wicklow County Development Plan and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to Blessington's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. In combination with other plans, programmes etc., contribution towards the objectives of the wide policy framework relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated contribution towards maintaining and improving air quality and managing noise levels, including through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable compact growth; Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport; Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality⁹³. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors⁹⁴. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extent of travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air. This has been mitigated by provisions which have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable compact growth and sustainable mobility. Interactions between noise emissions and sensitive receptors. Various provisions have been integrated into the Plan to ensure that noise levels at sensitive receptors will be minimised. 	AC
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area. Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within the Plan area by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on known architectural and archaeological heritage and unknown archaeology however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. 	CH
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscapes will change overtime as a result of natural changes in vegetation cover combined with new developments that will occur in compliance with the Plan's landscape protection measures. 	L

⁹³ Although road transport interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.

⁹⁴ Although road transport interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.

8.4 Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The AA assesses the effects of the Plan on European Sites designated for certain habitats and species. The emerging conclusion of the AA is that the Draft Plan will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network⁹⁵.

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

8.5 Interrelationship between Environmental Components

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

Likely significant effects on environmental components which are identified include those which are interrelated; implementation of the Plan will not affect the interrelationships between these components. The presence of significant interrelationships between environmental components is identified on Table 8.4.

⁹⁵ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
(a) no alternative solution available;
(b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan/programme/project to proceed; and
(c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

Table 8.4 Presence of Interrelationships between Environmental Components

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

8.6 Detailed Evaluation

For an explanation of SEO codes e.g. **BFF, PHH, S, W**, etc. refer to Table 8.1 on page 86.

The following applies to each of the sub-sections 8.6.1 to 8.6.9 below:

The Plan is situated in a hierarchy of documents setting out public policy setting out public policy for, among other things, land use planning, infrastructure, sustainable development, tourism, environmental protection and environmental management, such as the National Planning Framework, the National Development Plan, the National Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Adaptation Framework 2024, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region, the Wicklow County Development Plan, the Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan 2024 (for additional detail please refer to Section 2.5 "Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes" in this report).

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

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

8.6.1 Part A, including Overall Strategy

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
	+	-	-	0
<p>Part A of the Draft Plan sets out details, including related County Development Plan provisions, other factors informing development options and the Plan's Overall Strategy. The Overall Strategy for the Plan is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington; To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; 	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L	BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. To ensure that the lands surrounding the European Site of the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA are protected from adverse impacts arising from new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas. Generally, zoning for new development will only be provided for above the 194m contour adjoining the lakeshore. <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in Part A would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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8.6.2 Part B.1 Town Centre Regeneration

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Part B.1 sets out the Plan's Town Centre Regeneration provisions, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blessington Town Centre; Blessington Town Centre First Plan; Public Realm; Movement in Blessington Town Centre; 	<p>+</p> <p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>-</p> <p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>0</p>

- Retail in Blessington; and
- Blessington Opportunity Sites.

The Blessington Town Centre First Plan (appended to the Plan), builds on previous town centre health checks and sets out a range of projects for the improvement of Blessington Town Centre with identified funding streams. Certain actions or projects from the Town Centre First Plan have been integrated into Local Area Plan provisions.

Opportunity Sites are identified by the Local Area Plan, which would, if developed, contribute to the enhancement of the public realm, streetscape, vibrancy, vitality, and the retail/services offer in the town centre. There are numerous underutilised and unoccupied properties within Blessington Town Centre that could be redeveloped to contribute to the enhancement of the area and any development proposal for these sites should have regard to the objectives of the County Development Plan, the Local Area Plan, and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan as relevant. The Local Area Plan has included all opportunity sites identified in the Blessington Town Centre First Plan (OP1, OP2 & OP3 Blessington Town Centre, Main Street & Market Square and OP4, OP5 & OP6 Downshire Lodge, Dempsey's, and Downshire Park), but has also identified further opportunity sites as relevant (BLESS OP7 Horseshoe Arch & Backlands and BLESS OP8 North Blessington Main Street).

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

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.

Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

The provisions identified in Part B.1 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.

The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised.

An example of mitigation integrated into Part B.1 is Objective BLESS2, "To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical.

Such areas include:

- Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan.
- Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir."

Another example of mitigation from Part B.1 is Objectives BLESS OP1-3:

- To provide for mixed use town centre infill development (which shall include residential use, particularly on upper floors). Indicative block formats,

<p>plot lines, and active frontages are provided in the below concept parameters and access plans. Development proposals should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide for landmark infill development on an area of surface car parking and incidental green verges (OP1). Such development would be suitable for a wide range of commercial, retail, community, tourism and residential use, subject to the provision of adequate active uses to all frontages. - To provide for a new pedestrian/cyclist street through an existing gap in street frontage (two adjacent gates and, if necessary, a single storey extension to the south) between Blessington Main Street and north of the Newtown Centre in OP2. Active frontages and an attractive public realm should be provided along this new pedestrian link. Existing vernacular buildings of heritage value should be retained. - To provide for infill development on vacant sites on Market Square (OP3). Such development should provide for a linear green space on a vacant site between 'The Forge' and the Market House/Credit Union. Where possible, active frontages should be provided onto this linear green space. The linear green space shall continue towards the Newtown Centre with safe pedestrian crossing points across intervening roads/streets. The linear green space shall widen into a larger public realm/green square along the south of OP1. The southern gable of 'The Forge' should inform the northern boundary of this linear green space through OP1. Greenery and street trees can be employed to maintain the sense of enclosure around Market Square at the entrance to this linear green space. - The development of back lands between OP2 and OP3 (i.e. the rear of intervening premises along Blessington Main Street) should provide strong urban and active frontages onto existing or proposed streets. Architectural variation between these intervening plots will be encouraged, while plot amalgamation will be discouraged." 				
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8.6.3 Part B.2 Housing Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated -	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0
<p>Part B.2 sets out the Plan's Housing Development provisions, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning for Residential Development; • Development Potential and Density; and • Housing Targets and Extant Planning Permissions. <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in Part B.2 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

<p>infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. <p>An example of mitigation integrated into Part B.2 is Objective BLESS6, "...The priority for housing growth shall be the existing built up area of the settlement, on lands zoned 'town centre', and 'existing residential'."</p>				
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8.6.4 Part B.3 Economic Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Part B.3 sets out the Plan's Economic Development provisions, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of zoned land for employment; • Regeneration of current and former quarry lands for employment uses; • Redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation; • Incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area with a high-quality public realm, active frontages, and safe active travel accessibility; and • Aggregate and mineral industry. <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in Part B.3 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p>	+	-	-	0

<p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 “Mitigation Measures” of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. <p>An example of mitigation integrated into Part B.3 is Objective BLESS15 which provides for the facilitation and encouragement of the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals “in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.”</p>				
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8.6.5 Part B.4 Tourism Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Part B.4 sets out the Plan’s Tourism Development provisions, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the tourism product and facilitating appropriate tourism development; • Facilitating improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions, the proposed Blessington eGreenway as an expansion to the existing Blessington Greenway, a Visitor Hub at the former HSE building on Kilbride Road and other supporting greenway infrastructure; • Positively considering the development of new hotels, hostels, touring caravan (Aires park) and camping sites (not static mobile home parks), and the improvement of, and extension to, existing tourist accommodation related developments; and • Sustainable recreational use of the lakeshore of the Poulaphouca Reservoir for eco-tourism activities. <p>The development of new, and enhancement of existing, links, walking and cycling routes (including the Blessington eGreenway as an expansion to the existing Blessington Greenway and supporting infrastructure) has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations. The development of sustainable transport and travel related infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can</p>	+	-	-	0

<p>be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in Part B.4 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. <p>Examples of mitigation integrated into Part B.4 are Objectives BLESS22 ("subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area") and BLESS23 ("respect the natural amenity and scenic character of the area").</p>				
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8.6.6 Part B.5 Community Development

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Part B.5 sets out the Plan's Community Development provisions, including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education; • Health and Care; and • Leisure and Recreation. <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in Part B.5 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments</p>	+	-	-	0

<p>and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. <p>An example of mitigation integrated into Part B.5 is Objective BLESS24, "The Planning Authority will resist developments that entail the loss of existing community, education and open space/recreation lands or buildings unless it can be demonstrated that (a) adequate community, education and open space/recreation lands and buildings would be retained in the settlement having regard to the planned future population of the settlement or (b) the particular lands or buildings are not suitable or needed for current or future educational, community or open space / recreational usage. In particular, developments that would unduly constrain the ability of existing schools to expand will not be permitted."</p>				
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8.6.7 Part B.6 Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>The purpose of Part B.6 is to set out the specific objectives with regard to the heritage of the settlement and it should be read in conjunction with the County Development Plan - the heritage strategies, objectives, schedules and standards set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan will apply directly across the Blessington Plan area.</p> <p>In particular, the County Development Plan addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeology & National Monuments • Architectural heritage, including the Record of Protected Structures, vernacular structures, and Architectural Conservation Areas • Historical & Cultural Heritage • Protected habitats • Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows • Water systems & wetlands • Soils & Geology • Landscape, including Views & Prospects • Green Infrastructure • Recreational Use of Natural Resources • Public Rights of Way <p>It is not considered necessary to re-state the majority of the objectives for these areas in the Plan; however, the following priority heritage concerns in the Plan area are addressed: Architectural heritage; Biodiversity and Natural Heritage, including protected sites; and Green Infrastructure / Recreational Use of</p>	+	-	-	0

<p>Natural Resources.</p> <p>These provisions generally focus on protecting the environment and facilitating sustainable development.</p> <p>Objective BLESS38 provides for the promotion and supporting of the development of enhanced or new greenways and amenity walks. The development of green infrastructure, including new or enhanced walking and cycling routes, has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations. The development of such infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. Objectives BLESS39 and BLESS40⁹⁶ provide for green corridors and directly mitigate potential conflicts mentioned above in relation to BLESS38.</p> <p>Objective BLESS42 from Part B.6 requires that “Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body’s ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive.”</p> <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The provisions identified in Part B.6 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 “Mitigation Measures” of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. 				
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⁹⁶ BLESS39 - To require development proposals to have regard to existing green infrastructure assets (as identified within this local area plan or otherwise), including trees and hedgerows, that may exist within a subject site, and to consider how the biodiversity value and ecological connectivity of such assets may be maintained. Where existing GI assets or green corridors within a site have been identified on Map No. 3 ‘Key Green Infrastructure’ or the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit, proposals should include measures to preserve and, where necessary, improve ecological connectivity and biodiversity value across said assets/corridors.

BLESS40 To facilitate the development of new green corridors within the plan area where opportunities may be identified, and barriers in ecological connectivity rectified, via the development management process. In particular, the following additional green corridors will be facilitated:

- The creation of green corridors through Quarry Lands, and where relevant SLO3, to link the Deerpark watercourse and Glen Ding Forest with the plan boundary in the direction of the Red Bog SAC.

- The creation of green corridors linking the Deerpark Watercourse to Local Biodiversity Areas and existing wooded areas on the eastern boundary of SLO3 (refer to SLO3 below).

- The creation of a green corridor through the grounds of St. Mary’s Senior National School to improve the connectivity between existing green corridors along Oak Drive/Blessington Business Park and Blessington Main Street. This link may in turn improve ecological connectivity to the lakeshore via boundary hedging on the grounds of the Church of Our Lady and the ‘Priest’s Walk’ through the Rectory residential development.

8.6.8 Part B.7 Infrastructure

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated -	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0
<p>The purpose of Part B.7 is to set out the specific objectives with regard to infrastructure and it should be read in conjunction with the County Development Plan – the infrastructure strategies, objectives, schedules and standards set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan will apply directly across the Blessington Plan area.</p> <p>In particular, the County Development Plan addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Transportation • Water Supply & Demand • Wastewater Infrastructure • Storm and Surface Water Infrastructure • Flood Risk Management • Waste and Environmental Emissions • Energy and Information Infrastructure <p>It is not considered necessary to re-state the majority of the objectives for these areas in the Plan; however, the following priority physical infrastructure concerns in the Plan area are addressed: sustainable transportation; flood risk management; and wastewater infrastructure, and therefore these are addressed in Part B.7.</p> <p>The provision of adequate infrastructure is critical to facilitate and sustain the growth of Blessington over the lifetime of the plan and beyond.</p> <p>This part of the Plan will help to ensure that development takes place in line with the capacity of supporting infrastructure and requires the timely provision of infrastructure needed for planned sustainable development.</p> <p>Sustainable transport and travel related provisions, including those arising from the Local Transport Assessment that accompanies the Plan, would contribute towards the planning framework for the future development of sustainable transport and movement, in combination with the implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans and programmes. Many of these provisions would primarily contribute towards maximising sustainable mobility and associated interactions with emissions to air (including noise and greenhouse gas emissions), energy usage, air quality and human health.</p> <p>The development of new, and enhancement of existing, walking and cycling routes has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components, including habitats, at certain locations. The development of sustainable transport and travel related infrastructure, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams.</p> <p>The facilitation of journeys by car, in particular, would give rise to emissions to air. Although interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels. As identified by the footnote to Plan Objective BLESS44: "The detail associated with new transport or green/blue infrastructure projects referred to in this Plan and accompanying Transport Assessment, including locations and associated mapping, that are not already permitted or provided for by existing plans / programmes / etc. is non-binding and indicative. Such new projects shall be subject to feasibility assessment, taking into account the environmental</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

constraints and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for such projects where appropriate. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.” Note that a Corridor and Route Assessment is provided for by CPO 12.10 from the Wicklow County Development Plan.

Sustainable drainage and flood risk management provisions would contribute towards the protection and management of human health, biodiversity, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, water status and existing infrastructure and services. Flood risk management infrastructure (if required) has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental effects during construction and operation on most environmental components. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas and adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can contribute towards the maintenance and improvement in the status of water bodies and flood risk management and positively interact with other environmental components including biodiversity and flora and fauna.

Objective BLESS52 provides for support for “the continued upgrade of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant and/or additional Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the plan area, subject to the full environmental protection of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and associated watercourses”.

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

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.

Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

The provisions identified in Part B.7 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.

The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 “Mitigation Measures” of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised.

8.6.9 Part B.8 Zoning

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs +	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated -	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated -	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0
<p>Part B.8 sets out the Plan’s provisions relating to Zoning and Land Use, covering issues including Zoning Objectives, Phasing and Specific Local Objectives.</p> <p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan’s zoning through an interdisciplinary approach.</p> <p>Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan.</p> <p>The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input seeks to facilitate zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>The approach to land use zoning contained within the Draft Plan contributes towards the protection of European sites. Development objectives / zoning for lands designated as European sites is not provided for by the Draft Plan, thereby avoiding direct ‘land-take’ within European sites. Furthermore, land directly adjacent to European sites is zoned so as to form a buffer zone. In a number of locations, there are lands adjoining European Sites, which while not being included in the legally designated site, are linked to the site in terms of similar or supporting habitats, water flows or other characteristics which render them important to protect from inappropriate development which may have a direct or indirect effect on the designated site itself. The approach to zoning is explained as follows in the Draft Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No lands within the actual European Site have been zoned. 2. Where there is existing developed areas, the lands have been zoned for their existing use, which will essentially allow for the continuation of the existing use and its enhancement. In accordance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and the Planning & Development Act, any proposed development with potential to impact upon the integrity of a European Site shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment; 3. Where there is existing undeveloped lands, the lands have only be zoned for new development where it can be justified that such zoning and development arising therefrom is essential for the town to achieve its development vision and strategic objectives. In accordance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and the Planning & Development Act, any proposed development with potential to impact upon the integrity of a European Site shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment; 4. Where there is existing undeveloped lands, and the development of these lands is not essential for the achievement of the development vision and strategic objectives for the town, the land will be zoned ‘OS2’ – natural areas. The only developments that will be considered in such area are those which contribute to the objective of the natural areas zone (detailed in this plan) and that can be shown to not diminish the role and function of such areas, will not result in adverse impacts on the integrity of any EU protected site and will not diminish the biodiversity value of the lands or the ability of plants and animals to thrive and move through the area. <p>The assessment of these provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.5 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>	<p>BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L</p>		

be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit. Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

The provisions identified in Part B.8 would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.

The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating provisions for environmental protection and management into the Plan, Wicklow County Council is helping to ensure that:

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised.

Examples of mitigation integrated into Part B.8 are requirements under:

- Specific Local Objective 1 – Lands at Naas Road

Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- The restoration of the culverted watercourses within the SLO to open watercourses with associated riparian zones corresponding to lands zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'. This must not increase flood risk in adjacent areas, e.g. Glen Ding estate.
- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value.

The delivery of the road objective linking the Naas Road to the Blessington GAA grounds, as located within SLO1. The design of this road objective should aim to minimise the loss of trees and existing hedgerows. The road objective may only cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022- 2028.

- Specific Local Objective 2 – Blessington Demesne (West)

Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including area identified as LBAs.

- Specific Local Objective 3 – Quarry Employment Lands

- Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:
- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including Local Biodiversity Areas. A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland within the SLO shall be included as part of any planning application

- Specific Local Objective 4 – Doran's Pit

Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value, including Local Biodiversity Areas
- A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland in this area shall be included as part of any planning application.

- Specific Local Objective 5 – Burgage More (North)

Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value. In particular, lands zoned for tourism purposes should be developed for low density and 'low impact' uses without a substantial number of structures, e.g. campsites, aires parks, etc, with the following mitigation measures at a minimum:

- Limitation on the size of development versus retained green space, with no more of 50% of the zone occupied at full use.
- Ancillary buildings and service structures for the tourism uses shall re-use or be clustered around the existing farmhouse and outbuildings on lands zoned T 'Tourism' and RE 'Existing Residential'.
- Minimal landscaping of undeveloped areas within the development, other than low impact access paths to site facilities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connectivity must be fully retained (corridors through any physical barriers) ○ Lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines ○ Mature trees retained; compensatory tree planting programme for ash trees lost due to die-back ○ Biodiversity plan developed (for example, ponds, pollinator friendly planting) ● Specific Local Objective 6 – Burgage More (Central) <p>Lands zoned MU may be developed for a range of uses, including (but not limited) to tourism, community (including cemeteries), employment and residential use, subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: Lands to the east of north-south hedgerow / tree line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All mature trees and hedgerows on the lands shall be maintained other than strictly required to facilitate appropriate development and detailed compensatory landscaping and tree planting to account for any loss due to the development and natural die back b) No uses will be considered that require floodlighting; street lighting and residential lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines c) Any development shall be designed following detailed ecological evaluation to ensure no adverse impacts, either directly or indirect, on biodiversity, protected species, European Sites or ecological corridors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific Local Objective 7 – Burgage More (South) <p>Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development within this SLO shall maintain the hedgerows and rural character of Burgage More lane to the west and provide an appropriate buffer to this lane for such purposes. ○ Lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific Local Objective 8 – Blessington Demesne (East) <p>Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas).</p>				
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Section 9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Introduction

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

Mitigation was achieved through:

- Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning;
- Considering alternatives for the Plan;
- The integration of environmental considerations into zoning provisions of the Plan;
- The integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA provisions into the text of the Local Area Plan; and
- The integration of individual provisions into the text of the existing, already in force, County Development Plan.

9.2 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning

In preparing the Draft Plan, information relating to various sectors, from different Departments within the Councils and from different bodies and organisations, was gathered and analysed, contributing towards the development of evidence-led Plan provisions. This work included preparing the following documents that are appended to the Draft Plan: a Green Infrastructure Audit; a Town Centre First Plan (prepared by another section of the Council); a Social Infrastructure Audit; and an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule with associated details on implementation.

