

COUNTY KILDARE DRAFT HERITAGE PLAN 2026-2031

Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Screening

Prepared for:

Kildare County Council



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Kildare County Council



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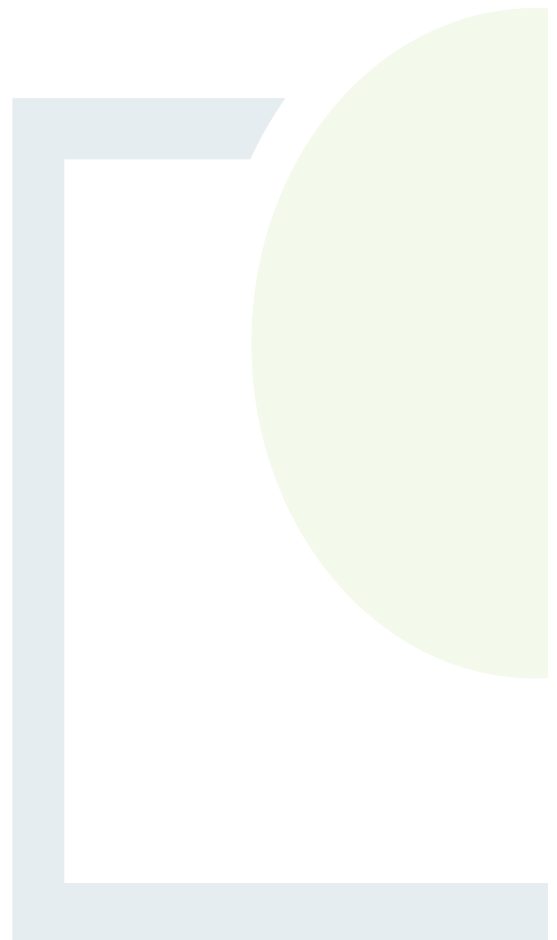
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Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Screening for the County Kildare Draft Heritage Plan 2026-2031

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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this Report to Inform AA Screening to Kildare County Council for their Local Authority Heritage Plan.

This project has been funded by Kildare County Council and the Heritage Council. The Local Authority Heritage Officer Programme is delivered in partnership with the Heritage Council.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Kildare County Council (KCC) is in the process of preparing a Local Authority Heritage Plan ('the Draft Plan') for its functional area (the Plan Area or County Kildare) for the years 2026-2031. The aim of the Draft Plan is to safeguard heritage within the county for present and future generations.

KCC appointed Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) to complete reports to inform SEA and AA Screenings of the Draft Plan.

This report presents an examination of whether the Draft Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

1.2 Background to Local Authority Heritage Plans

A Local Authority Heritage Plan must be prepared in accordance with The Heritage Council's Local Authority Heritage Plan Guidelines (2024)¹. These guidelines provide best practice guidance to local authorities on preparing and implementing heritage conservation actions within their functional area. These guidelines note that a Heritage Plan is '*a city or county-wide strategy for the identification, protection, conservation, management, enhancement and interpretation of the built, natural and cultural heritage led by the local authority.*'

A Heritage Plan offers the opportunity to identify heritage issues and needs at city or county-wide level, and to address them locally, within a regional and national framework. The Plan should be delivered by a number of groups working in partnership (i.e., the Heritage Forum for the relevant Local Authority), and should identify a vision for the heritage of the Plan Area and priorities for action, over a specified period, and should include a mechanism for monitoring impacts, review and evaluation.

While the aim of a heritage plan is specific to each local authority, the Plan will overall aim to record, conserve, promote local built, natural and cultural heritage and to increase awareness, appreciation and the enjoyment of the heritage resources for the wider community.

¹ Available at: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/images/Local-Authority-Heritage-Plan-Guidelines.pdf>. (Accessed October 2025).



1.3 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

"6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The competent authority must carry out a screening for appropriate assessment to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed plan, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site. If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site, an appropriate assessment of its implications for the European Site(s) in view of the Site's conservation objectives must be carried out.

The provisions of Article 6(3) do not apply where the proposed plan or project is 'connected with or necessary to the management of the site'. In this case, the plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

1.4 Guidance

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin (2009, updated 2010);
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission 2013;
- Scottish Natural Heritage. (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Guidance.
- Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2019). Brussels, (2019/C 33/01). OJ C 33, 25.1.2019.



- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (European Commission, 2002). This document was updated by Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Commission Notice (2021) Brussels, 28.9.2021 C (2021) 6913 final;
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator (2021).
- Atkinson, S., Magee, M., Moorkens, E.A. & Heavey, M. (2024). Guidance on Assessment and Construction Management in Margaritifera Catchments in Ireland. <https://e-mussels.eu/europe/conservation-guidelines>

1.5 Assessment Process and Approach

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a proposed plan or project on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model. In order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

- Source(s) – e.g., pollutant run-off, noise, removal of vegetation etc.;
- Pathway(s) – functional link, or ecological pathway e.g., groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and,
- Receptor(s) –the qualifying habitats and species of European sites and ecological resources supporting those habitats/species.

In the context of this report, a source is any identifiable element of the proposed plan that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)² for an SAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)³ for an SPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term Qualifying Interests also applies to SCIs (and is used in this document for simplicity). A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor.

The assessment commences with a description of the plan, and the associated sources for impacts to the receiving environment. The type of impacts that are likely due to the plan (Source) are identified having regard to the spatial and temporal scale of the plan, resource requirements and likely emissions. These sources are then used to define the zone of influence (Zoi) of the plan.

² SACs are areas designated under the Habitats Directive to conserve habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and plant and animal species listed in Annex II. Collectively these are referred to as the 'Qualifying Interests' or 'QIs' of the SAC.