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

9.3 Consideration of Alternatives

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

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

9.4 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Draft Plan

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

Table 9.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The effects are consistent with those identified by the SEA for the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

9.5 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plan

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

Table 9.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. 	<p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the lands surrounding the European site of the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA are protected from adverse impacts arising from new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas. Generally, zoning for new development will only be provided for above the 194m contour adjoining the lakeshore. <p>BLESS15 To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p> <p>BLESS23 To promote and encourage the sustainable recreational use of the lakeshore of the Poulaphouca Reservoir for eco-tourism activities. Where such recreational uses involve the development of structures or facilities, the Council will ensure that the proposals will respect the natural amenity and scenic character of the area.</p> <p>BLESS34 Protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of natural, architectural and archaeological heritage assets, and in particular those features of the natural landscape and built structures that contribute to their special interest. The natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area shall be protected in accordance with the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan. In particular, the heritage assets of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and Glen Ding Forest shall be rigorously protected.</p> <p>BLESS37 To reinforce the lakeshore character of the settlement and to provide for the enjoyment of the Poulaphouca Reservoir, Glen Ding Forest, and other natural areas as recreational and natural assets.</p> <p>BLESS38 To promote and support the development of enhanced or new greenways and amenity walks at the following locations and require development in the vicinity of same to enhance existing routes and / or provide new links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poulaphouca Reservoir (Blessington Greenway/proposed Blessington eGreenway) - Glen Ding Forest - Wooded areas at Doran's Pit - Blessington Demesne (Town Park) <p>The enhancement of existing, and development of new, recreational facilities along the lakeshore area, such as walking routes, car parking areas, signage, changing / toilet facilities and water based clubs/facilities, will be considered subject to compliance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and other planning considerations.</p> <p>BLESS39 To require development proposals to have regard to existing green infrastructure assets (as identified within this local area plan or otherwise), including trees and hedgerows, that may exist within a subject site, and to consider how the biodiversity value and ecological connectivity of such assets may be maintained.</p> <p>Where existing GI assets or green corridors within a site have been identified on Map No. 3 'Key Green Infrastructure' or the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit, proposals should include measures to preserve and, where necessary, improve ecological</p>	<p>SCO6 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity</p> <p>Natural heritage and biodiversity is the cornerstone of Wicklow's identity – 'The Garden of Ireland'. It is essential that we conserve and enhance the County's rich natural heritage and biodiversity for the benefit or current and future generations.</p> <p>CPO 4.14 To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.</p> <p>CPO 9.36 To facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby watercourses, wildlife habitats, areas of ecological importance and other environmental assets are protected from the threat of pollution, and where development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside. Developments shall not be detrimental to archaeological and heritage features of importance.</p> <p>Tourism and Recreation</p> <p>CPO11.1 To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism and recreation sectors in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>CPO 11.4 To only permit the development of a tourism or recreational facility in a rural area in cases where the product or activity is dependent on its location in a rural situation and where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development does not adversely affect the character, environmental quality and amenity of the rural area or the vitality of any settlement and the provision of infrastructure therein. The natural resource / tourist product / tourist attraction that is essential to the activity shall be located at the site or in close proximity to the site, of the proposed development. The need to locate in a particular area must be balanced against the environmental impact of the development and benefits to the local community.</p> <p>Environmental Protection</p> <p>CPO 11.47 Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the plan, shall manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant environmental effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities; visitor/habitat management plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>CPO 11.48 Ensure the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.</p> <p>CPO 11.49 Where projects for new tourism projects identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable development.</p> <p>Corridor and Route Selection</p> <p>CPO 12.10 Where projects for new infrastructure identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.</p> <p>CPO 18.17 Where projects for significant green infrastructure identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new green infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.</p> <p>Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Objectives</p> <p>General</p> <p>CPO 17.1 To protect, sustainably manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, geological heritage, landscape and environment of County Wicklow in recognition of its importance for nature conservation and biodiversity and as a non renewable resource.</p> <p>CPO 17.2 Ensure the protection of ecosystems and ecosystem services by integrating full consideration of these into all decision making.</p> <p>CPO 17.3 To support and promote the implementation of the County Wicklow Heritage Plan and the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>connectivity and biodiversity value across said assets/corridors.</p> <p>BLESS40 To facilitate the development of new green corridors within the plan area where opportunities may be identified, and barriers in ecological connectivity rectified, via the development management process. In particular, the following additional green corridors will be facilitated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The creation of green corridors through Quarry Lands, and where relevant SLO3, to link the Deerpark watercourse and Glen Ding Forest with the plan boundary in the direction of the Red Bog SAC. - The creation of green corridors linking the Deerpark Watercourse to Local Biodiversity Areas and existing wooded areas on the eastern boundary of SLO3 (refer to SLO3 below). - The creation of a green corridor through the grounds of St. Mary's Senior National School to improve the connectivity between existing green corridors along Oak Drive/Blessington Business Park and Blessington Main Street. This link may in turn improve ecological connectivity to the lakeshore via boundary hedging on the grounds of the Church of Our Lady and the 'Priest's Walk' through the Rectory residential development. <p>BLESS41 To enforce a general presumption against the culverting of watercourses within the plan area, except where absolutely necessary. Where development is proposed within sites that contain culverted watercourses, proposals should be included to restore or 'daylight' said watercourses with an appropriate riparian zoned in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan. Similarly, where development includes significant works to existing roads with culverted crossings of watercourses, proposals should be included, where practical, to improve the ecological connectivity of these crossings, e.g. the replacement of culverts with clear span bridges, box culverts with wildlife ledges, etc.</p> <p>BLESS42 Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Mitigation integrated into Part B.8 are requirements under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Local Objective 1 – Lands at Naas Road Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The restoration of the culverted watercourses within the SLO to open watercourses with associated riparian zones corresponding to lands zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'. This must not increase flood risk in adjacent areas, e.g. Glen Ding estate. ○ The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value. <p>The delivery of the road objective linking the Naas Road to the Blessington GAA grounds, as located within SLO1. The design of this road objective should aim to minimise the loss of trees and existing hedgerows. The road objective may only cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022- 2028.</p> • Specific Local Objective 2 – Blessington Demesne (West) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The development of appropriate buffer 	<p>Protected sites and species</p> <p>CPO 17.4 To contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Wildlife Sites (including proposed Natural Heritage Areas); Salmonid Waters; Flora Protection Order sites; Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979); Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).</p> <p>To contribute towards compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including but not limited to the following and any updated/superseding documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) , the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) , the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC); EU 'Guidance on integrating ecosystems and their services into decision-making' (European Commission 2019) • National legislation, including the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2010 (as amended) , European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008 (as amended) and the Flora Protection order 2015. • National policy guidelines (including any clarifying circulars or superseding versions of same), including 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (2018), 'Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development' (2003), 'Tree Preservation Guidelines', 'Landscape and Landscape Assessment' (draft 2000), 'Appropriate Assessment Guidance' (2010); • Catchment and water resource management plans, including the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (including any superseding versions of same), • Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 (including any superseding versions of same) and the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan; • Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 (EPA), including any superseding versions of same), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges. <p>CPO 17.5 Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan.</p> <p>CPO 17.6 Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site 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 EU Habitats directive. All projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>CPO 17.7 To maintain the conservation value of all proposed and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and to protect other designated ecological sites in Wicklow.</p> <p>CPO 17.8 Ensure ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, Annex I habitats, or rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CPO 17.9 The Council recognises the natural heritage and amenity value of the Wicklow Mountains National Park and shall consult at all times with National Park management regarding any developments likely to impact upon the conservation value of the park, or on issues regarding visitor areas.</p> <p>CPO 17.10 To support the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the development of site specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) for designated sites.</p> <p>Sites & Corridors of ecological & biodiversity value</p> <p>CPO 17.12 To protect non-designated sites from inappropriate development, ensuring that ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on locally important natural habitats, species or wildlife corridors. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CPO 17.13 To facilitate, in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, the ongoing identification and recording of locally important biodiversity areas and species in County Wicklow, not otherwise protected by legislation and ensure that consideration is given to these in the development management process.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including area identified as LBAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Local Objective 3 – Quarry Employment Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including Local Biodiversity Areas. A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland within the SLO shall be included as part of any planning application • Specific Local Objective 4 – Doran’s Pit <p>Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value, including Local Biodiversity Areas ○ A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland in this area shall be included as part of any planning application. • Specific Local Objective 5 – Burgage More (North) • Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <p>The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value. In particular, lands zoned for tourism purposes should be developed for low density and ‘low impact’ uses without a substantial number of structures, e.g. campsites, aires parks, etc, with the following mitigation measures at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limitation on the size of development versus retained green space, with no more of 50% of the zone occupied at full use. ○ Ancillary buildings and service structures for the tourism uses shall re-use or be clustered around the existing farmhouse and outbuildings on lands zoned T ‘Tourism’ and RE ‘Existing Residential’. ○ Minimal landscaping of undeveloped areas within the development, other than low impact access paths to site facilities. ○ Connectivity must be fully retained (corridors through any physical barriers) ○ Lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines ○ Mature trees retained; compensatory tree planting programme for ash trees lost due to die-back ○ Biodiversity plan developed (for example, ponds, pollinator friendly planting) 	<p>CPO 17.14 Ensure that development proposals support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the plan area in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, including linear landscape features like watercourses(rivers, streams, canals, ponds, drainage channels, etc), woodlands, trees, hedgerows, road and railway margins, semi-natural grasslands, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, features which act as stepping stones, such as marshes and woodlands, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones that taken as a whole help to improve the coherence of the European network in Wicklow.</p> <p>CPO 17.15 To protect and enhance wetland sites that are listed as being of C+ or higher importance in the County Wicklow wetlands survey and any subsequent updates or revisions thereof and to implement the recommendations of the County Wicklow wetlands survey.</p> <p>CPO 17.16 Require pollinator friendly landscape management and planting within new developments and on Council owned land.</p> <p>CPO 17.17 Work with statutory authorities to prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species and require, where appropriate Invasive Species Management Plans to be prepared as part of the development management process where necessary.</p> <p>Woodlands, trees and hedgerows</p> <p>CPO 17.18 To promote the preservation of trees, groups of trees or woodlands in particular native tree species, and those trees associated with demesne planting, in the interest of long-term sustainability of a stable ecosystem amenity or the environment generally, as set out in Schedule 10.08 and Map 10.08 A, B & C of this plan.</p> <p>CPO 17.19 To consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect trees and woodlands of high amenity value generally and in particular where it appears that they are in danger of being felled and in response to requests from local communities.</p> <p>CPO 17.20 Development that requires the felling of mature trees of environmental and/or amenity value, even though they may not have a TPO in place, will be discouraged.</p> <p>CPO 17.21 To strongly discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and encourage tree surgery rather than felling if such is essential to enable development to proceed.</p> <p>CPO 17.22 To require and ensure the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees, as part of the development management process, and require the planting of native broad leaved species, and species of local provenance in all new developments.</p> <p>CPO 17.23 To require the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the County. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length and set back within the site in advance of the commencement of construction works on the site (unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority).</p> <p>CPO 18.3 New development and redevelopment proposals shall wherever possible, integrate nature based solutions to the design, layout and landscaping of development proposals, and in particular to the delivery of linear parks and connected open spaces along watercourses in order to enhance the existing green infrastructure of the local area. All such proposals will be subject to ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CPO 18.4 To facilitate the development and enhancement of suitable access to and connectivity between areas of interest for residents, wildlife and biodiversity, with focus on promoting river corridors, Natura 2000 sites, nature reserves and other distinctive landscapes as focal features for linkages between natural, semi natural and formalised green spaces where feasible and ensuring that there is no adverse impact (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>CPO 18.5 To identify and facilitate the provision of linkages along and between green / river corridors within the county and adjoining counties to create inter connected routes and develop riverside parks and create linkages between them to form ‘necklace’ effect routes including development of walkways, cycleways, bridleways and wildlife corridors where feasible and ensuring that there is no adverse impact (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>CPO 18.7 To facilitate the development of green bridges / wildlife crossings over existing physical transport barriers to repair fragmentation of the green infrastructure network caused by such grey infrastructure developments.</p> <p>CPO 18.11 To support the development of greenways, blueways and other access routes along natural corridors while ensuring that there is no adverse impact on the flora and fauna, biodiversity or water quality of natural assets. Wicklow County Council prioritises environmental protection in our design and construction of routes and surface selection.</p> <p>In particular, to support the development of existing and examine the feasibility of new walking, cycling, horse riding and water based routes and trails along the following routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from Bray Head, via the Sugarloaf Mountains, joining up with The Wicklow Way; • the extension of the ‘Blessington Greenway’ walk around the Phoulaphuca reservoir;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific Local Objective 6 – Burgage More (Central) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: Lands zoned MU may be developed for a range of uses, including (but not limited) to tourism, community (including cemeteries), employment and residential use, subject to the following criteria: Lands to the east of north-south hedgerow / tree line: a) All mature trees and hedgerows on the lands shall be maintained other than strictly required to facilitate appropriate development and detailed compensatory landscaping and tree planting to account for any loss due to the development and natural die back b) No uses will be considered that require floodlighting; street lighting and residential lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines c) Any development shall be designed following detailed ecological evaluation to ensure no adverse impacts, either directly or indirect, on biodiversity, protected species, European Sites or ecological corridors Specific Local Objective 7 – Burgage More (South) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development within this SLO shall maintain the hedgerows and rural character of Burgage More lane to the west and provide an appropriate buffer to this lane for such purposes. Lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines. Specific Local Objective 8 – Blessington Demesne (East) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the expansion of a lakeshore walk around the Vartry reservoir; the extension of the old Shillelagh branch recreational trail - railway walk from Arklow to Shillelagh; the development of a route along the disused Great Southern and Western Railway line (Naas to Tullow branch) through Dunlavin and Baltinglass. the development of a coastal route from Bray to Arklow as well as links between this potential route and the coast road; the Wicklow Way and St. Kevin's Way (as permissive waymarked routes). the Wicklow to Glendalough "pilgrim walk" incorporating ancient wells. 'Mountains to the Sea' amenity route incorporating Glendalough, Laragh, Annamoe, Roundwood, Newtownmountkennedy and Kilcoole-Newcastle. <p>Recreation and Tourism</p> <p>CPO 11.4 To only permit the development of a tourism or recreational facility in a rural area in cases where the product or activity is dependent on its location in a rural situation and where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development does not adversely affect the character, environmental quality and amenity of the rural area or the vitality of any settlement and the provision of infrastructure therein. The natural resource / tourist product / tourist attraction that is essential to the activity shall be located at the site or in close proximity to the site, of the proposed development. The need to locate in a particular area must be balanced against the environmental impact of the development and benefits to the local community.</p> <p>CPO 11.6 To ensure that tourism and recreation related developments are appropriately located in the County. Subject to the following exceptions, all tourist and recreation related developments are 'open for consideration' in all landscape areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following tourist uses will not be permitted within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (both the Mountain Uplands Area and the Coastal Area): Static caravans and mobile homes; Holiday homes will not be permitted in any landscape category other than urban zones except where they comply with objectives CPO 11.13, CPO 11.14, CPO 11.15 and CPO 11.16. <p>CPO 11.32 To encourage eco-tourism projects or those tourism projects with a strong environmentally sustainable design and operational ethos.</p> <p>CPO 11.42 To promote and encourage the recreational use of coastline, rivers and lakes and the development of 'blueways' in the County subject to normal environmental protection and management criteria. Where such recreational uses involve the development of structures or facilities, the Planning Authority will ensure that the proposals will respect the natural amenity and character of the area, listed views and prospects onto and from the area in question. Where possible, such structures should be set back an appropriate distance from the actual amenity itself and should not adversely affect the unique sustainable quality of these resources.</p> <p>CPO 11.47 Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the plan, shall manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant environmental effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities; visitor/habitat management plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>CPO 11.48 Ensure the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.</p> <p>CPO 11.49 Where projects for new tourism projects identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable development.</p> <p>Light Pollution Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.17 To ensure that all external lighting whether free standing or attached to a building shall be designed and constructed so as not to cause excessive light spillage, glare, or dazzle motorists, and thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties, traffic and wildlife.</p> <p>CPO 15.18 To require proposals for new developments with the potential to create light pollution or light impacts on adjacent residences to mitigate impacts, in accordance with the Development & Design Standards set out in this plan.</p> <p>CPO 15.19 To promote the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting.</p> <p>CPO 15.20 To require the design and implementation of a hierarchy of light intensity zones in development schemes to ensure that environmental impact is minimised as far as possible particularly in areas proximate to ecological corridors.</p>

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Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. <p>BLESS14 To facilitate and support the incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area with a high quality public realm, active frontages, and safe active travel accessibility. New applications for employment developments will be considered subject to the inclusion of proposals for the above public realm improvements. New applications for developments deemed to be 'product'-based, or applications concerning existing developments of that type, will be further required to demonstrate that HGV traffic sufficient to create a hazard to active travel users within and around a subject site would not be generated.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Seveso Sites</p> <p>CPO 9.16 The Seveso Directive 96/82/EC as amended by Directive 2003/105/EC and more recently by Directive 2012/18/EU is concerned with the prevention of major accidents that involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequences for humans and the environment. It applies to establishments where dangerous substances are produced, used, handled or stored. This EU directive seeks to ensure the safety of people and the environment in relation to major industrial accidents involving dangerous substances.</p> <p>The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (the "COMAH Regulations", (SI No. 209 of 2015) implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU) and are the main regulations that give effect to this Directive in Irish law. The National Authority for Occupational Safety Health (i.e. the Health and Safety Authority – HSA) has been designated as the central competent authority for enforcement of these regulations.</p> <p>There is one Seveso site in County Wicklow (as of July 2019), located at Sigma Aldrich Fine Chemicals, Arklow.</p> <p>In relation to the Prevention of Major Accidents (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) legislation, it is the objective of the Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents; where proposals are being considered for the following: (i) new establishments at risk of causing major accidents, (ii) the expansion of existing establishments designated under the Directive, and (iii) other developments proposed near to existing establishments; the Council will require that applicants must demonstrate that the following considerations are taken into account: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances, public health and safeguarding of public health, and protection of the environment; ensure that land use objectives must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest; and have regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when dealing with proposals relating to Seveso sites and land use plans in the vicinity of such sites.
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>Soils & Geology</p> <p>CPO 17.27 Geological and soil mapping where available shall be considered in planning decisions relating to settlement, excavation, flooding, food production value and carbon sequestration, to identify prime agricultural lands (for food production), degraded/contaminated lands (which may have implications for water quality, health, fauna), lands with unstable soils / geology or at risk of landslides, and those which are essential for habitat protection, or have geological significance.</p> <p>CPO 17.28 Protect and enhance 'County Geological Sites' (Schedule 10.10 and Map 10.10 of this plan) from inappropriate development at or in the vicinity of a site, such that would adversely affect their existence, or value.</p> <p>CPO 17.29 To consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland as is deemed necessary, when dealing with any proposals for major developments, which will entail 'significant' ground excavation, such as quarrying, road cuttings, tunnels, major drainage works, and foundations for industrial or large buildings and complexes.</p> <p>CPO 17.30 To facilitate public access to County Geological Heritage Sites, on the principle of "agreed access" subject to appropriate measures being put in place to ensure public health and safety and subject to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>CPO 17.31 To facilitate the Geological Survey of Ireland, and other interested bodies with the interpretation of geological heritage in Wicklow, and to facilitate the development of a "Wicklow Rock Trail", Geopark or other similar geo-tourism initiatives.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical. Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. • Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir. <p>BLESS13 To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.</p> <p>BLESS15 To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p>	<p>CPO 17.32 To facilitate the exploitation of mineral resources, in an environmentally sensitive manner, in accordance with the objectives and control measures set out in Chapter 9 and in the Design & Development standards of this plan.</p>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. • To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; <p>BLESS15 To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p> <p>BLESS41 To enforce a general presumption against the culverting of watercourses within the plan area, except where absolutely necessary. Where development is proposed within sites that contain culverted watercourses, proposals should be included to restore or 'daylight' said watercourses with an appropriate riparian zoned in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan. Similarly, where</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>CPO4.14 To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.</p> <p>CPO 9.39 To ensure that agricultural developments do not cause increased pollution to watercourses. Developments will be required to adhere to the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC), the Nitrates National Action Programme and the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended), with regard to storage facilities, concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources. Developments will be required to comply with relevant measures, which operate to protect water quality from pollution by agricultural sources. The disposal and storage of agricultural waste shall comply with the standards required by Council.</p> <p>Strategic Objective: To promote the development of the County's sea and river fishing industry, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the County's economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment.</p> <p>CPO 9.49 To support the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture industry in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Inland Fisheries Ireland. The Council will not permit development that has a detrimental impact on the environment. In particular, development that has a detrimental impact on the environmental/ ecological/ water quality of seas, rivers and streams, will not be permitted.</p> <p>CPO 9.50 To facilitate the provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing and aquaculture industry. Infrastructure and buildings in coastal or riverbank locations should be located in proximity to existing landing facilities and shall be of a design that is compatible with the area. Any development, which by reason of its nature or scale is detrimental to the character or amenity of an area, will not be permitted. Any development in the coastal zone shall comply with the objectives of this plan, as set out in Chapter 19.</p> <p>Water Quality Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.1 To ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide</p>