³ SPAs are sites classified under the Birds Directive to protect rare or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I to the Directive as well as regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands. Wetland habitats that support internationally important populations of migratory birds may be coastal or inland. Collectively, these species and habitats are referred to as the 'Special Conservation Interests' of the SPA.



The European Commission Notice (2021) on the 'Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', states that in identifying European sites (Natural 2000 sites), which may be affected by a plan or project, the following should be identified:

- Any European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;
- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project. European sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the plan project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g., water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;
- European sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project.

The zone of influence of a plan is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have potential effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. The OPR (2021) practice note states that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km). Section 3.3 sets out the detailed rationale for the identification of relevant European sites within the ZoI based on the sources of impacts arising from the proposed plan. Subsequently, an assessment is undertaken with respect to potential connectivity (Pathways) to European Sites and their qualifying interests/special conservation interests are identified.

The potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects is also assessed having regard to the identified impacts of the proposed plan along the ecological pathways identified to European sites.

The likelihood of significant effects on the European Sites within the ZoI is examined having regard to the sensitivity of each European site with pathways for impacts associated with the proposed plan on its own and in combination with other plans and projects.

Having regard to the European Commission Communication on the Precautionary Principle (European Commission, 2021) the:

“absence of scientific evidence on the significant negative effect of an action cannot be used as justification for approval of this action. When applied to Article 6(3) procedure, the precautionary principle implies that the absence of a negative effect on Natura 2000 sites has to be demonstrated before a plan or project can be authorised. In other words, if there is a lack of certainty as to whether there will be any negative effects, then the plan or project cannot be approved.”

Where significant effects are determined to be likely, or where there is uncertainty regarding the likelihood of significant effects, the plan will be required under law to be subjected to Appropriate Assessment.



2. DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY KILDARE DRAFT HERITAGE PLAN 2026-2031

2.1 County Kildare Draft Heritage Plan 2026-2031

The aim of the Draft Plan is to *“to recognise the value and opportunity of Kildare’s unique heritage resource and to manage, conserve and protect it, in partnership for present and future generations.”*

The following Strategic Objectives are defined in the Draft Plan:

- Strategic Heritage Objective 1: Increase understanding of Kildare’s heritage through awareness, education and training.
- Strategic Heritage Objective 2: Promote best practice in the conservation and management of County Kildare’s heritage resource.
- Strategic Heritage Objective 3: Collate and publish heritage data and information to a wide audience, undertake surveys & research to inform policy.
- Strategic Heritage Objective 4: Promote heritage as a resource that contributes to quality of life, cultural and economic development in County Kildare.
- Strategic Heritage Objective 5: Foster stewardship and involvement in heritage with the wider community of Kildare.

A series of Actions have been defined in the Draft Plan under each Strategic Objective. The higher-level Objectives are broader in scope, whilst the Actions underpinning the Objectives are more defined and measurable. These are presented in Table 2-1.



Table 2-1: Draft Plan Objectives and corresponding Actions

Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action
Strategic Heritage Objective 1: Increase understanding of Kildare’s heritage through awareness, education and training.	1.	Support community groups, the Tidy Towns Network and NGOs in the development of community-led pilot projects supported by built heritage conservation professionals which would act as best practice conservation models.
	2.	Continue to support the nomination for Dún Ailinne, Kilcullen, as a candidate for the "Royal Sites of Ireland" UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.
	3.	Develop the KCC Heritage Hub- an accessible online resource for built, natural and cultural heritage matters in the county.
	4.	Use available online media platforms and other new technology (such as 3D Modelling) to bring heritage to new audiences.
	5.	Inform the network of heritage groups and NGOs in the county through the Public Participation Network (PPN).
	6.	Continue to support the involvement of all four Kildare towns in the Irish Walled Towns Network.
	7.	Resource local heritage initiatives through the KCC Community Heritage Grant Scheme.
	8.	Develop a rolling heritage education awareness programme based on an audit of current heritage education programmes to include seminars, walks, exhibitions and workshops and to increase participation in annual events such as Biodiversity Week, Heritage Week and Culture Night.
	9.	Increase awareness of Kildare’s significant military heritage, working with the Dept. of Defence and other stakeholders.
	10.	Work in partnership with relevant agencies/organisations, local voluntary groups and the public to protect and promote waterways heritage in Kildare.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	
	11.	Establish links with the owners of historic houses and other heritage sites to promote those open to the public during National Heritage Week.	
	12.	Promote and support training for relevant Citizen Science projects.	
	13.	Explore the designation of significant trees or groups of trees suitable for Tree Preservation Orders as resources allow.	
	14.	Continue to support the Geological Survey Ireland to identify and protect the Geological Sites of Importance in the county.	
	15.	Support the Landscape Character Assessment and its integration into the County Development Plan.	
	16.	Support the preparation of a County Kildare Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy to inform the County Development Plan.	
	17.	Support heritage-related actions in the Kildare County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 including:	
		a.	N1- Develop Green Infrastructure Plan
		b.	N12- Support the Heritage in Schools programme
	18.	c.	N17-Engage with Bord na Móna to explore the appropriate and sensitive diversification of former cutaway peatlands
18.		Organise an annual/biennial heritage seminar for all interested parties to increase awareness of heritage in the county.	
19.		Develop communication and promotional strategy for Kildare's heritage which maximises the existing structures, such as local and online media, community and business networks.	
Strategic Heritage Objective 2: Promote best practice in the conservation and management of	20.	Assist community groups and property owners/operators to avail of funding and advice from all relevant sources for the conservation and management of heritage sites.	