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		<p>development includes significant works to existing roads with culverted crossings of watercourses, proposals should be included, where practical, to improve the ecological connectivity of these crossings, e.g. the replacement of culverts with clear span bridges, box culverts with wildlife ledges, etc.</p> <p>BLESS42 Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>BLESS51 Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines; • An appropriately detailed flood risk / drainage impact assessment will be required with all planning applications, to ensure that the development itself is not at risk of flooding and the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment (both up and down stream of the application site), taking into account all sources of flooding; • Restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B to that which are 'appropriate' to each flood zone, as set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines unless the 'plan making justification test' has been applied and passed; • Where a site has been subject to and satisfied the 'Plan Making Justification Test' development will only be permitted where a proposal complies with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines. • Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA. <p>Where flood zone mapping does not indicate a risk of flooding but the Planning Authority is of the opinion that flood risk may arise or new information has come to light that may alter the flood designation of the land, including the latest future scenario flood mapping, an appropriate flood risk assessment will be required to be submitted by an applicant for planning permission and the sequential approach shall be applied as the 'Plan Making Justification Test' will not be satisfied.</p> <p>BLESS52 To support the continued upgrade of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant and/or additional Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the plan area, subject to the full environmental protection of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and associated watercourses.</p>	<p>guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>CPO 13.2 To prevent development that would pollute water bodies and in particular, to regulate the installation of effluent storage and disposal systems in the vicinity of natural water bodies or development that would exacerbate existing underlying water contamination.</p> <p>CPO 13.3 To minimise alterations or interference with river / stream beds, banks and channels, except for reasons of overriding public health and safety (e.g. to reduce risk of flooding); a buffer of generally 25m along watercourses should be provided (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority having particular regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland for urban location) free from inappropriate development, with undeveloped riparian vegetation strips, wetlands and floodplains generally being retained in as natural a state as possible.</p> <p>CPO 13.4 To ensure that any development or activity with the potential to impact on ground water has regard to the GSI Groundwater Protection Scheme.</p> <p>CPO 13.5 To ensure compliance with and to implement the provisions of the Nitrates Directive in so far as it falls within the remit of the Council to do so.</p> <p>CPO 13.6 To encourage and promote the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>CPO 13.7 To support and facilitate projects and programmes that aim to improve scientific knowledge and public awareness of the importance of natural water quality, and in particular to support the LAWPRO programme in County Wicklow and adjoining counties as appropriate.</p> <p>Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.</p> <p>CPO 13.22 To promote the use of green infrastructure, such as swales and wetlands, where feasible as landscape features in new development to provide storm / surface runoff storage and reduce pollutants, as well as habitat, recreation and aesthetic functions.</p> <p>Flood Management Objectives</p> <p>CPO 14.01 To support the implementation of recommendations in the OPW Flood Risk Implementation Plans (FRMPs), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>CPO14.02 To support and facilitate flood management activities, projects or programmes as may arise, including but not limited to those relating to the management of upstream catchments and the use of 'natural water retention' measures, and ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.</p> <p>CPO14.03 To recognise the concept of coastal evolution and fluvial flooding as part of our dynamic physical environment, and adopt an adaptive approach to working with these natural processes. The focus of a flood management strategy should not solely be driven by conservation of existing lands; it should recognise that marshes, mud flats and other associated eco-systems evolve and degenerate, and appropriate consideration should be given to the realignment of defences and use of managed retreat and sacrificial flood protection lands to maintain such habitats as part of an overall strategy.</p> <p>CPO14.05 To continue to work with the OPW and other agencies to deliver Flood Defence Schemes in the County as identified in current and future FRMPs, and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoca River (Arklow) Flood Defence Scheme; - Avoca River (Avoca) Flood Defence Scheme; - Low cost works in accordance with the OPW's Minor Works Scheme; - Coastal Protection Projects, where funding allows; and - Ensure that development proposals support, and do not impede or prevent, progression of such schemes. <p>CPO 14.06 To implement the 'Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009).</p> <p>CPO 14.07 To prepare new or update existing flood risk assessments and flood zone maps for all zoned lands within the County as part of the review process for Local Area Plans, zoning variations and Small Town Plans, where considered necessary.</p> <p>CPO 14.08 The zoning of land that has been identified as being at a high or moderate probability of flooding (flood zones A or B) shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and in particular the 'justification test for development plans' (as set out in Section 4.23 and Box 4.1 of the guidelines).</p> <p>CPO 14.09 Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. • An appropriately detailed flood risk assessment will be required with all planning applications, to ensure that the development itself is not at risk of flooding and the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment (both up and down stream of the application site), taking into account all sources of flooding. • Restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B to that which are 'appropriate' to

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			<p>each flood zone, as set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the guidelines for Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009, as amended) unless the 'plan making justification test' has been applied and passed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a site has been subject to and satisfied the 'plan making justification test' development will only be permitted where a proposal complies with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines. Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA. <p>Where flood zone mapping does not indicate a risk of flooding but the planning authority is of the opinion that flood risk may arise or new information has come to light that may alter the flood designation of the land, an appropriate flood risk assessment will be required to be submitted by an applicant for planning permission and the sequential approach shall be applied as the 'plan making justification test' will not be satisfied.</p> <p>CPO 14.10 To prohibit development in river flood plains or other areas known to provide natural attenuation for floodwaters except where the development can clearly be justified with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 'Justification Test'.</p> <p>CPO 14.11 To limit or break up large areas of hard surfacing in new developments and to require all surface car parks to integrate permeability measures such as permeable paving.</p> <p>CPO 14.12 Excessive hard surfacing shall not be permitted for new, or extensions to, residential or commercial developments and all applications will be required to show that sustainable drainage techniques have been employed in the design of the development.</p> <p>CPO 14.13 Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design; Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.</p> <p>CPO 14.14 Underground tanks and storage systems shall be permitted as a last resort only where it can be demonstrated the other more sustainable SuDS infrastructure measures are not feasible. In any case underground tanks and storage systems shall not be permitted under public open space, unless there is no other feasible alternative.</p> <p>CPO 14.15 To promote the use of green infrastructure, such as swales and wetlands, where feasible as landscape features in new development to provide storm / surface runoff storage and reduce pollutants, as well as habitat, recreation and aesthetic functions.</p> <p>CPO 14.16 For developments adjacent to all watercourses or where it is necessary to maintain the ecological or environmental quality of the watercourse, any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse in accordance with the guidelines in 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland.</p> <p>Water Systems</p> <p>CPO 17.24 To ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>CPO 17.25 Ensure that floodplains and wetlands are retained for their biodiversity and ecosystems services value and resist development and activities that would interfere with the natural water cycle to a degree that would interfere with the survival and stability of these natural habitats.</p> <p>CPO 17.26 Protect rivers, streams and other water courses by avoiding interference with river / stream beds, banks and channels and maintaining a core riparian buffer zone of generally 25m along watercourses (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority having particular regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland for urban location) free from inappropriate development, with undeveloped riparian vegetation strips, wetlands and floodplains generally being retained in as natural a state as possible. Structures such as bridges should be clear span, and designed and built in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance.</p> <p>CPO 18.16 To protect the quality of bathing waters and to endeavour to ensure that bathing waters achieve "sufficient or better status" and increase the number of bathing waters classified as "good" or "excellent", in accordance with the Bathing Water Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC).</p>
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and 	As detailed at the beginning of the Plan: It is also important to note that the land-use objectives of this plan aim to support other plans and strategies prepared by Wicklow County Council, including the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan, the Wicklow Climate Action Plan, Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan, Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan, Wicklow Heritage Plan etc., all which have a wider remit than this LAP.	<p>Air Pollution Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.9 To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to emissions to air (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).</p> <p>CPO 15.10 To require proposals for new developments with the potential for the accidental release of chemicals or dust generation, to submit and have approved by the Local Authority construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.</p> <p>CPO 15.11 To require activities likely to give rise to air emissions to implement measures to control such emissions, to</p>

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	<p>European environmental objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington; To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. <p>Various Opportunity Site provisions under Part B.1, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BLESS OP1, OP2 & OP3 Blessington Town Centre, Main Street & Market Square: "To provide for a new pedestrian/cyclist street through an existing gap in street frontage (two adjacent gates and, if necessary, a single storey extension to the south) between Blessington Main Street and north of the Newtown Centre in OP2. Active frontages and an attractive public realm should be provided along this new pedestrian link. Existing 	<p>undertake air quality monitoring and to provide an annual air quality audit.</p> <p>Noise Pollution Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.12 To implement the Wicklow County Council Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure</p> <p>CPO 15.13 To enforce, where applicable, the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003, and EPA Noise Regulations 2006.</p> <p>CPO 15.14 To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).</p> <p>CPO 15.15 To require proposals for new developments with the potential to create excessive noise to prepare a construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.</p> <p>CPO 15.16 To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures to undertake noise monitoring and to provide an annual monitoring audit.</p> <p>Climatic Factors</p> <p>Climate change action is one of three cross-cutting key principles of the Plan and has been integrated into the Plan in a proactive way with the inclusion of relevant policies and objectives; strategic policy outcomes incorporating climate change mitigation and adaptation into land-use planning, supported by land-use policies and objectives that where relevant incorporate objectives that both mitigate against the source of the causes of climate change and adapt to reduce the impacts of climate change. Climate change action informs objectives in relation to all chapters of the Plan, including the town and settlement plans and the Plan appendices.</p> <p>Given the Plan's remit as a land use framework not all sources and impacts are addressed in the Plan objectives (e.g. impact on insurance costs). The Plan's role in addressing climate change is part of a combined overall effort by Wicklow County Council to fulfil its role in addressing the climate change challenge. Climate change poses a real threat to ecosystems, however these ecosystems including wetlands and woodlands, are important for their role as carbon sinks, water attenuation and flooding protection. As it noted in the RSES, careful land management is needed to ensure that land use changes do not impact on the ability of the natural environment to absorb climate impacts. The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment also have a key role to play in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>The approach taken in crafting the Plan is to identify what are the impacts and sources of climate change, identify the key sectors of the sources of impacts that are relevant to the County Plan as a land use plan and to ensure that these are considered in the crafting of all policies and objectives.</p> <p>Under the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Local Authorities are required to prepare local Climate Action Plans outlining how they are implementing their adopted Climate Action Adaptation and Mitigation strategies. Wicklow's is Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is adopted and being implemented.</p> <p>Building on existing climate action policies, the RSES identifies the following five areas where Climate Change Action should be targeted in the region namely Built Environment, Sustainable Transport, Energy and Waste, Flood Resilience and Water, and Green Infrastructure and Eco-system services. Provisions relating to these areas have been integrated throughout the County Development Plan.</p>

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		<p>vernacular buildings of heritage value should be retained.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLESS OP4, OP5 & OP6 Downshire Lodge, Dempsey's, and Downshire Park: “The development of these opportunity sites may require the reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square to remove the necessity of traffic entering the sites traversing the full circuit around the Newtown Centre/OP1. Rather, vehicular traffic should spend as little time as possible traversing the town centre, e.g. potential two-way access from the south-west corner of the Newtown to allow vehicular traffic to immediately proceed to the Blessington Inner Relief Road.” <p>BLESS1 To support and facilitate activities and developments that will improve the vitality, connectivity and vibrancy of Blessington Town Centre.</p> <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical. Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. • Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir. <p>BLESS3 To support and facilitate improvements to the public realm in Blessington Town Centre to provide an attractive, comfortable environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Such improvements could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street • The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre. • The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square. • Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square • The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre. • The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street. <p>BLESS17 To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle. • Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub. • Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat. • Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist 	

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		<p>services at Doran's Pit.</p> <p>BLESS18 To facilitate and support the proposed Blessington eGreenway as an expansion to the existing Blessington Greenway.</p> <p>BLESS19 To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as an eGreenway Visitor Hub.</p> <p>BLESS20 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of supporting greenway infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Supporting Greenway Infrastructure.</p> <p>BLESS21 To facilitate active travel links to nearby tourist attractions, e.g. Russborough House, and other settlements in the area.</p> <p>BLESS38 To promote and support the development of enhanced or new greenways and amenity walks at the following locations and require development in the vicinity of same to enhance existing routes and / or provide new links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poulaphouca Reservoir (Blessington Greenway/proposed Blessington eGreenway) - Glen Ding Forest - Wooded areas at Doran's Pit - Blessington Demesne (Town Park) <p>The enhancement of existing, and development of new, recreational facilities along the lakeshore area, such as walking routes, car parking areas, signage, changing / toilet facilities and water based clubs/facilities, will be considered subject to compliance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and other planning considerations.</p> <p>BLESS43 Support the implementation of proposed road safety and active travel projects, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme - The Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme - The Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme - The extension of the existing Blessington Greenway into the Blessington eGreenway, as it relates to the plan area. <p>BLESS44 Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of new regional/distributor roads and road improvements⁹⁷, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road (northern and southern sections). - The provision of a road objective through Doran's Pit, linking the N81 to Kilbride Road. - The completion of a partly constructed link road in Blessington Demesne, linking the GAA grounds/educational/care facilities with Naas Road. - The delivery of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme. Any development within the preferred route corridor will be assessed for acceptability having regard to the potential effects on the future viability of the proposed road. Active travel routes from the town centre to Glen Ding should be facilitated in the final design of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme. 	

⁹⁷ The detail associated with new transport or green/blue infrastructure projects referred to in this Plan and accompanying Transport Assessment, including locations and associated mapping, that are not already permitted or provided for by existing plans / programmes / etc. is non-binding and indicative. Such new projects shall be subject to feasibility assessment, taking into account the environmental constraints and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for such projects where appropriate. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.

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		<p>BLESS45 Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of safe active travel routes along the existing road network and along new off-road routes, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The delivery of the Greater Dublin Area cycle network, as it relates to the plan area. - The delivery of the National Cycle Network, as it relates to the plan area (exact route from Blessington to Naas to be determined). - The delivery of local/greenway feeder routes within the plan area (refer to Map 6 Active Travel and the accompanying Transport Assessment). - The delivery of identified, and other, permeability improvements within the settlement (refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel). - The delivery of identified, and other, traffic management measures within the settlement (refer to Map No. 5 Transport Strategy and the accompanying Transport Assessment). - The delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6 Active Travel. - The delivery of additional pedestrian and cyclist routes where development occurs along the boundaries of green corridors – on sites containing or immediately adjacent to OS2 lands, appropriate pedestrian and cycle routes should be laid out along the OS2 boundary, with permeability improvements and short sections linking to other routes where necessary at site boundaries. <p>BLESS46 To ensure that development along the route of the existing/proposed Blessington Greenway, and along indicated greenway feeder routes (see Map No. 6 Active Travel), minimises the creation of additional entrances/junctions to only those absolutely necessary, in order to reduce potential conflict between greenway users and vehicular traffic.</p> <p>BLESS47 New development should, where relevant, have regard to the indicated street descriptions shown on Map No. 5 Transport Strategy (refer to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets), subject to the completion of the necessary road objectives to allow that function (as out in the accompanying Transport Assessment.) Streets without an indicated description should be considered 'local' streets.</p> <p>BLESS48 Support the development of additional car parking areas within the plan area, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A public transport park and ride in Blessington along the N81. - A car park in Doran's Pit for potential greenway parking and access to adjacent woodland. - A car park on Active Open Space lands in Blessington Demesne to serve those lands and as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding. <p>BLESS49 To continue to work with the NTA on the improvement of bus services to Blessington and to provide for the significant enhancement of services, facilities and infrastructure at a suitable location in Blessington, including but not limited to,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity and enhanced car / bike / bus parking. - Bus priority along Blessington Main Street via a reduction in through traffic through the town centre, upon completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road. - Support for the NTA's BusConnects programme as it relates to the plan area. 	