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action
County Kildare's heritage resource.	21.	Develop Feighcullen Woodland Creation on Public Land project subject to project level environmental assessment and to progress additional locations for similar projects across other municipal districts, where possible and feasible.
	22.	Seek to leverage funding for a County Archaeologist subject to resources.
	23.	Collaborate with KCC Architectural Conservation Officer to prepare a Buildings at Risk Register for heritage buildings in the county.
	24.	Update the county Kildare Thatched Cottage Survey.
	25.	Continue to update & maintain the Record of Protected Structures, ensuring that structures of significant historic, architectural, cultural, scientific and technical interest in the county are included.
	26.	Support and collaborate the implementation of the County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031.
	27.	Work with all stakeholders to implement the Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan which seeks to protect and promote archaeological, cultural, natural and built heritage of this significant heritage resource. It is envisaged that the delivery of projects contained in the CPMP will require separate Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA).
	28.	Facilitate traditional skills workshops in association with relevant bodies.
	29.	Develop links with other Local Authorities and other public bodies to assess opportunities for potential shared heritage projects.
	30.	Support preparation of a feasibility study to determine viability of developing of a County Museum.
31.	Support communities in the recording of oral histories. Where possible, compile oral histories with other relevant media such as photographs and written materials.	



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action
	32.	Promote best practice in the management, conservation, and recording of historic graveyards and develop a conservation management programme for historic graveyards in the care of KCC with the County Kildare Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and graveyard maintenance groups across the county.
	33.	Support delivery of objective in County Development Plan to develop a National Peatlands Park, including identification of potential sites and development of strategy with landowners and other stakeholders.
	34.	Prioritise the protection of heritage in the sustainable development of greenways, blueways and peatways in the county.
Strategic Heritage Objective 3: Collate and publish heritage data and information to a wide audience, undertake surveys & research to inform policy.	35.	Compile a list in collaboration with Architectural Conservation Officer of all council-owned built heritage sites and develop conservation/management strategies for these structures as resources permit.
	36.	Continue to promote citizen science recording projects such as the Meitheal Logainm Minor Placenames Project, National Biodiversity Data Centre and the National Benchmark Survey to expand datasets of local heritage knowledge.
	37.	Publish surveys and reports prepared as actions of the Heritage Plan.
	38.	Establish and maintain an archive of reports on archaeological sites and finds.
	39.	Encourage appropriate access to National Monuments and publicly owned archaeological monuments in the county and facilitate partnerships to provide appropriately managed access to these sites.
	40.	Advise as required on the naming of new estates in Kildare to accurately reflect the cultural heritage of the county.
	41.	Support audit of natural heritage sites in the ownership of KCC and implementation of conservation/management strategies for these sites.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action
	42.	Commission a recording project of local traditional music.
	43.	Expand Heritage GIS Databases by gathering and displaying further audits on heritage in the county in conjunction with KCC GIS team.
	44.	Ensure that the objectives of the Heritage Plan are incorporated into all statutory plans where appropriate.
Strategic Heritage Objective 4: Promote heritage as a resource that contributes to quality of life, cultural and economic development in County Kildare.	45.	Liaise with heritage and tourism organisations and other relevant partners to promote the development of promotional material for publicly accessible heritage sites and routes in the county.
	46.	Continue to support the network of Kildare Museums and Heritage Centres.
	47.	Support and provide guidance for the sensitive development of themed heritage access trails on existing established routes in the county e.g. geology, natural heritage, pilgrimages and ancient roadways, canal trails and military heritage. Possible route concepts include:
		Túras Columbanus
		Industrial heritage trails (including canals and peatlands)
		St. Brigid's Way
	48.	Consider provision of on-site information for Kildare's heritage sites through the use of technology such as QR codes or similar.
	49.	Prepare an audit of existing heritage-related directional signage and seek to improve the provision and quality of directional signage. Develop design standardisation for heritage signage in the county where possible.
50.	Collate materials and publish findings relating to Kildare's sporting heritage, including the equine heritage of Kildare as "Thoroughbred Country".	
51.	Support the work of Kildare's Local Studies and Archives team.	



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action
	52.	Support development of a schools project based on 1930's Folklore Commission Schools Collection.
Strategic Heritage Objective 5: Foster stewardship and involvement in heritage with the wider community of Kildare.	53.	Work with Creative Ireland and local arts groups to promote Kildare's cultural heritage.
	54.	Promote supports for community heritage groups, including the Adopt a Monument Scheme, as well as promoting national and local grant schemes.
	55.	Support existing national education programmes such as the Heritage in Schools Programme and develop a scheme to bring schools and community groups to heritage sites in the county.
	56.	Promote accessible and inclusive heritage events and services.
	57.	Develop strategic links with third level institutions to encourage research and mapping of Kildare's heritage and other relevant projects.



2.2 Relationship with other Relevant Plans and Programmes

The Plan sits within a hierarchy of plans and has been informed by and is consistent with the aims and objectives of other plans, programmes and strategies developed at national, regional and local levels. These include, but National Level

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018).
- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework First Revision (2025).
- Heritage Ireland 2030: A Framework for Heritage (2022).
- Climate Action Plan (2025)
- National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030
- All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025
- Draft Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2025)
- Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018-2020
- The National Peatlands Strategy 2015-2025

Regional and Local Level

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly 2019 - 2031.
- The Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029.
- The Kildare Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029.
- County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031 (Draft)

2.2.1 Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is Ireland's National Heritage Plan, and establishes a framework for the understanding and enjoyment of heritage for the next decade under the following three themes:

- National Leadership and Heritage
- Heritage Partnerships
- Communities and Heritage.

A series of objectives under each theme are detailed in the plan.

Heritage Ireland 2030 sets out a framework for action across government, local authorities, communities, and individuals. It promotes stronger leadership, better coordination, and more meaningful public engagement, while also supporting innovation, education, and sustainable development. The Plan recognises that local authorities have a critical role in all aspects of the protection and promotion of heritage, as enablers of community action, managers of land, providers of infrastructure, owners of land and monuments and as regulatory authorities in relation to planning and economic development.



It is an objective of Heritage Ireland 2030 to enhance support for local authorities in their active role of heritage management, conservation and community engagement, and to *“Continue the preparation and implementation of City or County Heritage plans and resource their implementation with a view to maximising their effectiveness and assistance in the delivery of Heritage Ireland 2030”*⁴.

⁴ Action 148 of the Heritage Ireland 2030



3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction to Screening

This section of the report examines if the Plan is likely to have a significant effect upon European Sites, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase is progressed in the following stages. A series of questions are asked during the Screening Stage of the AA process in order to determine:

- Whether the plan or project introduces any sources of environmental or ecological impact.
- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.

Whether the plan or project will have a likely significant effect on a European Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential effects.

Plans are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no sources of environmental impact associated with a plan or project.
- Where there are no pathways such as hydrological links between a plan or project area, and relevant European sites
- Where a European site is located at a distance from the plan or project area such that effects are not foreseen;
- Where known threats or vulnerabilities at a European site cannot be linked to potential effects that may arise from a plan or project.

3.2 Potential Interactions of the Proposed Plan on the Receiving Environment

Having regard to the European Commission (2021) guidance document and the OPR (2021) practice note, the potential impacts of the Draft Plan Actions on the receiving environment at source are considered based (in Table 3-1) on the following criteria:

- Habitat destruction/fragmentation/deterioration;
- Surface water run-off carrying suspended silt and contaminants, into local watercourses;
- Changes to groundwater quality, yield and/or flow paths associated with the proposed project;
- Plan related activities (noise, vibration, lighting, human presence, structures, etc) leading to disturbance / displacement of species;
- Plan related activities leading to a reduction in species populations / density;
- Air pollution due to dust and other airborne emissions; and
- Disturbance and potential spread of invasive species.

These impacts are further examined in defining the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the plan to identify likely significant effects through the Source-Pathway-Receptor assessment (See Section 3.3).



Table 3-1: Identification of sources arising from the Proposed Plan that have potential for interactions with the receiving environment

Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
<p>Strategic Heritage Objective 1: Increase understanding of Kildare’s heritage through awareness, education and training.</p>	1.	<p>Support community groups, the Tidy Towns Network and NGOs in the development of community-led pilot projects supported by built heritage conservation professionals which would act as best practice conservation models.</p>	<p>The action will support community groups and other stakeholders in the development of community-led projects, supported by heritage professionals. This will serve as best practice conservation models and increase public understanding and awareness of heritage conservation. The action will have positive effects for environmental receptors such as cultural heritage and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>
	2.	<p>Continue to support the nomination for Dún Ailinne, Kilcullen, as a candidate for the "Royal Sites of Ireland" UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.</p>	<p>The action is advocacy-based and will support the nomination for Dún Ailinne as a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. The action will contribute to cultural heritage awareness and support the delivery of the Plan through advocacy. In isolation, the action will not interact with an environmental receptor to result in any positive or negative interactions.</p>
	3.	<p>Develop the KCC Heritage Hub- an accessible online resource for built, natural and cultural heritage matters in the county.</p>	<p>The action proposes the development of the KCC Heritage Hub, an online resource which can contribute to increased public awareness to the cultural heritage resources within the Plan Area. In and of itself, the action will not interact an environmental receptor to result in any positive or negative interactions.</p>