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>- Support for the NTA's Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan as it relates to the plan area. BLESS50 To protect the strategic function of the N81 (and any upgrade/bypassed route thereof) as it relates to the plan area.</p>	
<p>Material Assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and various Land Use Zoning provisions. Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington; To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. <p>BLESS5 To promote the development of opportunity sites within Blessington Town Centre in accordance with the specific criteria set out</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and various Land Use and Phasing provisions. Strategic Objective: To support and facilitate the exploitation of County Wicklow's natural aggregate resources in a manner, which does not unduly impinge on the environmental quality, and the visual and residential amenity of an area. CPO 9.54 To have regard to the following guidance documents (as may be amended, replaced or supplemented) in the assessment of planning applications for quarries and ancillary facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004, DoEHLG); 'Environmental Management Guidelines – Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non Scheduled Minerals)', EPA 2006; 'Archaeological Code of Practice between the DoEHLG and the Irish Concrete Federation' 2009; 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry', 2008; and 'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry – Guidelines for the protection of biodiversity within the extractive industry', NPWS 2009. <p>Strategic Objective: To support and facilitate the exploitation of County Wicklow's natural aggregate resources in a manner, which does not unduly impinge on the environmental quality, and the visual and residential amenity of an area.</p> <p>Water Infrastructure Objectives Water Supply Objectives CPO 13.8 In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy and settlement strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, to ensure the provision of sufficient storage, supply and pressure of potable water to serve all lands zoned for development and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic water supply schemes and any other smaller, localised water improvement schemes required during the lifetime of the plan, as well as programmes to consolidate, and improve supply and resilience under the National Water Resource Plan. In particular, to support and facilitate the delivery of new / improved water treatment supplies and storage infrastructure in the following settlements/areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newtownmountkennedy - Rathdrum - Dunlavin - The areas and settlements covered by the Mid Wicklow Water Supply Scheme <p>CPO 13.9 To protect existing and potential water resources of the County, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plans, the Groundwater Protection Scheme and source protection plans for public water supplies. CPO 13.10 To require new developments to connect to public water supplies where services are adequate or where they will be provided in the near future, or where extension of an adjacent water supply system is technically and environmentally feasible. CPO 13.11 Where connection to an existing public water supply is not possible, or the existing supply system does not have sufficient capacity, the provision of a private water supply will be only permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in EU and national legislation and guidance, would not be prejudicial to public health, would not impact on the source or yield of an existing supply, particularly a public supply or would not adversely affect the ability of water bodies to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. Private water supplies for multi-house developments will not be permitted.</p> <p>Water Demand Objectives CPO 13.14 To require all new developments to integrate water demand reduction designs and technologies in all aspects of the development including but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of water efficient equipment; - Provision of dual flush toilets, cistern bags or other similar technologies; - Construction of grey water systems to allow for the re-use of wastewater from sinks, shower drains or washing machines; - Provision of rainwater harvesting equipment; - The use of low maintenance plants in the design of landscaping; - In manufacturing, use of process or cooling loops, counter current rinsing and batch processing, or increasing the recycle rate of cooling towers. <p>Waste Water Objectives CPO 13.15 In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the</p>

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		<p>for each identified area within this Local Area Plan. Regard should also be had to concept and access plans for opportunity sites as included in the Blessington Town Centre First Plan (or any update thereof).</p> <p>BLESS13 To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.</p> <p>BLESS17 To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle. • Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub. • Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat. • Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist services at Doran's Pit. <p>BLESS18 To facilitate and support the proposed Blessington eGreenway as an expansion to the existing Blessington Greenway.</p> <p>BLESS19 To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as an eGreenway Visitor Hub.</p> <p>BLESS20 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of supporting greenway infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Supporting Greenway Infrastructure.</p> <p>BLESS21 To facilitate active travel links to nearby tourist attractions, e.g. Russborough House, and other settlements in the area.</p> <p>BLESS24 The Planning Authority will resist developments that entail the loss of existing community, education and open space/recreation lands or buildings unless it can be demonstrated that (a) adequate community, education and open space/recreation lands and buildings would be retained in the settlement having regard to the planned future population of the settlement or (b) the particular lands or buildings are not suitable or needed for current or future educational, community or open space / recreational usage. In particular, developments that would unduly constrain the ability of existing schools to expand will not be permitted.</p> <p>BLESS25 To facilitate the provision of schools on lands zoned Community and Education (CE) and to consider the provision of schools on any land use zoning, excluding OS1 and OS2 zones, where it is in line with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan, relevant planning guidelines (including the Department of Education guidelines) and proper planning.</p> <p>BLESS26 To facilitate and support the provision of new childcare facilities in a manner, which is compatible with land-use and transportation policies and adheres to the principles of sustainable development. To facilitate and encourage the co-location of childcare facilities with other educational facilities such as schools. Applications for the development of new educational facilities, or the significant redevelopment or extensions of existing facilities, should consider the</p>	<p>delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, to ensure that all lands zoned or identified for development are serviced by an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic wastewater schemes. In particular, to support and facilitate the delivery of new / improved wastewater treatment plants in the following settlements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arklow - Blessington - Aughrim - Tinahely - Avoca - Laragh – Glendalough - Lakes area around Blessington - Large and Small Villages <p>CPO 13.16 Permission will be considered for private wastewater treatment plants for single rural houses where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the specific ground conditions have been shown to be suitable for the construction of a treatment plant and any associated percolation area; • the system will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on ground waters / aquifers and the type of treatment proposed has been drawn up in accordance with the appropriate groundwater protection response set out in the Wicklow Groundwater Protection Scheme (2003); • the proposed method of treatment and disposal complies with Wicklow County Council's Policy for Wastewater Treatment & Disposal Systems for Single Houses (PE ≤ 10) and the Environmental Protection Agency "Waste Water Treatment Manuals"; and • in all cases the protection of ground and surface water quality shall remain the overriding priority and proposals must definitively demonstrate that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on water quality standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance documents. <p>CPO 13.17 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not be permitted.</p> <p>CPO 13.18 Private wastewater treatment plants for commercial / employment generating development will only be considered where:</p> <p>Irish Water has confirmed the site is due to be connected to a future public system in the area or Irish Water has confirmed there are no plans for a public system in the area;</p> <p>It can clearly demonstrated that the proposed system can meet all EPA / Local Authority environmental criteria; and An annually renewed contract for the management and maintenance of the system is contracted with a reputable company / person, details of which shall be provided to the Local Authority.</p> <p>CPO 13.19 Where any application for a private treatment plant would require a discharge licence under the Water Pollution Acts, a simultaneous application for same shall be required to be made when submitting the planning application.</p> <p>Storm & Surface Water Infrastructure Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.20 Ensure the separation of foul and surface water discharges in new developments through the provision of separate networks.</p> <p>CPO 13.21 Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design;</p> <p>Solid Waste Management Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.1 To require all developments likely to give rise to significant quantities of waste, either by virtue of the scale of the development or the nature of the development (e.g. one that involves demolition) to submit a construction management plan, which will outline, amongst other things, the plan to minimise waste generation and the plan to protect the environment with the safe and efficient disposal of waste from the site.</p> <p>CPO 15.2 To require all new developments, whether residential, community, agricultural or commercial to make provision for storage and recycling facilities (in accordance with the standards set out in Development & Design Standards of this plan).</p> <p>CPO 15.3 To facilitate the development of existing and new waste prevention and recovery facilities and in particular, to facilitate the development of 'green waste' recovery sites.</p> <p>CPO 15.4 To facilitate the development of waste-to-energy facilities, particularly the use of landfill gas and biological waste.</p> <p>CPO 15.5 To have regard to the Council's duty under the 1996 Waste Management Act (as amended), to provide and operate, or arrange for the provision and operation of, such facilities as may be necessary to promote reuse or for the recovery and disposal of household waste arising within its functional area.</p> <p>CPO 15.6 To facilitate the development of sites, services and facilities necessary to achieve implementation of the objectives of the Regional Waste Management Plan.</p> <p>Hazardous Waste Objectives</p>

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		<p>provision of co-located childcare facilities within the development.</p> <p>BLESS27 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of new open spaces, parks and multi-purpose sport uses close to the built-up area of Blessington, including covered spaces. In particular,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To require the delivery of significant areas of outdoor play space on lands zoned AOS as part of SLO-2 and SLO-4. - To require the delivery of public parks on lands zoned OS1 in SLO-1 and SLO-8. <p>BLESS28 To facilitate and encourage the continued operation of existing and development of new community infrastructure, including (but not limited to) indoor multi-functional community spaces, youth centres etc in Blessington. In particular, to require the development of a community hall in the redevelopment of Doran’s Pit in line with SLO 4.</p> <p>BLESS29 To facilitate and encourage the continued operation of existing and development of new care and health related facilities, including (but not limited to) primary care centres, general practitioners surgeries, care / nursing homes and respite / hospice centres facilities particularly within the built-up area of Blessington.</p> <p>BLESS30 To facilitate and support the development of a swimming pool/leisure centre within Blessington.</p> <p>BLESS52 To support the continued upgrade of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant and/or additional Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the plan area, subject to the full environmental protection of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and associated watercourses.</p>	<p>CPO 15.7 To facilitate the development of sites, services and facilities for the disposal of hazardous household wastes in accordance with the objectives of the Regional Waste Management Plan.</p> <p>CPO 15.8 In relation to the Prevention of Major Accidents (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) legislation, it is an objective to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents; • where proposals are being considered for the following: (i) new establishments at risk of causing major accidents, (ii) the expansion of existing establishments designated under the Directive, and (iii) other developments proposed near to existing establishments; the Council will require that applicants must demonstrate that the following considerations are taken into account: (i) prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances, (ii) public health and safeguarding of public health, and (iii) protection of the environment; • ensure that land use objectives must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest; and • have regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when dealing with proposals relating to Seveso sites and land use plans in the vicinity of such sites. <p>CPO 18.2 To protect existing green infrastructure resources and to facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the benefits that can be achieved with regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of open space amenities, • sustainable management of water, • protection and management of biodiversity, • protection of cultural heritage, and • protection of protected landscape sensitivities. <p>CPO 19.1 To review and update the County Development Plan if necessary to ensure that it is consistent with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the National Marine Planning Framework following its adoption, and • the Marine Planning and Development Management Act (following its enactment)
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<p>Various Opportunity Site provisions under Part B.1, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLESS OP1, OP2 & OP3 Blessington Town Centre, Main Street & Market Square: "Development proposals should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area." • BLESS OP4, OP5 & OP6 Downshire Lodge, Dempsey’s, and Downshire Park: "To provide for mixed use town centre infill development (which shall include residential use, particularly on upper floors). Indicative block formats, plot lines, and active frontages are provided in the below concept parameters and access plans. Development should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area." <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical.</p> <p>Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. • Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and 	<p>CPO 4.14 To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.</p> <p>CPO 5.17 To harness and integrate the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive reuse, recognising its important contribution to placemaking. New development should respect and complement the historic fabric of existing towns and villages – the traditional street patterns, plot sizes, mix of building types, distinctive paving and attractive street furniture.</p> <p>CPO 5.18 To protect, integrate and enhance heritage assets, including attractive streetscapes and historic buildings, through appropriate reuse and regeneration and restrict inappropriate development that would undermine the settlement’s identity, heritage and sense of place.</p> <p>Archaeology Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.1 To secure the preservation of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally. In the development management process, there will be a presumption of favour of preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record. In securing such preservation the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>CPO 8.2 No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) or any other site of archaeological interest will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.</p> <p>CPO 8.3 Any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance as identified in Schedules 08.01 & 08.02 and Maps 8.01 & 8.02 of this plan) shall be subject to an archaeological assessment.</p> <p>CPO 8.4 To require archaeological assessment for all developments with the potential to impact on the archaeological heritage of riverine, intertidal or sub tidal environments.</p> <p>CPO 8.5 To facilitate new or improved public access to and erection of appropriate interpretive signage at National Monuments, archaeological sites, castles, sites of historic interest and archaeological landscapes in State or private ownership, as identified in Schedule 08.02 and Map 8.02 of this plan, in co-operation with landowners.</p> <p>CPO 8.6 To protect the integrity of Baltinglass Hills archaeological landscape including identified monuments and their wider setting by resisting development that may adversely impact upon the significance and understanding of this important landscape.</p>

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		<p>landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir.</p> <p>BLESS3 To support and facilitate improvements to the public realm in Blessington Town Centre to provide an attractive, comfortable environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Such improvements could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street • The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre. • The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square. • Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square • The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre. • The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street. <p>BLESS13 To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.</p> <p>BLESS31 To consolidate and safeguard the historical and architectural character of Blessington through the protection of individual buildings, structures, shopfronts and elements of the public realm that contribute greatly to this character⁹⁸.</p> <p>BLESS32 To protect those features that have been identified in the Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal as contributing to the town centre's overall appearance and heritage value and to ensure that new development contributes positively to the designated Architectural Conservation Area.</p> <p>BLESS33 To promote the sustainable use and re-use of heritage vernacular buildings along Blessington Main Street/N81, Market Square, and Kilbride Road, and to resist the demolition of any such building unless absolutely necessary.</p> <p>BLESS34 Protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of natural, architectural and archaeological heritage assets, and in particular those features of the natural landscape and built structures that contribute to their special interest. The natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area shall be protected in accordance with the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan. In particular, the heritage assets of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and Glen Ding Forest shall be rigorously protected.</p>	<p>CPO 8.7 To support the inscription of Glendalough to Ireland's tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site list and promote a conservation led approach to facilitating visitor access and enjoyment of this internationally significant landscape.</p> <p>CPO 8.8 To protect and promote the characteristics of historic towns in County Wicklow identified as zones of archaeological potential in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), ensuring that cognisance is given in relevant development proposals to retaining existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.</p> <p>CPO 8.9 To protect and promote the conservation of historic burial grounds (those that are generally no longer in use but which may contain sites and features on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and/or RPS) and support greater public access to these where possible.</p> <p>Architectural Heritage Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.10 To protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Wicklow and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations.</p> <p>CPO 8.11 To support the work of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in collecting data relating to the architectural heritage, including the historic gardens and designed landscapes, of the County, and in the making of this information widely accessible to the public, and property owners.</p> <p>CPO 8.12 To have regard to 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011) in the assessment of proposals affecting architectural heritage.</p> <p>Record of Protected Structures Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.13 To ensure the protection of all structures, items and features contained in the Record of Protected Structures.</p> <p>CPO 8.14 To positively consider proposals to alter or change the use of protected structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to architectural heritage assessment and to demonstration by a suitably qualified Conservation Architect / or other relevant expertise that the structure, character, appearance and setting will not be adversely affected and suitable design, materials and construction methods will be utilised.</p> <p>CPO 8.15 All development works on or at the sites of protected structures, including any site works necessary, shall be carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures / site that render it worthy of protection.</p> <p>CPO 8.16 To support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc) previously existed.</p> <p>CPO 8.17 To strongly resist the demolition of protected structures or features of special interest unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist. All such cases will be subject to full heritage impact assessment and mitigation.</p> <p>Other Structures & Vernacular Architecture Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.18 To seek (through the development management process) the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings, historic shopfronts, thatched roofs and historic features such as stone walls and milestones. The demolition of vernacular buildings will be discouraged.</p> <p>CPO 8.19 Development proposals affecting vernacular buildings and structures will be required to submit a detailed, true measured survey, photographic records and written analysis as part of the planning application process.</p> <p>CPO 8.20 Where an item or a structure (or any feature of a structure) is considered to be of heritage merit (where not identified in the RPS), the Planning Authority reserves the right to refuse permission to remove or alter that structure / item, in the interests of the protection of the County's architectural heritage.</p> <p>Architectural Conservation Area Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.21 Within Architectural Conservation Areas, all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects of the environment which form an essential part of their character, as set out in their character appraisals, shall be considered for protection. The repair and refurbishment of existing buildings within the ACA will be favoured over demolition/new build in so far as practicable.</p> <p>CPO 8.22 The design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of an existing building, should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole. Schemes for the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of Architectural Conservation Areas will be promoted. In consideration of applications for new buildings, alterations and extensions affecting Architectural Conservation Areas, the following principles will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals will only be considered where they positively enhance the character of the ACA. • The siting of new buildings should, where appropriate retain the existing street building line.

⁹⁸ The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage can be utilised as a source of information with regard to the architectural value of any such features, but should not be considered an exhaustive list of buildings worthy of protection.

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mass of the new building should be in scale and harmony with the adjoining buildings, and the area as a whole, and the proportions of its parts should relate to each other, and to the adjoining buildings. Architectural details on buildings of high architectural value should be retained wherever possible. Original features, which are important to a building's character such as window type, materials, detailing, chimneys, entrances and boundary walls, both within and outside the architectural conservation area should be retained where possible. A high standard of shopfront design relating sympathetically to the character of the building and the surrounding area will be required. The materials used should be appropriate to the character of the area. Planning applications in ACAs should be in the form of detailed proposals, incorporating full elevational treatment and colours and materials to be used. Where modern architecture is proposed within an ACA, the application should provide details (drawings and/or written detail) on how the proposal contributes to, or does not detract from the attributes of the ACA. <p>CPO 8.23 To consider the designation of further ACAs for towns and villages in County Wicklow, when preparing future local plans, and as deemed appropriate.</p> <p>CPO 8.24 To establish, where it is considered appropriate, "Areas of Special Planning Control", if it is considered that all or part of an Architectural Conservation Area is of special importance to the civic life or the architectural, historical, cultural or social character of a town or village in which it is situated.</p> <p>Historical & Cultural Heritage Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.25 To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects which are part of the County's distinct local historical and cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the RPS.</p> <p>CPO 8.26 To facilitate access to and appreciation of areas of historical and cultural heritage, through the development of appropriate trails and heritage interpretation, in association with local stakeholders and site landowners, having regard to the public safety issues associated with such sites.</p> <p>CPO 8.27 To facilitate future community initiatives to increase access to and appreciation of railway heritage, through preserving the routes of former lines free from development.</p>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the lands surrounding the European Site of the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA are protected from adverse impacts arising from new development and to carefully manage and control the extension of existing development in proximity to these areas. Generally, zoning for new development will only be provided for above the 194m contour adjoining the lakeshore. <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical. Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir. <p>BLESS15 To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p> <p>BLESS23 To promote and encourage the sustainable recreational use of</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>CPO 4.15 To protect and promote the quality, character and distinctiveness of the rural landscape.</p> <p>Landscape, Views & Prospects</p> <p>CPO 17.35 All development proposals shall have regard to the County landscape classification hierarchy in particular the key landscape features and characteristics identified in the Wicklow Landscape Assessment (set in Volume 3 of the 2016 County Development Plan) and the 'Key Development Considerations' set out for each landscape area set out in Section 5 of the Wicklow Landscape Assessment</p> <p>CPO 17.36 Any application for permission in the AONB which may have the potential to significantly adversely impact the landscape area shall be accompanied by a Landscape / Visual Impact Assessment, which shall include, inter alia, an evaluation of visibility and prominence of the proposed development in its immediate environs and in the wider landscape, a series of photos or photomontages of the site / development from clearly identified vantage points, an evaluation of impacts on any listed views / prospects and an assessment of vegetation / land cover type in the area (with particular regard to commercial forestry plantations which may be felled thus altering character / visibility). The Assessment shall demonstrate that landscape impacts have been anticipated and avoided to a level consistent with the sensitivity of the landscape and the nature of the designation.</p> <p>CPO 17.37 To resist development that would significantly or unnecessarily alter the natural landscape and topography, including land infilling / reclamation projects or projects involving significant landscape remodelling, unless it can be demonstrated that the development would enhance the landscape and / or not give rise to adverse impacts</p> <p>CPO 17.38 To protect listed views and prospects from development that would either obstruct the view / prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view / prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the view / prospect and the location of the development within that view / prospect.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Draft Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>the lakeshore of the Poulaphouca Reservoir for eco-tourism activities. Where such recreational uses involve the development of structures or facilities, the Council will ensure that the proposals will respect the natural amenity and scenic character of the area.</p> <p>BLESS35 To protect the listed views and prospects, as they relate to the plan area, from development that would either obstruct the view / prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view / prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the view / prospect and the location of the development within that view / prospect. Particular regard will be had to listed (and other) views and prospects to and from the Poulaphouca Reservoir.</p> <p>BLESS36 To protect the following additional views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From St. Mary's Church to Bastion Wood and Glen Ding Forest. - From side streets/laneways east (to the Poulaphouca Reservoir/Wicklow Mountains) and west (to Glen Ding) from Blessington Main Street. <p>BLESS37 To reinforce the lakeshore character of the settlement and to provide for the enjoyment of the Poulaphouca Reservoir, Glen Ding Forest, and other natural areas as recreational and natural assets.</p>	

Section 10 Monitoring Measures

10.1 Introduction

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

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

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

10.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. The monitoring measures identified below as part of the Blessington Local Area Plan SEA are consistent with the measures that were identified by the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 SEA. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

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

Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to

deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

10.3 Sources

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

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

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

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁹⁹ basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

⁹⁹ The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

10.4 Reporting

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 10.1.