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	4.	Use available online media platforms and other new technology (such as 3D Modelling) to bring heritage to new audiences.	The action proposes the use of online media platforms and other technology to disseminate heritage information and increase awareness for cultural heritage within the wider community. It has the potential to underpin and support the delivery of the Plan. In and of itself, the action will not interact with an environmental receptor to result in any positive or negative interactions.
	5.	Inform the network of heritage groups and NGOs in the county through the Public Participation Network (PPN).	The action pertains to collaborating with the wider network of heritage groups and NGOs within the Plan Area to exchange knowledge and information. The action has the potential to create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing heritage initiatives and measures within the Plan Area, and contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan. In and of itself, however, the action, being engagement-based, will not interact with an environmental receptor to result in any positive or negative interactions.
	6.	Continue to support the involvement of all four Kildare towns in the Irish Walled Towns Network.	The Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) aims to unite and coordinate the strategic efforts of local authorities and community groups involved in the management, conservation and enhancement of historic walled towns in Ireland. Within the Plan Area, Athy, Castledermot, Kildare and Naas are the principal medieval walled towns and members of the IWTN. The action proposes the continued involvement of the aforementioned towns in the IWTN. The action is engagement-based, and will contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	7.	Resource local heritage initiatives through the KCC Community Heritage Grant Scheme.	The action will commit resourcing and funding for local heritage initiatives through the KCC Community Heritage Grant Scheme, which funds projects that contribute to the conservation of items of heritage (defined under the Heritage Act, 1995). Eligible projects and activities under this scheme include gathering heritage data and heritage management, and raising awareness of heritage. Any lower-order projects and activities will be subject to their own environmental assessment processes (including Appropriate Assessment) where appropriate, under the Local Authority land-use planning framework. The action will underpin and support the delivery of the Plan, and potentially result in positive effects for cultural and natural heritage, biodiversity, flora and fauna, landscape and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment
	8.	Develop a rolling heritage education awareness programme based on an audit of current heritage education programmes to include seminars, walks, exhibitions and workshops and to increase participation in annual events such as Biodiversity Week, Heritage Week and Culture Night.	The action proposes the development of a heritage awareness programme which will include a range of activities across different mediums. The action will promote awareness and foster interest in the county heritage. It will contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	9.	Increase awareness of Kildare’s significant military heritage, working with the Dept. of Defence and other stakeholders.	The action will draw public attention and increase awareness of Kildare's military heritage through collaboration with the Department of Defence and other relevant stakeholders. It has the potential to foster further interest in this aspect of county heritage and contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	10.	Work in partnership with relevant agencies/organisations, local voluntary groups and the public to protect and promote waterways heritage in Kildare.	The action proposes engagement and collaboration with relevant stakeholders and the public to protect and promote waterways heritage in Kildare. The action will contribute to the general conservation and enhancement measures for heritage within the Plan Area and effective delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	11.	Establish links with the owners of historic houses and other heritage sites to promote those open to the public during National Heritage Week.	The action proposes engagement with owners of heritage sites with the intention to promote these sites over National Heritage Week, which will increase public interest and awareness. The action has the potential to foster public engagement throughout the local community and contribute to the overall delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	12.	Promote and support training for relevant Citizen Science projects.	The action is training-based and will impart support for relevant Citizen Science projects that could contribute to biodiversity and natural heritage initiatives and measures. Such citizen science efforts can contribute to the a wider database of baseline information, which in turn can aid informed decision-making and lead to more target and focused conservation efforts. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	13.	Explore the designation of significant trees or groups of trees suitable for Tree Preservation Orders as resources allow.	The action proposes assessing the feasibility for the designation of significant trees or groups of trees for Tree Preservation Orders within the Plan Area. The action has positive implications for biodiversity, flora and fauna, and cultural heritage through the potential conservation of trees with amenity or ecological value. However, being review-based, the action itself will not interact with any environmental receptor to result in any positive or negative interactions.
	14.	Continue to support the Geological Survey Ireland to identify and protect the Geological Sites of Importance in the county.	The action proposes the continuation of support to the Geological Survey Ireland for the identification and protection of Geological Sites of Importance in the county. Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that geological heritage is protected under the Planning and Development Act 2000, and the implementation of this action will ensure that these sites of national scientific and heritage importance are duly identified and protected. The action will contribute to the general heritage conservation within the Plan Area and aid in the delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	15.	Support the Landscape Character Assessment and its integration into the County Development Plan.	The action supports Landscape Character Assessment and its integration into the County Development Plan. The Landscape Character Assessment database includes over 500 LCAs at various scales (local to regional) across the UK and Ireland. The landscape within the Plan Area is a unique heritage resource and this action will generally contribute to its conservation and aid in the delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	16.	Support the preparation of a County Kildare Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy to inform the County Development Plan.	<p>The action supports the preparation of a County Kildare Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for informing the Kildare County Development Plan, which is the land-use planning framework within the Plan Area.</p> <p>Such a strategy will be subject to its own SEA and AA (as necessary) under the land-use planning framework.</p> <p>The preparation of a focussed Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy can potentially benefit natural and cultural heritage through targeted and focussed measures, as well as provide an opportunity for the wider community and interested stakeholders to participate in the preparation process.</p> <p>The integration of such heritage considerations and improvements into the planning process has the potential to contribute to the realisation of positive effects on cultural heritage, biodiversity, flora and fauna, landscape and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>
	17.	<p>Support heritage-related actions in the Kildare County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. N1- Develop Green Infrastructure Plan b. N12- Support the Heritage in Schools programme c. N17-Engage with Bord na Móna to explore the appropriate and sensitive diversification of former cutaway peatlands 	<p>The action will support relevant, heritage-related actions within the Kildare County Climate Action Plan (which was subject to its own SEA and AA), including the development of a Green Infrastructure Plan, supporting the Heritage in Schools Programme, and engaging with Bord Na Mona to explore sensible diversification of former cutaway peatlands. The action is support- and advocacy-based and will not introduce an additional source of impact beyond what has already been considered in the Kildare County Climate Action Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	18.	Organise an annual/biennial heritage seminar for all interested parties to increase awareness of heritage in the county.	The action proposes organising a heritage seminar for interested stakeholders with the purpose of increasing heritage awareness within the county. The action has the potential to foster further interest in heritage conservation throughout the local community and any specialist stakeholders. Being engagement-based, the action will not interact with any environmental receptors to result in positive or negative interactions.
	19.	Develop communication and promotional strategy for Kildare's heritage which maximises the existing structures, such as local and online media, community and business networks.	The action proposes the development of a communication and promotional strategy for county heritage, which will maximise existing networks and resources, such as online and local media, community and business networks. The action will potentially foster increased interest in heritage protection and enhancement throughout the wider community. The action, being engagement-based, will not interact with any environmental receptors to result in positive or negative interactions.
Strategic Heritage Objective 2: Promote best practice in the conservation and management of County Kildare's heritage resource.	20.	Assist community groups and property owners/operators to avail of funding and advice from all relevant sources for the conservation and management of heritage sites.	The action proposes assisting community groups and other stakeholders in availing funding and specialist advice from available resources for the conservation and management of heritage sites. As this will contribute to general improvements to heritage assets, the action has the potential to generate positive effects on cultural heritage as a receptor, as well as co-benefits on interacting receptors such as biodiversity, flora and fauna and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	21.	Develop Feighcullen Woodland Creation on Public Land project subject to project level environmental assessment and to progress additional locations for similar projects across other municipal districts, where possible and feasible.	<p>In 2023, Kildare County Council acquired a 50-acre site in Feighcullen with the view to creating a protected biodiversity habitat, incorporating native tree planting under the Woodland Creation on Public Lands Scheme. This project has been proposed under the land-use planning framework (the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, Policy Objectives LR T1 and LR T2), which was subject to its own environmental assessments (SEA and AA). 475 semi-mature trees and 1,800 saplings and hedgerows were planted subsequently in 2023.</p> <p>The action is pledging support towards the Feighcullen Woodland Creation on Public Land project, and depending on feasibility, may consider progressing additional locations for similar projects across other municipal districts. Such subsequent projects will be subject to their own environmental assessments.</p> <p>The action will potentially result in positive effects for biodiversity, flora and fauna, landscape, air and noise, and population and human health. The action, in and of itself, will not result in a negative source of impact outside what has been considered within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029. The action will therefore not introduce an additional source of negative impact that result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>
	22.	Seek to leverage funding for a County Archaeologist subject to resources.	<p>The action will, depending on resources, leverage funding for an in-house, Local Authority Archaeologist. The implementation of this action will have direct positive effects on culture heritage and interacting receptors biodiversity, flora and fauna and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
<p>Strategic Heritage Objective 1: To identify, protect and enhance the county's heritage resources and to ensure that these resources are integrated into the county's development plan.</p>	23.	Collaborate with KCC Architectural Conservation Officer to prepare a Buildings at Risk Register for heritage buildings in the county.	The action proposes collaboration with the Local Authority Conservation Officer for the preparation of a Buildings at Risk Register for heritage buildings in the Plan Area. This register highlights vacant, derelict or endangered historic buildings. This register will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to focussed and targeted heritage improvements. In and of itself, the action will not interact with any environmental receptors to result in any positive or negative interactions.
	24.	Update the county Kildare Thatched Cottage Survey.	The Kildare Thatched Cottage survey was commissioned by Kildare County Council and the Heritage Council. The previous survey in 2005 identified 91 thatched buildings in Kildare, of which 53 survived with varying degrees of intactness. The survey is now dated over twenty years, therefore requiring an update on the conditions of the surviving structures. This surveying will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to more focussed and targeted heritage improvements. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	25.	Continue to update & maintain the Record of Protected Structures, ensuring that structures of significant historic, architectural, cultural, scientific and technical interest in the county are included.	The action will see the continued updating and maintenance of the Record of Protected Structures within the Plan Area. The action will underpin and support the effective delivery of this Plan, in addition to enabling informed decision-making across other sections of the Local Authority (particularly for Forward Planning). The action has positive implications for cultural heritage. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	26.	Support and collaborate the implementation of the County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031.	The action pledges support and collaboration in the implementation of the Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan, which has been subject to its Screening for SEA and AA. The action has positive implications for the county's natural heritage, i.e., biodiversity, flora and fauna, and any other interacting environmental receptors such as landscape, air, soils and water, and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	27.	Work with all stakeholders to implement the Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan which seeks to protect and promote archaeological, cultural, natural and built heritage of this significant heritage resource. It is envisaged that the delivery of projects contained in the CPMP will require separate Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA).	The Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan (CPMP) was adopted in November 2024 by Kildare County Council and the Department of Defence. It provides a framework for protecting and promoting heritage at the Curragh Plains. It is supported by Action AH A5 of the Kildare County Development Plan which has been subject to SEA and AA. It is inherently protective and positive in nature. This action, in and of itself, will not introduce a negative source of impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	28.	Facilitate traditional skills workshops in association with relevant bodies.	The action will, collaboratively, support and facilitate traditional skills workshops which will offer the community the opportunity to experience and learn these endangered skills that are at the risk of being lost to time and technological advancement. The action will have positive effects on cultural heritage and population and human health through training and engagement and the preservation of such niche skills. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	29.	Develop links with other Local Authorities and other public bodies to assess opportunities for potential shared heritage projects.	The action proposes collaboration with other Local Authorities and other public bodies within Ireland to explore potential shared heritage projects. The action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing heritage initiatives and heritage conservation and restoration efforts. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	30.	Support preparation of a feasibility study to determine viability of developing of a County Museum.	The action will support the preparation of a feasibility study for a potential County Museum within the Plan Area. The potential provision of a County Museum will promote heritage awareness within the wider community and contribute to heritage protection and stewardship. However, as the action itself is review-based, it will not directly interact with an environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	31.	Support communities in the recording of oral histories. Where possible, compile oral histories with other relevant media such as photographs and written materials.	Oral histories capture the unique stories and experiences of individuals and communities that are not recorded on paper. Oral histories, collected through interviews and recordings, can provide unique insights into the past and is a more accessible medium of accessing history. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	32.	Promote best practice in the management, conservation, and recording of historic graveyards and develop a conservation management programme for historic graveyards in the care of KCC with the County Kildare Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and graveyard maintenance groups across the county.	The action will promote best practice in the management, conservation and recording of historic graveyards, and potentially develop a conservation management programme in collaboration with the County Kildare Historic Monuments Advisory Committee for historic graveyards within the ownership of the Local Authority. The action is aimed at the protection and enhancement of heritage features within the Plan Area, and will potentially give rise to co-benefits for interacting environmental receptors such as landscape, population and human health, and biodiversity, flora and fauna. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	33.	Support delivery of objective in County Development Plan to develop a National Peatlands Park, including identification of potential sites and development of strategy with landowners and other stakeholders.	<p>The action is supportive of the ongoing efforts of the National Peatlands Park Group and the NPWS in the provision of a National Peatlands Park. This has been proposed to be centred on the Irish Peatland Conservation Council's Bog of Allen Nature Centre, and the Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park. This has been proposed as part of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (Reference: Policy Objectives EC A8, RD O36, BI O42, and BI A31), which underwent full SEA and AA previously.</p> <p>The action proposed by the Draft Plan, in and of itself, will not result in a negative source of impact outside what has been considered within the governing land-use planning framework. The action will therefore not introduce an additional source of negative impact that result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	34.	Prioritise the protection of heritage in the sustainable development of greenways, blueways and peatways in the county.	The action has proposed the prioritising heritage protection in the sustainable development of any biodiversity or green infrastructure within the Plan Area. The action is a protective in nature and supports the integration of heritage conservation within the land-use framework and development planning process. It has the potential to contribute to the realisation of positive effects on cultural heritage and other co-benefits for interacting environmental receptors such as biodiversity, flora and fauna, and landscape. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
Strategic Heritage Objective 3: Collate and publish heritage data and information to a wide audience, undertake surveys & research to inform policy.	35.	Compile a list in collaboration with Architectural Conservation Officer of all council-owned built heritage sites and develop conservation/management strategies for these structures as resources permit.	The action proposes collaborating with the Architectural Conservation Officer in preparing an inventory of council-owned built heritage sites and develop conservation/management strategies for these structures (depending on resources). Such surveying will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to more focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. In and of itself, the action will not directly interact with an environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	36.	Continue to promote citizen science recording projects such as the Meitheal Logainm Minor Placenames Project, National Biodiversity Data Centre and the National Benchmark Survey to expand datasets of local heritage knowledge.	The action will continue to promote and support citizen science recording projects by enabling members of the public to contribute to research and add to existing datasets of local heritage knowledge. Such research can help expand existing datasets pertaining to local heritage and inform decision-making. The action has the potential to improve awareness and knowledge of intangible heritage in the Plan Area, which will underpin and support heritage conservation. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	37.	Publish surveys and reports prepared as actions of the Heritage Plan.	The action proposes the publication of surveys and reports of the findings and outcomes of the implementation of the Plan actions. These publications will increase transparency between the Local Authority and interested stakeholders, and allow the Kildare County Council to monitor the performance of the actions and take remedial or enhancement measures where required. Being review-based, the action, in and of itself, will not directly interact with an environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	38.	Establish and maintain an archive of reports on archaeological sites and finds.	The action will develop and maintain an archive of reports on archaeological sites and finds within the Plan Area. The implementation of this action will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to more focussed and targeted heritage improvements by augmenting the repository of baseline information for archaeological heritage assets within the County. Being review-based, the action will not interact with an environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	39.	Encourage appropriate access to National Monuments and publicly owned archaeological monuments in the county and facilitate partnerships to provide appropriately managed access to these sites.	The action focuses on the facilitation of access to National Monuments and other publicly-owned heritage features within the Plan Area and collaborate with stakeholders to provide appropriately-managed access to these sites. The action will promote awareness of such sites and foster further public interest. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	40.	Advise as required on the naming of new estates in Kildare to accurately reflect the cultural heritage of the county.	The action focuses on the nomenclature of planned new estates within County Kildare which are reflective and representative of its cultural heritage. The action will consult with and advise with stakeholders in naming these estates, which has positive implications for cultural heritage and population and human health through the preservation of County Kildare's unique etymology. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	41.	Support audit of natural heritage sites in the ownership of KCC and implementation of conservation/management strategies for these sites.	The action supports the audit of natural heritage sites within Local Authority ownership and the implementation of conservation and management strategies of these sites. The implementation of such conservation and management strategies are subject to their own environmental assessments, including Appropriate Assessment, where required, and can provide an opportunity for managing environmentally-sensitive sites in a coordinated manner as opposed to an ad-hoc approach. The action is positive for natural heritage, i.e., cultural heritage and biodiversity, flora and fauna. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	42.	Commission a recording project of local traditional music.	The action will fund a recording project of local traditional music. This preservation of musical heritage of County Kildare will contribute to its sustenance and preserve its legacy. This action has the potential to foster community engagement and educate and pass it on to future generations, as well as potentially support craftspeople involved who build and maintain special musical instruments unique to the style of music. The action has positive implications for cultural heritage and population and human health through the conservation of Kildare's ethnomusicological heritage. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	43.	Expand Heritage GIS Databases by gathering and displaying further audits on heritage in the county in conjunction with KCC GIS team.	The action proposes augmenting existing Heritage GIS Databases by carrying out further audits and surveys on heritage within the Plan Area, in collaboration with the in-house GIS team at Kildare County Council. The action will ultimately underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and potentially lead to focussed and targeted heritage improvements. However, as the action is review-based, it will not directly interact with any environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	44.	Ensure that the objectives of the Heritage Plan are incorporated into all statutory plans where appropriate.	The action supports the integration of heritage considerations and improvements within the land-use planning framework and development planning processes. It has the potential to contribute to the realisation of positive effects on heritage, and other interacting receptors such as landscape and population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
Strategic Heritage Objective 4: Promote heritage as a resource that contributes to quality of life, cultural and economic development in County Kildare.	45.	Liaise with heritage and tourism organisations and other relevant partners to promote the development of promotional material for publicly accessible heritage sites and routes in the county.	The action proposes coordination and collaboration with other heritage and tourism organisations and other relevant stakeholders for developing promotional material of heritage sites and routes in the county. The action will potentially foster further interest in heritage protection throughout the local authority and wider community. The action, being awareness- and engagement-based, will not directly interact with any environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	46.	Continue to support the network of Kildare Museums and Heritage Centres.	The action pledges support towards the network of Kildare Museums and Heritage Centres in their heritage promotion and conservation work. The action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing heritage work and improving awareness and conservation efforts within the Plan Area. The action, being engagement-based, will not directly interact with any environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	47.	Support and provide guidance for the sensitive development of themed heritage access trails on existing established routes in the county e.g. geology, natural heritage, pilgrimages and ancient roadways, canal trails and military heritage. Possible route concepts include:	The action proposes improving accessibility through signage (wayfinding and contextual) on existing heritage trails within the Plan Area. The action will increase awareness and engagement for visitors. The action will potentially foster further interest in heritage protection throughout the local authority and wider community. The action, being awareness- and engagement-based, will not directly interact with any environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions. The action will not introduce likely, significant effects on the environment. The works involves in developing signage on existing heritage trails will be minor in nature and will be unlikely to result in likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	Túras Columbanus		
Industrial heritage trails (including canals and peatlands)			
St. Brigid's Way			