Interim reporting may be undertaken as part of reporting on the County Development Plan and other Local Area Plans.

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

Table 10.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ¹⁰⁰
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Confirmation of compliance with Plan provisions relating to the protection of European Sites and sustaining resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)¹⁰¹ DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)¹⁰² Internal review of local land use plans Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. under the County Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 17 “Natural Heritage and Biodiversity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 17 “Natural Heritage and Biodiversity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems

¹⁰⁰ Where remedial action is required, consultations with government agencies (e.g. DECC, DT, EPA, HSE, NPWS, Regional Assembly, Uisce Éireann) may be undertaken in order to confirm causes of any identified changes in the environment and in order to develop appropriate responses.

¹⁰¹ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

¹⁰² Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ¹⁰⁰
Population and Human Health	PHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 "Economic Development" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 "Economic Development" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DECC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of published information from the Health Service Executive and EPA Internal consultations with the Council's Environment Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ¹⁰⁰
Water	W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance ¹⁰³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.

¹⁰³ Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ¹⁰⁰
Air	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data EPA Air Quality Monitoring Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above
Climatic Factors	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of progress in implementing of Wicklow County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 EPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions reporting Internal review of implementation of Plan provisions relating to renewable energy in transport, including facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030) 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050) 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ¹⁰⁰
Cultural Heritage	CH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	
Landscape	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Water Reuse Regulation (2020/741)	The purpose of this Regulation is to facilitate the uptake of water reuse whenever it is appropriate and cost-efficient, thereby creating an enabling framework for those Member States who wish or need to practise water reuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse. This Regulation lays down minimum requirements for water quality and monitoring and provisions on risk management, for the safe use of reclaimed water in the context of integrated water management. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC, Directive 2009/31/EC and Directive 2013/30/EU	The overall aim of the ELD is to prevent and fully remedy damaged natural resources and their services to the condition that would have existed if no damage had occurred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relates to environmental damage caused by any of the occupational activities listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities; damage to protected species and natural habitats caused by any occupational activities other than those listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities, whenever the operator has been at fault or negligent. Where environmental damage has not yet occurred but there is an imminent threat of such damage occurring, the operator shall, without delay, take the necessary preventive measures. Where environmental damage has occurred the operator shall, without delay, inform the competent authority of all relevant aspects of the situation and take all practicable steps to immediately control, contain, remove or otherwise manage the relevant contaminants and/or any other damage factors in order to limit or to prevent further environmental damage and adverse effects on human health or further impairment of services and the necessary remedial measures, in accordance with Article 7. The operator shall bear the costs for the preventive and remedial actions taken pursuant to this Directive. The competent authority shall be entitled to initiate cost recovery proceedings against the operator. The operator may be required to provide financial security guarantees to ensure their responsibilities under the directive are met. The Environmental Liability Directive has been amended through a number of Directives. Implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive is contributed towards by a Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) 'Making the Environmental Liability Directive more fit for purpose' that is updated annually to changing developments, growing knowledge and new needs. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Sewage Sludge Directive (Council Directive 86/278/EEC of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture)	<p>The purpose of this Directive is to regulate the use of sewage sludge in agriculture in such a way as to prevent harmful effects on soil, vegetation, animals and man, thereby encouraging the correct use of such sewage sludge. Member States shall prohibit the use of sludge where the concentration of one or more heavy metals in the soil exceeds the limit values which they lay down in accordance with Annex I A and shall take the necessary steps to ensure that those limit values are not exceeded as a result of the use of sludge.</p> <p>The aims of the Sewage Sludge Directive are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect humans, animals, plants and the environment by ensuring that heavy metals in soil and sludge do not exceed set limits to increase the amount of sewage sludge used in agriculture 	<p>The Directive also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sets limits for the concentration of seven heavy metals in sewage sludge intended for agricultural use and in sludge-treated soils (cadmium, copper, nickel, lead, zinc, mercury, chromium) bans the use of sewage sludge that results in concentrations of these heavy metals in soil exceeding these limit values 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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<p>Bathing Waters Directive</p> <p>(Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC)</p>	<p>With a view to preserving, protecting and improving human health and the environment, within the legal framework of Directive 2000/60/EC, the present Directive establishes provisions for: (a) the monitoring and classification of bathing water quality; (b) the management of bathing water quality; and (c) the provision of information to the public on bathing water quality. Member States are required to annually identify all bathing waters and define the length of the bathing season.</p> <p>The EU aims to protect the environment and the health of Europeans by attaining good bathing water quality throughout the EU. More specifically, it aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide better and earlier information to citizens about the quality of their bathing waters, including logos • move from simple sampling and monitoring of bathing waters to bathing quality management • integrate into other EU measures protecting the quality of all our waters (rivers, lakes, ground waters and coastal waters) through the Water Framework Directive 	<p>The Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to monitor and assess bathing water. It ensures timely information is given to the public during the bathing season and requires Member States to disseminate information on bathing water quality actively and promptly. In particular, notices banning or advising against bathing should be rapidly and easily identifiable. The Directive applies to all surface waters that can be used for bathing, except for swimming pools and spa pools, confined waters subject to treatment or used for therapeutic purposes and confined waters artificially separated from surface water and groundwater. Decision establishing a symbol for information to the public on bathing water classification and any bathing prohibition. View the symbols for informing the public on bathing water prohibition, advice against bathing and bathing water classification.</p> <p>The implementation of the Bathing Water Directive is supported by a broad EU framework of water legislation, including the Water Framework Directive, the Environmental Quality Standards Directive, the Groundwater Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (2009/128/EC)</p> <p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115</p>	<p>The Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) establishes a framework for European Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides by setting minimum rules to reduce the risks to human health and the environment that are associated with pesticide use.</p> <p>The Directive aims to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides in the EU by reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment and promoting the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and of alternative approaches or techniques, such as non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. EU countries have drawn up National Action Plans to implement the range of actions set out in the Directive.</p>	<p>The main actions relate to training of users, advisors and distributors of pesticides, inspection of pesticide application equipment, the prohibition of aerial spraying, limitation of pesticide use in sensitive areas, and information and awareness raising about pesticide risks. EU countries must also promote Integrated Pest Management, for which, general principles are laid down in Annex III to the Directive.</p> <p>The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a new Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products, including EU wide targets to reduce by 50% the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 2030, in line with the EU's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. The proposal, adopted on 22 June 2022, is part of a package of measures to reduce the environmental footprint of the EU's food system and help mitigate the economic losses that we are already suffering due to climate change and biodiversity loss.</p> <p>The proposal transforms the existing Directive into a Regulation which will be directly binding and uniformly applicable to all Member States. It overhauls the existing rules on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (see Directive 2009/128/EC) to bring them in line with the ambitions set in the EU Green Deal, Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies. The proposals must be approved by Member States in the Council and the European Parliament, under the normal legislative procedure.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (1962)</p> <p>CAP 2023-2027</p>	<p>The CAP is a partnership between society and agriculture that ensures a stable supply of food, safeguards farmers' income, protects the environment and keeps rural areas vibrant. It aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support farmers and improve agricultural productivity, ensuring a stable supply of affordable food; • safeguard European Union farmers to make a reasonable living; • help tackle climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources; • maintain rural areas and landscapes across the EU; • keep the rural economy alive by promoting jobs in farming, agri-food industries and associated sectors. 	<p>The CAP 2023-2027 entered into force on 1 January 2023. Support for farmers and rural stakeholders across the 27 EU countries is based on the CAP 2023-2027 legal framework and the choices detailed in the CAP Strategic Plans, approved by the Commission. The approved Plans are designed to make a significant contribution to the ambitions of the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>EU REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006), as amended</p>	<p>The purpose of this Regulation is to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment, including the promotion of alternative methods for assessment of hazards of substances, as well as the free circulation of substances on the internal market while enhancing competitiveness and innovation.</p>	<p>This Regulation lays down provisions on hazardous substances and mixtures and specification of hazard classes; general obligations of manufacturers, importers and downstream users to classify, label and package the substances and mixtures; identification and examination of available information on substances and mixtures; evaluation of hazard information and decision on classification; establishment of a classification and labelling inventory in the form of a database; and the manufacture, placing on the market and use of chemical substances and preparations, pursuant to the precautionary principle.</p> <p>The Regulation sets forth the framework concerning the registration of such substances and preparations as well as the granting of authorizations. Furthermore, it sets up the European Chemicals Agency for the purposes of managing and carrying out the technical, scientific and administrative aspects of this Regulation. This Regulation sets out eight annexes attached. Annex I sets out the criteria for classification and labelling requirements for hazardous substances and mixtures. Annex II lays down special rules for labelling and packaging of certain classified substances and mixtures.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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UN Sustainable Development Goals	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which reflect the need for all countries to urgently act as a global partnership.	Sustainable transport is mainstreamed across several SDGs and targets, especially those related to food security, health, energy, economic growth, infrastructure, and cities and human settlements.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Commission’s “Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change” (2021)	The Strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050.	The Strategy has four principal objectives: to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic, and to step up international action on adaptation to climate change.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Environment Agency’s European Climate Risk Assessment (2024)	This assessment identifies 36 climate risks with potentially severe consequences across Europe.	The risks are evaluated in the contexts of risk severity, policy horizon (lead time and decision horizon), policy readiness and risk ownership. It further identifies priorities for EU policy action, based on a structured risk assessment united with qualitative aspects, such as considering social justice.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
UN Kyoto Protocol (2nd Kyoto Period), the Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II), Paris climate conference (COP21) 2015 (Paris Agreement)	The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) aims to identify and develop all the necessary elements of an EU strategy to implement the Kyoto Protocol. At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal. The agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and in line with recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) take steps “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kyoto Protocol is implemented through the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II). EU member states implement measures to improve on or compliment the specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP. <p>Under COP21, governments agreed to come together every 5 years to set more ambitious targets as required by science; report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement their targets; track progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Green Deal (2019) and “Fit for 55” legislation (2021)	The European Green Deal provides a roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all. The “Fit for 55” legislative package is a central part of the European Green Deal.	<p>The European Green Deal covers all sectors of the economy, notably transport, energy, agriculture, buildings, and industries such as steel, cement, ICT, textiles and chemicals. It outlines investments needed and financing tools available, and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition.</p> <p>The 'Fit for 55' package responds to the requirements in the EU Climate Law to reduce Europe's net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. It was updated when the Commission proposed increased ambition on renewable energy and energy efficiency in the REPowerEU plan to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and boost Europe's energy security. The final legislative package is expected to reduce EU net greenhouse gas emissions by 57% by 2030. For transport, the package is primarily focused on reducing fossil fuel dependency and increasing the availability of, and infrastructure for, renewable alternatives.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Leaders Pledge for Nature 2020	Political leaders (including Taoiseach Michael Martin) participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, representing 75 countries from all regions and the European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.	As part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve sustainable development, the leaders commit to achieve the vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050 by undertaking ten actions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting biodiversity, climate, and the environment at the heart of COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments as well as national and international development and cooperation; • Developing and implementing an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kunming, China, as a key instrument to reach the SDGs; • Raising ambition and aligning domestic climate policies with the Paris Agreement on climate change, with enhanced nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies consistent with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement, and the objective of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by mid-century, and strengthen climate resilience of economies and ecosystems; and • Mainstream biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies at all levels, including in food production, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, energy, tourism, infrastructure and extractive industries, and trade and supply chains, as well as into key international agreements and processes. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Europe 2020: European 2020 Strategy for Growth and Employment	The Europe 2020 Strategy aims to ensure that the economic revival of the European Union following the economic and financial crisis is supported by a series of reforms in order to build solid foundations for growth and job creation by 2020. While addressing the structural weaknesses of the EU's economy and economic and social issues, the strategy also takes account of the longer-term challenges of globalisation, pressure on resources and ageing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Europe 2020 Strategy should enable the EU to achieve growth that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ smart, through the development of knowledge and innovation; ◦ sustainable, based on a greener, more resource efficient and more competitive economy; ◦ inclusive, aimed at strengthening employment and social and territorial cohesion. • The EU has set itself five major targets for this ambition to be achieved by 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to at least 75 %; ◦ investing 3 % of gross domestic product in research and development; ◦ reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 %, increasing the share of renewable energies to 20 % and increasing energy efficiency by 20 %; ◦ reducing the school drop-out rate to less than 10 % and increasing the proportion of tertiary degrees to at least 40 %; ◦ reducing the number of people threatened by poverty or social exclusion by 20 million. • The Europe 2020 Strategy targets are also supported by 7 flagship initiatives at European level and in EU countries: the Innovation Union; Youth on the move; the Digital Agenda for Europe; a Resource-efficient Europe; an industrial policy for the globalisation era; the agenda for new skills and jobs; and the European Platform against Poverty. • At European level, the single market, the EU budget and the European external policy are additional levers in achieving the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives (European Commission, 2020)	The EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments. Aims to build resilience to future threats such as the impacts of climate change, forest fires, food insecurity, disease outbreaks and protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade.	The Strategy contains specific commitments and actions to be delivered by 2030, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a larger EU-wide network of protected areas on land and at sea; • Launching an EU nature restoration plan; • Introducing measures to enable the necessary transformative stage; and • Introducing measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013)	Aims to create a robust enabling framework in order to promote and facilitate Green Infrastructure (GI) projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting GI in the main EU policy areas. • Supporting EU-level GI projects. • Improving access to finance for GI projects. • Improving information and promoting innovation. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992)	The aim of this (revised) Convention is to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study.	The Valletta Convention makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies. The Convention sets guidelines for the funding of excavation and research work and publication of research findings. It also deals with public access, in particular to archaeological sites, and educational actions to be undertaken to develop public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage. It also constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European co-operation on the archaeological heritage, entailing a systematic exchange of experience and experts among the various States.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
ICOMOS (2011) Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes ('Dublin Principles')	It is aimed to assist in the documentation, protection, conservation and appreciation of industrial heritage as part of the heritage of human societies around the World.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (I) Document and understand industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes and their values; • (II) Ensure effective protection and conservation of the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; • (III) Conserve and maintain the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; and • (IV) Present and communicate the heritage dimensions and values of industrial structures, sites, areas and landscapes to raise public and corporate awareness, and support training and research. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Convention of the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1995)	The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinforcement and promotion of policies for protecting and enhancing the heritage within the territories of the parties. • The affirmation of European solidarity with regard to the protection of the heritage and the fostering of practical co-operation between states and regions. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. • A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. • Recognise individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage. • Emphasise that the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal. • Take the necessary steps to apply the provisions of this Convention concerning the role of cultural heritage in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society. • Greater synergy of competencies among all the public, institutional and private actors concerned. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000)	The European Landscape Convention introduced a Europe-wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and covering the entire territory, not just outstanding landscapes. Through its ground-breaking approach and its broader scope, it complements the Council of Europe's and UNESCO's heritage conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote protection, management and planning of landscapes. • Organise European co-operation on landscape issues. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community (2013-2020)	<p>It identifies three key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital • to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy • to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing 	<p>Four so called "enablers" will help Europe deliver on these objectives (goals):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better implementation of legislation. • Better information by improving the knowledge base. • More and wiser investment for environment and climate policy. • Full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies. <p>Two additional horizontal priority objectives complete the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the Union's cities more sustainable. • To help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) (1979)	The convention has three main aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to promote cooperation between states to give particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species including endangered and vulnerable migratory species 	The Parties under the convention recognise the intrinsic value of nature, which needs to be preserved and passed to future generations, they also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to ensure the conservation of nature in their countries, paying particular attention to planning and development policies and pollution control. Look at implementing the Bern Convention in central Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Take account of the potential impact on natural heritage by other policies. Promote education and information of the public, ensuring the need to conserve species is understood and acted upon. Develop an extensive number of species action plans, codes of conducts, and guidelines, at their own initiative or in co-operation with other organisations. Created the Emerald Network, an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Bali Road Map (2007)	The Bali Road Map includes the Bali Action Plan, which charts the course for a new negotiating process designed to tackle climate change. The Bali Action Plan is a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision.	The Bali Action Plan is divided into five main categories: shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing. The shared vision refers to a long-term vision for action on climate change, including a long-term goal for emission reductions.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Cancun Agreements (2010)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 16 Conference in Cancun in 2010, which addresses a series of key issues in the fight against climate change. Cancun Agreements' main objectives cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation Transparency of actions Technology Finance Adaptation Forests Capacity building 	Among the most prominent agreements is the establishment of a Green Climate Fund to transfer money from the developed to developing world to tackle the impacts of climate change.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Doha Climate Gateway (2012)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 18 meeting in Doha in 2012 which pave the way for a new agreement in Paris in 2015.	Among the many decisions taken, governments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened their resolve and set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015, which will come into effect in 2020. Streamlined the negotiations, completing the work under the Bali Action Plan to concentrate on the new work towards a 2015 agreement under a single negotiating stream in the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. Emphasized the need to increase their ambition to cut greenhouse gases and to help vulnerable countries to adapt. Launched a new commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, thereby ensuring that this treaty's important legal and accounting models remain in place and underlining the principle that developed countries lead mandated action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Made further progress towards establishing the financial and technology support and new institutions to enable clean energy investments and sustainable growth in developing countries. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (2001)	The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment. The objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex A to the Convention Restrict the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex B to the Convention Reduce or eliminate releases from unintentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex C to the Convention Ensure that stockpiles and wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally sound manner Other provisions of the Convention relate to the development of implementation plans, information exchange, public information, awareness and education, research, development and monitoring, technical assistance, financial resources and mechanisms, reporting, effectiveness evaluation and non-compliance 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Ramsar Convention (1971)	The Convention's mission is <i>"the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world"</i> .	Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands; • Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management; • Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
OSPAR Convention (1992)	The mission of OSPAR is to conserve marine ecosystems and safeguard human health in the North-East Atlantic by preventing and eliminating pollution; by protecting the marine environment from the adverse effects of human activities; and by contributing to the sustainable use of the seas.	OSPAR's work is organised under six strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and Ecosystem Strategy • Eutrophication Strategy • Hazardous Substances Strategy • Offshore Industry Strategy • Radioactive Substances Strategy • Strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme These six strategies fit together to underpin the ecosystem approach. For each strategy a programme of work is designed and implemented annually.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Level			
Ireland 2040 - Our Plan, the National Planning Framework, and the National Development Plan	The National Planning Framework is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for people, and to protect and enhance the environment - from villages to cities, and everything around and in between. The National Development Plan sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades, to cater for an expected population increase of over 1 million people.	National Strategic Outcomes as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. Sustainable Mobility 5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills 6. High-Quality International Connectivity 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage 8. Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)	An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development; to provide for proper planning and sustainable development in the interests of the common good; to provide for the licensing of events and control of funfairs; for those purposes to repeal and replace the Planning and Development Act 2000; to amend certain other enactments; and to provide for matters connected therewith.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, with certain exceptions, is subject to development control under the Planning Acts and the local authorities grant or refuse planning permission for development, including ones within protected areas. • There are, however, a range of exemptions from the planning system. Use of land for agriculture, peat extraction and afforestation, subject to certain thresholds, is generally exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission. • Additionally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a range of classes and large-scale projects. • Under planning legislation, Development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed. There are also discretionary powers to set objectives for the conservation of a variety of other elements of the natural heritage. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning and Development Act 2024	An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development; to provide for proper planning and sustainable development in the interests of the common good; to provide for the licensing of events and control of funfairs; for those purposes to repeal and replace the Planning and Development Act 2000 and amend certain other enactments; for purposes unrelated to the foregoing, to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019, the Land Development Agency Act 2021 and the National Asset Management Agency Act 2009; and to provide for matters connected therewith.	Key reforms included in the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of statutory timelines for all consenting processes, to give confidence and certainty to applicants; • A significant reorganisation of An Bord Pleanála, to be known as An Coimisiún Pleanála; • Greater mandatory alignment of all tiers of planning, improving consistency; • Improvements to the planning judicial review processes; • Clearer, more consistent policies and guidance; • Longer term, more strategic, ten-year plans for Local Authorities; • More agile local implementation, through the introduction of Urban and Priority Area Plans, including new bespoke plans for Gaeltacht and Island communities; • Creation of Urban Development Zones, which will facilitate a more plan-led approach to development, increasing certainty at the master-planning stage; • Provisions to deter abuse of planning processes through spurious planning submissions and appeals, as well as a ban on requesting payment for not opposing development and; • Ability to suspend the duration of a permission while subject to judicial review proceedings, so as not to lose any time available for completing the development. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011	The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 (O.J. No. L 197, 21 July 2001) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment — commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regulations cover plans and programmes in all of the sectors listed in article 3(2) of the Directive except land-use planning. These Regulations also amend certain provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide the statutory basis for the transposition of the Directive in respect of land-use planning. Transposition in respect of the land-use planning sector is contained in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004). 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011), as amended	These Regulations provide a new for the implementation in Ireland of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats and protection of wild fauna and flora (as amended) and for the implementation of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of wild birds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provide, among other things, for: the appointment and functions of authorized officers; identification, classification and other procedures relative to the designation of Community sites. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the CJEU against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities Environmental Objectives (FPM) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 296 of 2009)	The purpose of these Regulations is to support the achievement of favourable conservation status for freshwater pearl mussels,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set environmental quality objectives for the habitats of the freshwater pearl mussel populations named in the First Schedule to these Regulations that are within the boundaries of a site notified in a candidate list of European sites, or designated as a Special Area of Conservation, under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997). Require the production of sub-basin management plans with programmes of measures to achieve these objectives. Set out the duties of public authorities in respect of the sub-basin management plans and programmes of measure. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 9 of 2010), as amended	To amend the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) to make further provision to implement Commission Directive 2014/80/EU of 20 June 2014 amending Annex II to Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.	<p>The substances and threshold values set out in Schedule 5 to S.I. No. 9 of 2010 have been reviewed and amended where necessary, based on existing monitoring information and international guidelines on appropriate threshold values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A of Schedule 6 has been amended to include changes to the rules governing the determination of background levels for the purposes of establishing threshold values for groundwater pollutants and indicators of pollution. Part B of Schedule 6 has been amended to include nitrites and phosphorus (total) / phosphates among the minimum list of pollutants and their indicators which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must consider when establishing threshold values. Part C of Schedule 6 amends the information to be provided to the Minister by the EPA with regard to the pollutants and their indicators for which threshold values have been established. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
<p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003)</p> <p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (S.I. 350 of 2014)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface waters) Regulations of 2009 (S.I. 272 of 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transpose the Water Framework Directive into legislation. Outlines the general duty of public authorities in relation to water. Identifies the competent authorities in charge of water policy (amended to Irish Water in 2013) and gives EPA and the CER the authority to regulate and supervise their actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements River basin districts and characterisation of RBDs and River Basin Management Plans. Requires the public to be informed and consulted on the Plan and for progress reports to be published on RBDs. Implements a Register of protected areas, Classification systems and Monitoring programmes for water bodies. Allows the competent authority to recover the cost of damage/destruction of status of water body. Outlines environmental objectives and programme of measures and environmental quality standards for priority substances. Outlines criteria for assessment of groundwater. Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for surface water bodies. Outlines surface water quality standards. Establishes threshold values for the classification and protection of surface waters against pollution and deterioration in quality. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990	The Water Pollution Acts allow Local Authorities the authority regulate and supervise actions relating to water in their division.	The Water Pollution Acts enable local authorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosecute for water pollution offences. Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters. Issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution. issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices; Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects. Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Water Services Act 2007 (No. 30 of 2007) Water Services Act 2013 (No. 6 of 2013) Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (No. 50 of 2013) Water Services Act 2017 (No. 29 of 2017) Water Services (Amendment) Act 2022 (No. 39 of 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the water services infrastructure. Outlines the responsibilities involved in delivering and managing water services. Identifies the authority in charge of provision of water and waste water supply. <p>Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of water and waste water services in the amendment act during 2013, therefore these services are no longer the responsibility of the 34 Local Authorities in Ireland.</p>	Key strategic objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Uisce Éireann delivers infrastructural projects that meet key public health, environmental and economic objectives in the water services sector. Ensuring the provision of adequate water and sewerage services in the gateways and hubs listed in the National Spatial Strategy, and in other locations where services need to be enhanced. Ensuring good quality drinking water is available to all consumers of public and group water supplies, in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards Ensuring the provision of the remaining infrastructure needed to provide secondary waste water treatment, for compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan 2015 and Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024	This Water Services Strategic Plan sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over the next 25 years up to 2040. It details current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term. The Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 is Uisce Éireann investment plan for water and wastewater assets and infrastructure for the next 5 years. The Capital Investment Plan sets out where to prioritise investment to deliver the most urgently needed improvements in drinking water quality, leakage reduction, water availability, wastewater compliance, efficiencies and customer service.	The Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 is made up of investment in individual projects such as building new or upgrading existing water and wastewater treatment plants and upgrading existing networks, and national programmes where activities are being delivered in a consistent and efficient manner across the country. Some examples of these programmes are the Leakage Reduction Programme, the National Disinfection Programme, the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme, and the National Certification Authorisation Programme.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ireland's Forest Strategy 2023-2030 and associated Implementation Plan including the National Forestry Programme 2023-2027	The Implementation Plan will facilitate the initial steps in the implementation of the Strategy on the road to achieving the Shared Vision for 2050. The Implementation Plan includes the new Forestry Programme (2023 – 2027), which will be the primary implementation mechanism for the Forest Strategy. The Plan also includes a list of actions that will be funded and enabled by mechanisms outside of the Forestry Programme.	The Forestry Programme 2023-2027 was created in alignment with Ireland's Forest Strategy and is designed to provide lasting benefits for many key areas including climate change, biodiversity, wood production, and employment alongside enhancing societal benefits. The Forestry Programme will provide incentives for farmers and other landowners and will provide farm families with the opportunity to increase and diversify their income streams.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Water Action Plan 2024: River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 (3rd Cycle) (2024)	The Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of our water resources (as specified under SDG 6). This Water Action Plan enhances and builds upon the work of the first and second-cycle plans. Where necessary, this plan addresses the shortcomings experienced during the implementation of previous plans.	The responses to shortcomings addressed include, for example, strengthening the incorporation of the integrated catchment management approach, improving the environmental ambition, improving the evidence base for 'targeting the right measures in the right place' and securing dedicated resources to deliver these, increasing environmental enforcement and compliance, and strengthening the governance structures.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ireland's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2022-2027	The main purpose of Ireland's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2022-2027 is to provide a comprehensive national overview of the ecological and chemical status of surface waters and the quantitative and chemical status of groundwaters. The information is used to track progress towards the achievement of the environmental objectives required by the Water Framework Directive, and those set out in the River Basin Management Plan.	The programme is comprised of 2,899 surface and groundwater bodies representing 60% of the total number of national water bodies, covering 2,429 river water bodies, 224 lakes, 80 transitional water bodies, 45 coastal waters, 16 canals and 121 groundwater bodies. The programme is operated by the Environmental Protection Agency, Marine Institute, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Waterways Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Local Authorities.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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<p>National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) – Framework Plan (2021)</p>	<p>The NWRP is a plan on how to provide a safe, secure and reliable water supply to customers for the next 25 years, without causing adverse impact on the environment. The objective of the NWRP is to set out how we intend to maintain the supply and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long term whilst minimising the impact on the environment.</p> <p>The preparation of the plan has been divided into two distinct phases, the combination of which will become the final NWRP. Phase 1 was carried out in 2021 and the NWRP Framework has been adopted. In Phase 2 of the NWRP, Uisce Éireann summarised the needs across the 539 individual water supplies and identified the solutions to address these needs. Due to the large number of supplies in Ireland, Phase 2 was delivered as four Regional Water Resources Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Water Resources Plan: North West (RWRP NW) Regional Water Resources Plan: South West (RWRP SW) Regional Water Resources Plan: South East (RWRP SE) Regional Water Resources Plan: Eastern and Midlands (RWRP EM) 	<p>The key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas where there are current and future potential water supply shortfalls, taking into account normal and extreme weather conditions Assess the current and future water demand from homes, businesses, farms, and industry Consider the impacts of climate change on Ireland’s water resources Develop a drought plan advising measures to be taken before and during drought events Develop a plan detailing how we deal with the material that is produced as a result of treating drinking water Assess the water resources available at a national level including lakes, rivers and groundwater 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030</p>	<p>The national plans are intended to inform investment priorities for aquaculture under Member States’ operational programmes under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. They are also intended to identify measures to reduce the administrative burden on operators, to secure sustainable development and growth of aquaculture through coordinated spatial planning, to enhance the competitiveness of the aquaculture sector and to promote a level playing field for EU operators by exploiting their competitive advantages. Ireland’s National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was finalised following public consultation earlier in 2022. The Plan was adopted by the European Commission in 2022.</p>	<p>The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development proposes 58 actions to be implemented over the period up to 2030.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Aquaculture Acts 1997 to 2006 (Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006), s. 1(3)) Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1997 (23/1997) Fisheries and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 1998 (54/1998), ss. 2, 3 and 4 Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2001 (40/2001) Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006)</p>	<p>The Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division ensures the efficient and effective management of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities.</p>	<p>The Strategic Objectives of the Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop and manage an efficient and effective regulatory framework in respect of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to secure a fair financial return from the State’s foreshore estate in the context of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to progressively reduce arrears in the clearing of licence applications. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Foreshore Acts 1933 to 2011</p>	<p>The Foreshore Acts require that a lease or licence must be obtained from the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government for the carrying out of works or placing structures or material on, or for the occupation of or removal of material from, State-owned foreshore, which represents the greater part of the foreshore. Construction of permanent structures on privately owned foreshore also required the prior permission of the Minister under the Foreshore Act.</p>	<p>Developments on the foreshore require planning permission in addition to a Foreshore Lease/Licence/Permission. All Foreshore Leases, Licences Permissions are without prejudice to the powers of the local planning authority. Applicants should, therefore, consult initially with the local planning authority regarding their proposal. In the case of developments on foreshore for, by or on behalf of a Local Authority where an EIS is required, applications should be made to An Bord Pleanála under Part XV, Planning and Development Act 2000.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Marine Planning Development Management Bill (General Scheme), 2019</p>	<p>The Bill seeks to establish in law a completely new regime for the maritime area which will replace existing State and development consent regimes and streamline arrangements on the basis of a single consent principle.</p>	<p>One of the aims is to establish a legal basis for An Bord Pleanála and coastal local authorities to consent to development in the maritime area, while retaining existing foreshore and planning permission provisions for aquaculture and sea fisheries related development. It will also provide for a single environmental impact assessment (EIA) and a single appropriate assessment (AA), where applicable.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (2024)	<p>The NMPF details how marine activities will interact with each other in an ocean space that is under increasing spatial pressure, ensuring the sustainable use of Ireland’s marine resources to 2040.</p> <p>The NMPF has been prepared with an ecosystem-based approach and informed by best available knowledge.</p>	<p>The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) brings together all marine-based human activities for the first time, outlining the Government’s vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. The NMPF is intended as the marine equivalent to the National Planning Framework. This approach will enable the Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set a clear direction for managing our seas • clarify objectives and priorities • direct decision makers, users and stakeholders towards strategic, plan-led, and efficient use of our marine resources 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027	<p>Based on the challenges identified for the seafood sector and coastal communities and the policy context, Ireland’s Programme requires an ambitious vision to: "To support a resilient, climate smart, environmentally sustainable and profitable Irish seafood sector in order to maximise its contribution to jobs and growth and maintain the economic and social activities of our most vibrant and sustainable coastal communities"</p>	<p>The Programme details the vision and key missions to be achieved by the implementation of the programme. It also demonstrates how the strategic objectives of the EMFAF fund (specified in Regulation (EU) 2021/1139) will be employed in fulfilling the Programme.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	<p>Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth is an Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), setting out a roadmap for the Government’s vision, high-level goals and integrated actions across policy, governance and business to enable our marine potential to be realised. Implementation of this Plan will see Ireland evolve an integrated system of policy and programme planning for our marine affairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth of marine/ maritime sectors; • Increase the contribution to the national GDP; • Deliver a business friendly yet robust governance, policy and planning framework; • Protect and conserve our rich marine biodiversity and ecosystems; • Manage our living and non-living resources in harmony with the ecosystem; • Implement and comply with environmental legislation; • Building on our maritime heritage, strengthen our maritime identity; • Increase our awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits; and • Engagement and participation by all. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Flood Risk Management Plans arising from National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme	<p>The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive.</p>	<p>CFRAM Studies have been undertaken for all River Basin Districts. The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. Flood Risk and Hazard mapping, including Flood Extent Mapping, was finalised in 2017. The final outputs from the studies are the CFRAM Plans, finalised in 2018. The Plans define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 – 2022 and a Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network	<p>The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 - 2022 sets out a roadmap for the long-term management, restoration and conservation of protected raised bogs in Ireland.</p>	<p>The Plan is part of the measures being implemented in response to the on-going infringement action against Ireland in relation to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, with regard to the regulation of turf cutting on the Special Areas of Conservation and on foot of the recommendation of Mr. Justice Quirke that a National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan be drawn up, arising from the Peatlands Forum (2012).</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Peatlands Strategy (2015-2025)	<p>This Strategy aims to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations.</p>	<p>Objectives of the Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give direction to Ireland’s approach to peatland management. • To apply to all peatlands, including peat soils. • To ensure that the relevant State authorities and state-owned companies that influence such decisions contribute to meeting cross-cutting objectives and obligations in their policies and actions. • To ensure that Ireland’s peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsibly. • To inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. • To inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 113/2022)</p>	<p>The purpose of these Regulations is to give effect to Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme pursuant to Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural source.</p>	<p>Part 2 concerns farmyard management. The Part requires an occupier of a holding shall take all such steps, as far as is practicable for the purposes of minimising the amount of soiled water produced on the holding; livestock manure and other organic fertilisers, soiled water and effluents from dungsteeds, farmyard manure pits, silage pits or silage clamps arising or produced in a building or yard on a holding shall, prior to its application to land or other treatment, be collected and held in a manner that prevents the run-off or seepage, directly or indirectly, into groundwaters or surface waters of such substances. The Regulations provides for general obligations related to capacity of storage facilities and then distinguishes among requirements for storage facilities of: effluents and soiled water; pig manure; poultry manure; manure from deer, goats and sheep; manure from cattle.</p> <p>Part 3 concerns nutrient management.</p> <p>Part 4 is focused on the prevention of water pollution from fertilizers and certain activities; this includes the distances from a water body and other issues requirements as to manner of application of fertilizers, soiled water etc; periods when application of fertilizers is prohibited; limits on the amount of livestock manure to be applied.</p> <p>Part 5 regulates general duty of occupier, such as keeping of records, etc. Offences and related matters.</p> <p>Part 6 is functions of the public authorities: certificates, exemptions, etc.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-Fisheries) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 565 of 2014)</p>	<p>These Regulations the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-fisheries) Regulations 2013 so as to apply them to the regulation of sea-fishing activity in so far as the regulation of that activity is necessary to secure compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and the objectives of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 3 provides for the submission of a Fisheries Natura Plan in relation to planned fisheries; Regulation 4 provides for a screening of a Fisheries Natura Plan to determine whether or not an appropriate assessment is required; Regulation 5 provides for an appropriate assessment of a Fisheries Natura Plan and also provides for public and statutory consultation; Regulation 6 provides for the Minister to make a determination to adopt a Fisheries Natura Plan. The Minister may amend, withdraw or revoke a plan; Regulation 7 provides for publication of the adopted Fisheries Natura Plan; Regulation 8 provides for a Risk Assessment of unplanned fisheries and also provides for public and statutory consultation on the assessment; Regulation 9 provides for the issue of a Natura Declaration to prohibit, restrict including restricting by permit, control, etc. of sea fishing activities; Regulation 10 provides for Natura Permits to be issued where required by Natura Declarations; and Regulations 11 to 31 deal with functions of authorised officers and related matters, offences, etc. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Wildlife Act of 1976</p> <p>Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000</p> <p>Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2023</p>	<p>The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna.</p> <p>The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 introduced a new public sector duty on biodiversity. The legislation provides that every public body, as listed in the Act, is obliged to have regard to the objectives and targets in the National Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection for certain species, their habitats and important ecosystems Give statutory protection to NHAs Enhances wildlife species and their habitats Includes more species for protection 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030</p>	<p>Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.</p>	<p>This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. It will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives, while addressing new and emerging issues:</p> <p>Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025</p>	<p>The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is an island-wide attempt to reverse declines in pollinating insects to ensure the sustainability of our food, avoid additional economic impacts on agriculture, and protect the health of the environment.</p> <p>The main objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making farmland, public land and private land in Ireland pollinator friendly; Raising awareness of pollinators and how to protect them; Managed pollinators – supporting beekeepers and growers; Expanding our knowledge of pollinators and pollination service; and Collecting evidence to track change and measure success. 	<p>This voluntary Plan identified 81 actions, shared out between over 100 governmental and non-governmental organisations. A large focus of the Plan is to identify actions to improve the quality and amount of flower-rich habitat. Actions range from creating pollinator highways along our transport routes, to supporting pollinators on farmland, in gardens, businesses, and on public land.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)	An Act to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.	When considering a plan or framework, for approval, the Government shall endeavour to achieve the national transition objective within the period to which the objective relates and shall, in endeavouring to achieve that objective, ensure that such objective is achieved by the implementation of measures that are cost effective and shall, for that purpose, have regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ultimate objective specified in Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change done at New York on 9 May 1992 and any mitigation commitment entered into by the European Union in response or otherwise in relation to that objective, The policy of the Government on climate change, Climate justice, Any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any international agreement referred to in section 2; and The most recent national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projection of future greenhouse gas emissions, prepared by the Agency. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Climate Action Plan 2024	The National Climate Action Plan 2023 provided a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021. The Climate Action Plan 2024 builds upon the 2023 Plan by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings.	