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	48.	Consider provision of on-site information for Kildare's heritage sites through the use of technology such as QR codes or similar.	The action proposes exploring the feasibility of providing on-site information at heritage sites within the Plan Area through various mediums (including the use of QR codes). The action will increase information accessibility and foster further public interest and promote awareness of the value of such heritage sites. The action has the potential to underpin and support the implementation of the Plan. Being engagement-based, it will not interact with any environmental receptor to result in positive or negative interactions.
	49.	Prepare an audit of existing heritage-related directional signage and seek to improve the provision and quality of directional signage. Develop design standardisation for heritage signage in the county where possible.	The action will see the development of an audit for existing heritage-related directional signage and seek to improve the provision and quality of the signage. This is to be followed by the subsequent standardisation of design for heritage signage within the Plan Area for cohesiveness. The action is positive for cultural heritage, landscape/townscape and population and human health through potential improvements in the public realm. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	50.	Collate materials and publish findings relating to Kildare's sporting heritage, including the equine heritage of Kildare as "Thoroughbred Country".	The action proposes the collation of materials and information relating to Kildare's equine heritage. This will potentially draw public attention to Kildare's unique history, which can foster further interest in this part of cultural heritage. The action can underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan. Being review-based, the implementation of the action will not interact with any environmental receptors.