The Climate Action Plans list the actions needed to deliver on Ireland’s climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated periodically to ensure alignment with Ireland’s legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Adaptation Framework (NAF) 2024 and associated regional, local and sectoral adaptation plans	NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation under this Framework should seek to minimise costs and maximise the opportunities arising from climate change. Adaptation actions range from building adaptive capacity (e.g. increasing awareness, sharing information and targeted training) through to policy and finance-based actions. Adaptation actions must be risk based, informed by existing vulnerabilities of our society and systems and an understanding of projected climate change. Adaptation actions taken to increase climate resilience must also consider impacts on other sectors and levels of governance 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Climate Mitigation Plan 2017	The Plan represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the deep decarbonisation required in Ireland by mid-century in line with the Government’s policy objectives.	The National Mitigation Plan focuses on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Action Policy Framework Decarbonising Electricity Generation Decarbonising the Built Environment Decarbonising Transport An Approach to Carbon Neutrality for Agriculture, Forest and Land Use Sectors 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Climate Adaptation Sectoral Adaptation Plans	The Climate Act sets out the requirements for the preparation of Sectoral Adaptation Plans. The 12 priority sectors identified in the 2018 NAF were grouped into 9 such Plans and clustered into four themes covering natural and cultural capital, critical infrastructure, water resource and flood risk management, and public health. This approach aims to provide a structured and systematic approach to sectoral developments.	To support key national sectors in planning for climate change adaptation and according to the requirements of the National Adaptation Framework (2018), sectoral planning guidelines were developed as part of the Irish Climate Information Platform, Climate Ireland project . The guidelines aim to ensure that a coherent and consistent approach to adaptation planning is adopted at national and local levels. Since the guidelines’ publication in May 2018, they have been successfully implemented by relevant Departments to develop Sectoral Adaptation Plans.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) (2022)	It sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is framed around three key principles that will guide the delivery of sustainable mobility policy over the coming decade. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and green mobility; People focussed mobility; and Better integrated mobility. 	The SMP includes an Action Plan covering the period 2022-2025 with 91 actions, supporting behavioural change across a wide range of interventions including, among other things, public transport infrastructure and services, active travel promotion and supports, road safety initiatives, legislative measures, research, and public engagement. The Policy also supports the implementation of large-scale transport projects including MetroLink and DART+ in Dublin, BusConnects in the five cities, the Connecting Ireland scheme in rural areas, and an Active Travel Infrastructure Programme providing high-quality cycling infrastructure across the country.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and associated implementation plan	It sets out a pathway for the delivery of EV charge point infrastructure, including the rollout of EV infrastructure as required under the EU's Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), where a 300% increase in the amount of public recharging infrastructure is targeted for delivery.	The strategy takes a people-first approach, focusing on the different transport needs across the country and is being informed by the piloting of different technologies and charging options in Ireland. An Implementation Plan has also been developed in conjunction with the strategy to provide an initial set of actions and deliverables to support the strategy's delivery. This includes the development the National Road Network EV Charging Plan and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Renewable Transport Fuel Policy 2023-2025	The Renewable Transport Fuel Policy, 2023 – 2025 sets out a pathway to incentivise the supply of renewable transport fuel through annual increases in the renewable transport fuel obligation rate to 2030.	The policy will underpin the shift to the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP 23) biofuel targets of at least B20 (biodiesel equivalent) in diesel and E10 (Ethanol) in petrol by 2030 (with an interim B12/E10 by 2025 target).	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Energy Security Framework (2022)	National Energy Security Framework provides an overarching and comprehensive response to Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine. The Framework outlines the structures which are in place within Government to monitor and manage our energy supplies. It sets out the plans which are in place to deal with energy security emergencies should they arise, and outlines out how these plans will be tested in light of the war in Ukraine.	The Framework sets out the government's action in response to these issues across three key themes: - managing the impact on consumers and businesses, with a specific focus on financially vulnerable residential consumers in the short-term - ensuring security of energy supply in the near term, with a focus on the period up to and including winter 2022/23 - reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels, in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 (published in 2024)	National Energy and Climate Plans are the framework within which EU Member States must notify their climate and energy objectives, targets, policies, and measures to the European Commission and were established under Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action. Member States are required to develop NECPs on a ten-year rolling basis. The aim of the plans is to outline our energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and provide projections and ambitions towards 2050. Under the Regulation, Member States are also required to update their initial plans after 5 years, this is the first update of the initial NECP which was published in 2019. The NECP covers five dimensions of the Energy Union: - Decarbonisation - Energy Efficiency - Energy Security - Internal Energy Market - Research, Innovation and Competitiveness The NECP brings together the policies, targets, tools and associated material relating to our climate and energy obligations under various EU Regulations and Directives from across government bodies and departments into one document. It reflects our ambitions and provides certainty to investors and policymakers that we are committed to EU-wide targets and ambitions to move towards becoming a carbon-neutral society.	It outlines our department's energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP collates the policies, measures and actions related to energy and climate outlined in a range of government plans: such as the Climate Action Plan, the National Development Plan, and Project Ireland 2040, into one cohesive document. It also presents modelling that illustrates Ireland's current trajectories toward its three main European targets. The NECP reflects the ambitions set out in Climate Action Plan 2024. The NECP will act to identify gaps and areas that Ireland can improve on, which should be reflected in updated policies and measures in subsequent Climate Action Plans. The policies outlined in the NECP reflect the ambition of Climate Action Plan 2024.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024	It is the second National Implementation Plan for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals reviews the progress made towards each of the 17 Goals.	The Plan sets out five strategic objectives and 51 actions, with 119 individual measures to increase Ireland's ambition and strengthen implementation structures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also incorporates 23 external actions from four other National Plans or Strategies which contribute to and are complementary to the objectives of this Plan and which have been included for coherence and reporting purposes. Strategic Objective 1: To embed the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Strategic Objective 2: To integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs Strategic Objective 3: Greater partnerships for the Goals Strategic Objective 4: To further incorporate the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms Strategic Objective 5: Strong reporting mechanisms	Implementation of the Strategy needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Planning, Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040	The PLUTO takes account of forecasted future economic and demographic scenarios, affordability considerations and relevant Government policies.	The PLUTO seeks to: 1. Quantify in broad terms the appropriate scale of financial investment in land transport over the long term; 2. Consider how fiscal, environmental and technological developments might impact on this investment; and, 3. Identify strategic priorities for future investment to ensure land transport infrastructure provision facilitates the objectives of Project Ireland 2040.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) (2021)	The high-level strategic framework for prioritising future investment in the land transport network. This new framework is the Department of Transport's contribution to Project Ireland 2040, Government's long-term strategy for accommodating population growth in a sustainable manner and making Ireland a better country for all of its people. It has been developed to ensure that our transport sectoral strategy is underpinned by and supports the achievement of the spatial objectives and National Strategic Objectives set out in the National Planning Framework.	The framework establishes high-level investment priorities to efficiently and effectively address key transport challenges identified by the background analysis and to ensure that transport investment is aligned with and supports Government's overarching spatial and climate change objectives, as articulated in the National Planning Framework and Climate Action Plan.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Investing in our Future: A Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT) – Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	SFILT sets out a set of priorities to guide the allocation of the State's investment to best develop and manage Ireland's land transport network over the coming decades.	The three priorities stated in SFILT are: • Priority 1: Achieve steady state maintenance (meaning that the maintenance and renewal of the existing transport system is at a sufficient level to maintain the system in an adequate condition); • Priority 2: Address urban congestion; and • Priority 3: Maximise the value of the road network. In delivering on the steady state maintenance objective set out in SFILT, the Plan includes for: • Planned replacement programme for the bus fleet operated under Public Service Obligation ("PSO") contracts; • Tram refurbishment and asset renewal in the case of light rail; and • To the extent within the Authority' remit, support for the operation of the existing rail network within the GDA.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan (2016-2021)	€27 billion multi-annual Exchequer Capital Investment Plan, which is supported by a programme of capital investment in the wider State sector, and which over the period 2016 to 2021 will help to lay the foundations for continued growth in Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Capital Plan reflects the Government's commitment to supporting strong and sustainable economic growth and raising welfare and living standards for all. It includes allocations for new projects across a number of key areas and funding to ensure that the present stock of national infrastructure is refreshed and maintained. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 ("Energy Security Package")	It outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050.	The Energy Security Package includes a range of measures to implement this approach in the short and medium term by prioritising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced and Responsive Demand A Renewables-Led System More Resilient Systems Robust Risk Governance 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Our Sustainable Future: A framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012	A medium to long term framework for advancing sustainable development and the green economy in Ireland. It identifies spatial planning as a key challenge for sustainable development and sets a series of measures to address these challenges. It aims at improving synergies and identifying and tackling policy gaps, policy conflicts and trade-offs as part of a coherent, joined-up approach to policy making on sustainable development. Ireland's Framework for Sustainable Development timeframe is to 2020 to tie in with other national and international frameworks, but a longer-term horizon to 2050 is also taken where appropriate, to provide a framework for guiding and reporting on long-term broad development trends such as on climate change.	The objectives of the Framework are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prioritise policy areas and mechanisms where a sustainable development approach will add value and enable progress towards the strategy aims. Highlight and promote existing sustainable practices that, with the correct support, can underpin sustainable development more generally. Strengthen policy integration, coherence and co-ordination and bring a long term perspective to decision making. Set out governance mechanisms which ensure effective participation within government and across all stakeholders. Set out clear measures, responsibilities and timelines in an implementation plan. Set out how progress is to be measured and reported on through the use of indicators. Incorporate adequate and effective monitoring, learning and improvement into the Framework process. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020	<p>Outlines a policy for how a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. Sets out five key goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce overall travel demand. To maximise the efficiency of the transport network. To reduce reliance on fossil fuels. To reduce transport emissions. To improve accessibility to transport. 	<p>Others lower level aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Draft National Bioenergy Plan 2014 – 2020	<p>The Draft Bioenergy Plan vision: Bioenergy resources contributing to economic development and sustainable growth, generating jobs for citizens, supported by coherent policy, planning and regulation, and managed in an integrated manner.</p>	<p>Three high-level goals, of equal importance, based on the concept of sustainable development are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To harness the market opportunities presented by bioenergy in order to achieve economic development, growth and jobs. To increase awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits of developing bioenergy. To ensure that bioenergy developments do not adversely impact the environment and its living and non-living resources. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Draft Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework (DCCA) 2016	<p>Goal: To optimise the opportunities in Ireland for renewable electricity development on land at significant scale, to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, in accordance with European and Irish law, including Directive 2009/28/EC: On the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources.</p>	<p>Objective: To develop a Policy and Development Framework for renewable electricity generation on land to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, with particular focus on large scale projects for indigenous renewable electricity generation. This will, inter alia, provide guidance for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for the Transport Sector (DITAS) 2017-2030	<p>This Framework sets targets to achieve an appropriate level of alternative fuels infrastructure for transport, which is relative to national policy and Irish market needs. Non-infrastructure-based incentives to support the use of the infrastructure and the uptake of alternative fuels are also included within the scope of the Framework.</p>	<p>Targets for alternative fuel infrastructure include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFV forecasts Electricity targets Natural gas (CNG, LNG) targets Hydrogen targets Biofuels targets LPG targets Synthetic and paraffinic fuels targets 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010	<p>Outlines objectives and actions aimed at developing a strong cycle network in Ireland. Sets out 19 specific objectives, and details the 109 actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed.</p>	<p>Sets a target where 10% of all journeys will be made by bike by 2020. Proposes the planning, infrastructure, communication, education and stakeholder participations measures required to implement the initiative.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 to 2030	<p>This National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport represents the first step in communicating our longer-term national vision for decarbonising transport by 2050, the cornerstone of which is our ambition that by 2030 all new cars and vans sold in Ireland will be zero-emissions capable. By 2030 it is envisaged that the movement in Ireland to electrically-fuelled cars and commuter rail will be well underway, with natural gas and biofuels developing as major alternatives in the freight and bus sectors.</p>	<p>This policy set out to achieve five key goals in transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce overall travel demand Maximise the efficiency of the transport network Reduce reliance on fossil fuels Reduce transport emissions Improve accessibility to transport <p>These goals remain the cornerstone of transport policy and are fully aligned to the objectives of this National Policy Framework.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007 – 2020 (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White paper setting out a framework for delivering a sustainable energy future in Ireland. Outlines strategic Goals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security of Supply Sustainability of Energy Competitiveness of Energy Supply 	<p>The underpinning Strategic Goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that electricity supply consistently meets demand Ensuring the physical security and reliability of gas supplies to Ireland Enhancing the diversity of fuels used for power generation Delivering electricity and gas to homes and businesses over efficient, reliable and secure networks Creating a stable attractive environment for hydrocarbon exploration and production Being prepared for energy supply disruptions 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) (2010)	<p>The National Renewable Energy Action Plan sets out the Government's strategic approach and concrete measures to deliver on Ireland's 16% target under Directive 2009/28/EC. National Renewable Energy Action Plan.</p>	<p>The areas of intervention identified by the NREAP are heat, transport and electricity. Section 4 provides an overview of all policies and measures to promote the use of energy from renewable resources, these are: Biofuels Mineral Oil Tax Relief (MOTR) Schemes to increase production and use of biofuel; Greener Homes Scheme, financial facilitates to wider deployment of renewable-energy heating technologies in the residential sector; Grant support for the planting of perennial biomass crops (willow and miscanthus) – contributes to biomass needs of renewable energy sector; a policy that facilitates renewables by providing for grid connections outside the gate process for certain small, renewable, low carbon generators; new local and central authorities; etc.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland (2017 – 2020)	<p>Article 24 of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive requires Member States to submit a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) every three years. Ireland's 4th NEEAP was produced in early 2017.</p>	<p>It provides a comprehensive overview on the progress made towards the above targets the measures in place to ensure the targets are met the strategies and policies in place across the residential, commercial, transport and public sector.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Broadband Plan (2012)	<p>The National Broadband Plan is the Government's initiative to deliver high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland. This will be delivered through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear statement of Government policy on the delivery of High-Speed Broadband. Specific targets for the delivery and rollout of high-speed broadband and the speeds to be delivered. The strategy and interventions that will underpin the successful implementation of these targets. A series of specific complementary measures to promote implementation of Government policy in this area. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EirGrid's Grid25 Strategy and associated Grid25 Implementation Programme 2017-2022	<p>EirGrid's mission is to develop, maintain and operate a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient transmission system for Ireland; <i>"Our vision is of a grid developed to match future needs, so it can safely and reliably carry power all over the country to the major towns and cities and onwards to every home, farm and business where the electricity is consumed and so it can meet the needs of consumers and generators in a sustainable way."</i></p>	<p>Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to uprate the electricity transmission grid by 2025, continues to be implemented so as to increase the capacity of the grid, to satisfy future demand, and to help Ireland meet its target of 40 per cent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018)	<p>The objective of this Strategy is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all greenways users.</p> <p>It also aims to increase the number and geographical spread of greenways of scale and quality around the country over the next 10 years with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure; Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity; Greenways that provide a substantially segregated off road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do; and Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies, and Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice. 	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector	Construction 2020 sets out a package of measures agreed by the Government and is aimed at stimulating activity in the building industry. The Strategy aims both to increase the capacity of the sector to create and maintain jobs, and to deliver a sustainable sector, operating at an appropriate level. It seeks to learn the lessons of the past and to ensure that the right structures and mechanisms are in place so that they are not repeated.	This Strategy therefore addresses issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic approach to the provision of housing, based on real and measured needs, with mechanisms in place to detect and act when things are going wrong; Continuing improvement of the planning process, striking the right balance between current and future requirements; The availability of financing for viable and worthwhile projects; Access to mortgage finance on reasonable and sustainable terms; Ensuring we have the tools we need to monitor and regulate the sector in a way that underpins public confidence and worker safety; Ensuring a fit for purpose sector supported by a highly skilled workforce achieving high quality and standards; and Ensuring opportunities are provided to unemployed former construction workers to contribute to the recovery of the sector. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997)	The overall aim of this Strategy is to ensure that economy and society in Ireland can develop to their full potential within a well-protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community.	The Strategy addresses all areas of Government policy, and of economic and societal activity, which impact on the environment. It seeks to re-orientate policies as necessary to ensure that the strong growth Ireland enjoys and seeks to maintain will be environmentally sustainable.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 and National Landscape Character Assessment (pending preparation)	The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions. Landscape Strategy Vision: <i>"Our landscape reflects and embodies our cultural values and our shared natural heritage and contributes to the well-being of our society, environment and economy. We have an obligation to ourselves and to future generations to promote its sustainable protection, management and planning."</i>	The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into the approach to sustainable development; Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape; Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of the landscape; Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended)	To make provision in relation to the prevention, management and control of waste; to give effect to provisions of certain acts adopted by institutions of the European communities in respect of those matters; to amend the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992, and to repeal certain enactments and to provide for related matters.	The Waste Management Act contains a number of key legal obligations, including requirements for waste management planning, waste collection and movement, the authorisation of waste facilities, measures to reduce the production of waste and/or promote its recovery.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2021-2027	The EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (NWHMP) covers a six-year period from 2021 to 2027. This is the fourth National Hazardous Waste Management Plan and is made under Section 26 of the Waste Management Act 1996. It sets out the priorities to be pursued over the next six years and beyond to improve the prevention and management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous revised plan, and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous revised plan was published. The purpose of this plan is to protect the environment and human health in Ireland through best-practice management of hazardous wastes.	The Plan's objectives are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support and drive priority prevention actions by industry and the public to reduce the generation of hazardous waste; Support the identification of adequate and appropriate collection infrastructure for all hazardous wastes with a view to mitigating environmental and health impacts; Endorse the proximity principle such that hazardous wastes are treated as close to the point of production as possible – including within Ireland, taking into account the need for specialised installations for certain types of waste. Support effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous wastes in line with national policy priorities; Promotion of safe reuse and recycling pathways in support of the circular economy. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (2024)	The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, under the auspices of the County and City Management Association National Oversight Group, have co-ordinated the preparation of this plan which is the first National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy. This Plan sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024 to 2030.	The Plan seeks to influence sustainable consumption and prevent the generation of waste, improve the capture of materials to optimise circularity and enable compliance with policy and legislation.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Ministerial Guidelines such as Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Flood Risk Management Guidelines	The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public and cover a wide range of issues amongst others, architectural heritage, child care facilities, landscape, quarries and residential density.	The Minister issues statutory guidelines under Section 28 of the Act which planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are obliged to have regard to in the performance of their planning functions.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025	The Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025 is a roadmap for building a healthier Ireland.	It is based around four key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life to reduce health inequalities to protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing to create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
S.I. 232/2018 - European Union (National Emission Ceilings) Regulations 2018	The Regulations require the Minister to ensure that emissions of the specified pollutants are limited in accordance with the ceilings set out in Schedule 2. Annex III part 2 includes a set of measures to reduce emissions from agriculture.	The Regulations provide that the Environment Protection Agency shall prepare an annual inventory report of emissions of 5 specified pollutants (sulphur dioxide (SO ₂), nitrogen oxides (NO _x), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), ammonia (NH ₃), and fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}), and in certain years a report on projections of emissions. The Regulations also require the preparation of a national air pollution control programme Referring, among other things, to the 1979 UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution), and the establishment of a network to monitor the negative impacts of air pollution upon ecosystems based on a network of monitoring sites that is representative of Ireland's freshwater, natural and semi-natural habitats and forest ecosystem types. The Programme shall contain elements on the use of nitrogen fertilizer and soil protection. In fulfilling the requirements of subparagraph (b) the Minister shall ensure coordination with other monitoring programmes established pursuant to Union legislation including Directive 2008/50/EC, Directive 2000/60/EC and Council Directive 92/43/EEC and, if appropriate, the LRTAP Convention and, where appropriate, make use of data collected under those programmes.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Clean Air Strategy 2023	The Clean Air Strategy provides the strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote integrated measures across government policy that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air while delivering on wider national objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a National Strategy provides a policy framework by which Ireland can develop the necessary policies and measures to comply with new and emerging EU legislation. The Strategy should also help tackle climate change. The Strategy considers a wider range of national policies that are relevant to clean air policy such as transport, energy, home heating and agriculture. In any discussion relating to clean air policy, the issue of people's health is paramount and this is a theme of the Strategy. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Agri-Food Strategy 2030	The Food Vision 2030 Strategy is a new ten year Strategy for the Irish agri-food sector (taken to include primary agriculture, food and drink processing and manufacturing, fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing, forestry and forestry processing and the equine sector).	The Strategy consists of 22 Goals, grouped into four high-level "Missions" for the sector to work toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector Viable and Resilient Primary Producers with Enhanced Well-Being Food Which is Safe, Nutritious And Appealing, Trusted And Valued at Home and Abroad An Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology And Talent 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Agricultural Schemes, including: Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS), Agri-Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS), Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) and Results-based Environment-Agri Pilot Scheme (REAP)	Agri-environmental funding schemes aimed at rural development for the environmental enhancement and protection. The REPS evolved to AEOS 1, 2 and 3 and currently the Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment (GLAS) Scheme is in place. The recently introduced REAP scheme in Ireland is a two year scheme in place for 2021 and 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish best practice farming methods and production methods in order to protect landscapes and maximise conservation. Protect biodiversity, endangered species of flora and fauna and wildlife habitats. Ensure food is produced with the highest regard to the environment. Implement nutrient management plans and grassland management plans. Protect and maintain water bodies, wetlands and cultural heritage. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 (as amended)	The National Rural Development Programme, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a national programme based on the EU framework for rural development and prioritises improving the competitiveness of agriculture, improving the environment and improving the quality of life in rural areas.	At a more detailed level, the programme also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports structural change at farm level including training young farmers and encouraging early retirement, support for restructuring, development and innovation; • Aims to improve the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and • Aims to improve quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity through the implementation of local development strategies such as non-agricultural activities 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025	The vision of this policy is for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. Our Rural Future represents the Irish Government's blueprint for a post-COVID-19 recovery and development of rural Ireland over the next 5 years. It provides the framework to achieve the vision of transforming the quality of life and opportunity for people living in rural areas.	A set of policy measures aim to deliver wellbeing for all, and to support an aligned policy approach to rural development. It seeks to promote enhanced community participation, to prepare rural areas for technological, demographic and environmental change, and to address the diversity of challenges and opportunities facing rural areas, informed by analysis, data, and consultation.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Food Wise 2025 (DAFM)	Food Wise 2025 sets out a ten-year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further.	Food Wise 2025 identifies ambitious and challenging growth projections for the industry over the next ten years including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% increase in exports to €19 billion. • 70% increase in value added to €13 billion. • 60% increase in primary production to €10 billion. • The creation of 23,000 additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high-end value-added product development. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021	The Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 sets out actions that the Tourism Leadership Group has identified as priorities to be progressed until 2021 in order to maintain sustainable growth in overseas tourism revenue and employment. Each action involves specific tourism stakeholders, both in the public and private sectors, all of whom we expect to proactively work towards the completion of actions within the specified timeframe.	The Plan contains 27 actions focusing on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Context • Marketing Ireland as a Visitor Destination • Enhancing the Visitor Experience • Research in the Irish Tourism Sector • Supporting Local Communities in Tourism • Wider Government Policy • International Context • Co-ordination Structures 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Policy Statement: People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025	Growing Tourism to 2025 is a policy framework for the development of tourism within the Country. The main goal of this policy statement is to have a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work.	The Tourism Policy Statement sets three headline targets to be achieved by 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas tourism revenue of €5 billion per year • net of inflation excluding carrier receipts; • 250,000 people employed in tourism; and • 10 million overseas visitors to Ireland per year. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan 2016-2020	The Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan provides a strategic framework for the integration of built, natural and cultural heritage into the future management of waterways. The overarching aim of the Plan is to: <i>"Identify and protect the unique waterways heritage and promote its sustainable use for the enjoyment of this and future generations"</i> .	Four objectives of the Plan include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Fostering partnerships to continue building waterway heritage knowledge through storing information, undertaking research and developing best practice. • Objective 2: Promoting awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of our waterway heritage with a focus on community engagement. • Objective 3: Promoting the integrated management, conservation, protection and sustainable use of the inland navigable waterway asset. • Objective 4: To develop Waterways Ireland as a heritage organisation committed to achieving the aim of this plan. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Waterways Ireland "Reimagining Our Waterways" 10-Year Plan 2023	10-Year Plan is a visionary roadmap for reimagining historical waterways, greenways and blueways. Waterways Ireland's Vision is to be recognised as having enabled the creation of inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences, through conservation and sustainable development for the benefit of all.	At the core of our 10-year plan is set of six strategic priorities. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation Development & Governance • Sustainable Funding Model • Asset Portfolio Management • Participation and Reputation • Sustainable Development • Climate Action, Environment and Heritage 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Development and Innovation – A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022, (Fáilte Ireland, 2016)	This strategy sets out the framework and mechanism for the delivery of investment to cities, towns, villages, communities and businesses across the country. It identifies priorities to support innovation in the sector to retain and grow the country's competitiveness in the marketplace. Its ultimate aim is to strengthen the appeal of Ireland for international visitors.	The objectives of the Tourism Development and Innovation Strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To successfully and consistently deliver a world class visitor experience; • To support a tourism sector that is profitable and achieves sustainable levels of growth and delivers jobs; • To facilitate communities to play an enhanced role in developing tourism in their locality, thereby strengthening and enriching local communities; and • To recognise, value and enhance Ireland's natural environment as the cornerstone of Irish tourism. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998	The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that each Housing Authority adopts a Traveller Accommodation Programme for its functional area.	This Act amended and extended the Housing Acts, 1966 to 1997, the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 1963 to 1998, the Local Government Act, 1991, to make provision for the accommodation needs of travellers, to provide for the appointment of a national traveller accommodation consultative committee and local traveller accommodation consultative committees and to provide for related matters.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024)	The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They are accompanied by a companion non-statutory Design Manual that illustrates best practice examples of how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied.	The Guidelines build on and update previous guidance to take account of current Government policy and economic, social and environmental considerations. There is a renewed focus in the Guidelines on the renewal of existing settlements and on the interaction between residential density, housing standards and quality urban design and placemaking to support sustainable and compact growth.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)	The Guidelines have five key policy objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that retail development is plan-led; • Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development; • Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations; • Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy; and • Delivering quality urban design outcomes. 	The aim of the Guidelines is to ensure that the planning system continues to play a key role in supporting competitiveness in the retail sector for the benefit of the consumer in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. In addition, the planning system must promote and support the vitality and viability of city and town centres thereby contributing to a high standard of urban design and encouraging a greater use of sustainable transport.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Architectural Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)	Part 1 of these guidelines includes the criteria to be applied when selecting proposed protected structures for inclusion in the RPS. It also offers guidance to planning authorities on issuing a declaration on a protected structure and on determining planning applications in relation to a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of a building within an ACA.	Part 2 contains supplementary detailed guidance to support planning authorities in their role to protect the architectural heritage when a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of a building within an ACA is the subject of development proposals and when a declaration is sought in relation to a protected structure.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027	The primary objective of the strategy which is to facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community.	This Strategy will build on the progress made under the previous strategy, The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011 – 2016 (extended to 2021). The Strategy promotes a whole of community approach to housing for disabled people when planning the provision of housing, including infrastructure, transport, education, and employment.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Derelict Sites Act (1990)	An Act to make provision with respect to land to prevent it being or becoming a derelict site, to enable Local Authorities to require the taking of measures on derelict sites by the owners or occupiers and, in certain circumstances, to acquire derelict sites compulsorily, to establish registers of derelict sites, to enable the minister to give directions in relation to derelict sites, to provide for a derelict sites levy and to provide for other matters connected with the aforesaid and to repeal the Derelict Sites Act 1961.	Under the Act, local authorities can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecute owners who do not comply with notices served • Make compulsory land purchases • Carry out necessary work themselves and charge the owners for the cost All local authorities must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain derelict sites register • Make the register available for public inspection - It can remove an entry from the Register when it is satisfied that improvement works have been carried out on the derelict site. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended)	An Act to make provision with respect to land in areas in which housing is required and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant, to establish a register of vacant sites in those areas, to provide for vacant sites levy, to amend the Derelict Sites Act 1990, to amend Parts II, III and V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, to amend the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and to provide for related matters.	This Revised Act is an administrative consolidation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. It is prepared by the Law Reform Commission in accordance with its function under the Law Reform Commission Act 1975 (3/1975) to keep the law under review and to undertake revision and consolidation of statute law.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland	The government's overall objective is that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to purchase or rent at an affordable price • built to a high standard and in the right place • offering a high quality of life 	The policy has four pathways to achieving housing for all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting home ownership and increasing affordability • eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion • increasing new housing supply • addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Town Centre First Policy (2022)	The Town Centre First Policy is a major cross-government policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into town centres. It advocates for a holistic, place-based approach to sustainable rural development. The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the business, service, social and. cultural.	The Policy contains 33 actions which will give towns the tools and resources they need to become more viable and attractive places in which to live, work, socialise and run a business. This will focus on charting the future direction of their towns, address issues of vacancy and dereliction and add vibrancy to the town centre.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Regional/ County/Local Level			
Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031	The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Northern and Western Region in order to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework.	The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy includes provisions for its 12 constituent local authorities: Fingal County Council; Dublin City Council; South Dublin County Council; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council; Louth County Council; Kildare County Council; Meath County Council; Wicklow County Council; Longford County Council; Laois County Council; Offaly County Council; and Westmeath County Council.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024	The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035, which established an overall framework for transport investment over the next two decades and was subject to full SEA and Stage 2 AA, is a key policy shaping the six-year Integrated Infrastructure Plan. The priorities in the Integrated Infrastructure Plan align with the objectives and priorities set out in the Transport Strategy, focused on improving public and sustainable transport.	The Implementation Plan identifies investment proposals for a number of areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus; • Light Rail; • Heavy Rail; • Integration Measures and Sustainable Transport Investment; • Integrated Service Plan; and • Integration and Accessibility. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Transport Strategy 2022-2042	This Strategy sets out how transport will be developed across the Greater Dublin Area, covering Dublin, Meath, Wicklow and Kildare. Vision Statement: <i>"The GDA by 2022 is an economically vibrant, active and sustainable international Gateway Region, with strong connectivity across the GDA Region, nationally and worldwide; a region which fosters communities living in attractive, accessible places well supported by community infrastructure and enjoying high quality leisure facilities; and promotes and protects across the GDA green corridors, active agricultural lands and protected natural areas."</i>	Core principles deriving from the strategic vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dublin as the capital city of Ireland and a major European centre shall grow and progress, competing with other cities in the EU, and serving a wide range of international, national, regional and local needs. • The Dublin and Mid-East Regions will be attractive, vibrant locations for industry, commerce, recreation and tourism and will be a major focus for economic growth within the Country. • The GDA, through its ports and airport connections will continue to be the most important entry/exit point for the country as a whole, and as a Gateway between the European Union and the rest of the World. Access to and through the GDA will continue to be a matter of national importance. • Development in the GDA shall be directly related to investment in integrated high-quality public transport services and focused on compact urban form. • Development within the existing urban footprint of the Metropolitan Area will be consolidated to achieve a more compact urban form • Development in the Hinterland Area will be focused on the high-quality integrated growth and consolidation of development in key identified towns, separated from each other by extensive areas of strategic green belt land devoted to agriculture and similar uses 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the quality of waters covered by the plan is maintained. • Maintain and improve the quantity and quality of water included in the Plan scope. 	Aims to identify and determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Urban Cycle Network at the Primary, Secondary and Feeder level. • The Inter-Urban Cycle Network linking the relevant sections of the Urban Network including the elements of the National Cycle Network within the Greater Dublin Area including linkages to key transport locations outside of urban areas such as airports and ports. • The Green Route Network being cycle routes for development of tourist, recreational and leisure purposes. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs	Management planning for nature conservation sites has a number of aims. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and evaluate the features of interest for a site • To set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest • To describe the site and its management • To identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site • To set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve the objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites within the Natura 2000 network) have to be set for the habitats and species for which the sites are selected. • These objectives are used when carrying out appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact on these sites. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Groundwater Protection Schemes	A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.	A Groundwater Protection Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater, and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment-based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), including the Wicklow LECP 2024-2029	The overarching vision for each LECP is: "to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities."	The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Land Use Plans, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those in force in County Wicklow (including the overarching Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, as varied); • Emerging Land Use Plans and associated variations in County Wicklow (including the Draft Wicklow-Town Rathnew Local Area Plan and Proposed Variations No. 2 and No. 3 to the County Development Plan); and • Those in force and emerging in other adjoining planning authorities (including development plans for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, South Dublin, Kildare, Carlow, and Wexford). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline planning objectives for land use development. • Strategic framework for planning and sustainable development including those set out in National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. • Set out the policies and proposals to guide development in the specific Local Authority area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify future infrastructure, development and zoning required. • Protect and enhances amenities and environment. • Guide planning authority in assessing proposals. • Aim to guide development in the area and the amount of nature of the planned development. • Aim to promote sustainable development. Provide for economic development and protect natural environmental, heritage. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015 (and the upcoming County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030)	<p>Aims to protect, conserve, enhance and restore heritage, biodiversity and ecosystem services across all spectrums.</p> <p>The Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015 describes the biodiversity of County Wicklow and sets out a strategy for increasing of understanding and appreciation of the biodiversity along with measures for enhancing the protection of its valuable resource.</p>	<p>Plan's objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathering information on the biodiversity resource • managing the resource • education and awareness • cooperation to achieve objectives <p>The actions in the Plan continue to be implemented beyond its five-year timescale as part of ongoing implementation of the County Wicklow Heritage Plan.</p>	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
County Wicklow Character Assessment and Landscape Character Assessments in adjoining local authorities	Characterises the geographical dimension of the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the quality, value, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape area. • Guides strategies and guidelines for the future development of the landscape. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Wicklow County Council Tree Management Policy	This policy sets out a vision to protect and care for existing trees in its care, promote better management of trees and support better community engagement in the county. It aims to achieve an increase in tree cover for the county in both rural and urban environments. The Policy has been produced to provide better understanding of our tree resources in County Wicklow and the role Wicklow County Council plays in managing and developing these resources. The aim of the policy is to provide a better approach to care and maintenance of trees under public ownership, to increase tree cover in the county and to engage public participation in caring for trees.	The policy will assist in responding to the Climate and Biodiversity emergency by focusing on the role trees play in climate mitigation and adaptation as well as building resilience in biodiversity.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2017-2022 (and the upcoming County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2024-2029)	The Plan's overarching aim is 'Contributing towards quality of life'.	The Plan details a number of actions and initiatives aimed at ensuring that heritage continues to make a significant contribution to quality of life and remains an important part of the social and cultural infrastructure of the County.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Dublin Agglomeration Environmental Noise Action Plan 2024-2028	<p>Noise Action Plans are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, Statutory Instrument 140 of 2006. These Regulations give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. This Directive sets out a process for managing environmental noise in a consistent manner across the EU and the Noise Regulations set out the approach to meeting the requirements of the Directive in Ireland.</p> <p>The main purpose of Noise Action Plans is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects and the measures which may be considered to address noise problems • Address strategic noise issues by requiring competent authorities to draw up action plans to manage noise issues and their effects • Reduce noise, where possible, and maintain the environmental acoustic quality where it is good. 	<p>The Dublin Agglomeration Noise Action Plan 2024 – 2028 is a combined plan for the agglomeration of Dublin covering six Action Planning Authorities (APAs) including Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, Kildare County Council and Wicklow County Council. The Plan is structured in two parts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections 1 to 9 – sections covering overarching principles, policy, methodologies etc with all sections relevant to all APAs. • Sections 10 to 15 – separate sections for each agglomeration APA which includes specifics on their administrative area such as details of Priority Important Areas (PIAs), candidate Quiet Areas (CQAs) and measures. Section 10 is the relevant section for Dublin City Council. 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Draft Wicklow Noise Action Plan 2024-2028	Wicklow County Council are preparing a Noise Action Plan to cover noise for County Wicklow (outside the Dublin agglomeration). The Noise Action Plan has been informed by and is based on the Strategic Noise Maps which were prepared in 2022 and which cover transport (road and rail) and industry related environmental noise sources.	The Noise Action Plan is required under the Environmental Noise Directive ("END") (2002/49/EC) which was transported into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 549/2018) and the European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 663/2021). The Regulations require Strategic Noise Maps and Noise Action Plans to be made or revised every five years.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Wicklow County Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2029	<p>The Plan is developed around 5 thematic areas for actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance and Leadership 2. Built Environment and Transport 3. Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure 4. Communities: Resilience and Transition 5. Sustainability and Resource Management 	<p>The Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 strategic goals are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt climate focused governance, provide leadership, and build partnerships for climate action. 2. Achieve carbon emissions reduction of 51% and energy efficiency improvement of 50% in our operations by 2030, creating a pathway to net zero by 2050. 3. Support decarbonisation of transport and modal shift from cars to active travel and public transport. 4. Deliver on climate adaptation, biodiversity resilience and enhanced capacity for our environment to adapt to changing conditions. 5. Mobilise and empower climate action in local communities. 6. Achieve a 'just transition' particularly for communities that may be economically disadvantaged by decarbonising projects or impacted by climate change. 7. Mobilise climate action in enterprise and agriculture supporting the transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy. 8. Test the scope and scale of decarbonisation in Arklow with the aim of creating a vibrant town which has low carbon living at its core 	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2020-2025	The County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy provides a blueprint for realising the potential of Wicklow's outdoor recreation assets in a manner which prioritises environmental sustainability.	The Strategy identifies five outdoor recreations hubs/clusters – Glendalough, Rathdrum, Blessington/Baltinglass, Tinahely/Shillelagh and East Coast maritime. Objectives identified include: Expansion of the trails network, preparation of an outdoor recreation transport plan and increase awareness of environmental and cultural responsibilities	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Blessington Town Centre First Plan	The main product of the Plan is the development of Objectives and Projects for the enhancement and revitalisation of the town which will help to frame planning policy for Blessington Town Centre going forward and can be utilised by the community in the future. These Objectives and Projects seek to address the broad issues and desires raised during the consultation process, and come together to inform this community driven vision for the town.	The objectives are supported by achievable, measurable, and clear actions that have been identified, to steer forward the objectives and vision of the Plan. These actions serve as a benchmark to identify the progress of enacting the Plan and its goals, as well as providing guidelines for proceeding on the journey of revitalising the town centre. They also seek to address targeted topics and issues brought up and discussed during the public consultation and data collection process. Each objective and opportunity identified in the Plan are informed by and assessed against the relevant policy and guidelines.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Fáilte Ireland Tourism plans and strategies, including those relating to the Ireland's Ancient East and Dublin including Destination Experience Development Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies	Fáilte Ireland's work includes preparing various plans and strategies for brands and initiatives. These plans are subject to their own environmental assessment processes and any project arising is required to be consistent with and conform with the provisions of all adopted/approved Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including provisions for the protection and management of the environment.	Some of Fáilte Ireland's plans and strategies include various projects relating to land use and infrastructural development, including those relating to development of land or on land and the carrying out of land use activities. Many of these projects exist already while some are not currently in existence. The Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes that provide for different projects undergo a variety of environmental assessments. These assessments ensure that environmental effects are considered, including: those arising from new and intensified uses and activities; and those arising from various sectors such as tourism.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Various existing, planned and emerging projects provided for by the above plans and programmes	These projects have been provided for by higher-level plans and programmes.	These projects will contribute towards the development of the area to which the Plan relates and/or wider area and will contribute towards environmental protection and management.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.