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
	51.	Support the work of Kildare’s Local Studies and Archives team.	<p>The Kildare County Archives hold the records of local government, private papers and manuscript material relating to County Kildare, and provides its services to the public and the Local Authority. Kildare Local Studies holds an extensive collection of books, periodicals, maps and photographs and newspapers relating to the history and heritage of County Kildare, including a range of material on Irish archaeology, heritage and history. Such archival material may require special care and conditions for storage and handling.</p> <p>The action will support these efforts of the County Archives and County Kildare, and contribute to the preservation of Kildare's written heritage. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>
	52.	Support development of a schools project based on 1930’s Folklore Commission Schools Collection.	<p>The 1930's Folklore Commission Schools Collection comprises approximately 740,000 pages of folklore and local tradition, that were compiled by pupils from 5,000 primary schools in the Irish Free State between 1937 and 1939. This included oral history, topographical information, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games, pastimes, trades and crafts. This unique archival collection captures Irish history in granularity.</p> <p>The action will support the development of a comparable project, which will aim to capture the current zeitgeist for posterity. The action has positive implications for heritage and population and human health.</p> <p>The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.</p>



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
Strategic Heritage Objective 5: Foster stewardship and involvement in heritage with the wider community of Kildare.	53.	Work with Creative Ireland and local arts groups to promote Kildare’s cultural heritage.	The action proposes collaboration with Creative Ireland and local creative groups to promote Kildare’s cultural heritage. The action has the potential to promote heritage awareness and economically support local creative groups to produce creative works that can contribute to the local heritage and community wellbeing. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	54.	Promote supports for community heritage groups, including the Adopt a Monument Scheme, as well as promoting national and local grant schemes.	The action will promote available supports for community groups working in the heritage sphere. This has the potential to create a collaborative approach to implementing heritage improvements within the Plan Area. The action will contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan. The action will not introduce a source of negative impact that can lead to likely significant effects on the receiving environment.
	55.	Support existing national education programmes such as the Heritage in Schools Programme and develop a scheme to bring schools and community groups to heritage sites in the county.	The action will support heritage-related national education programmes and contribute to the development of a scheme which will aim schools and community groups to heritage sites within the Plan Area. The action promotes heritage-related education, and has the potential to improve heritage-related expertise and underpin and support heritage conservation in the County. In and of itself, being engagement-based, the implementation of the action will not interact with any environmental receptors to result in any positive or negative interactions.
	56.	Promote accessible and inclusive heritage events and services.	The action focuses on promoting accessible and inclusive heritage events and services. In addition to increasing general heritage awareness and creating a collaborative environment for promoting heritage awareness, focusing on enhancing the inclusivity aspect of these events and services will have a positive effect on population and human health. The action will not introduce a source of negative



Strategic Heritage Objective	Action reference	Action	Identification of Sources with Potential for Interactions with the Receiving Environment
			impact that can lead to likely significant effects the receiving environment.
	57.	Develop strategic links with third level institutions to encourage research and mapping of Kildare’s heritage and other relevant projects.	The action promotes heritage-related education. It has the potential to improve heritage-related expertise and underpin and support heritage improvements within the Plan Area. Being engagement-based, the action will not directly interact with any environmental receptors to result in positive or negative interactions.



3.2.1 Summary of the interactions of the Proposed Plan on the receiving environment

The Draft Plan provides a general framework for heritage protection and promotion on lands in the Plan Area. It defines the actions that support and promote:

- Best practice heritage management and improvement,
- Local authority heritage protection and enhancement initiatives,
- The improvement of heritage assets on local authority controlled lands,
- Training and awareness events,
- Education and training,
- Surveying and mapping to identify areas of risk from threats and pressure and areas for targeted heritage protection/enhancement action,
- Collaborating with key stakeholders and the public to achieve heritage aims and objectives.

The range of Actions defined in the Draft Plan have the potential to have a range of positive environmental effects on heritage assets within the Plan Area, including built, cultural, natural, tangible and intangible heritage. All Actions in the Draft Plan are aimed at protecting and enhancing heritage assets. They have been carefully reviewed, and it has been concluded that these Actions do not have the potential to have unintended negative effects on the receiving environment.

The Actions in the Draft Plan do not support intensive land use or development projects sitting outside the land use planning framework that can cause significant negative environmental effects. The Draft Plan will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent. There is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as result of the implementation of the Draft Plan.

The implementation of the Draft Plan will not introduce any sources of negative environmental impact, such as:

- Land take;
- Resource Requirements (Drinking Water Abstraction Etc.);
- Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air);
- Excavation Requirements;
- Transportation Requirements; and
- Construction, Operation, Decommissioning.

The Draft Plan will not introduce any source of negative environmental impact which could result in or contribute to the following types of negative effect on a European site:

- Reduction of habitat area, habitat degradation or fragmentation;
- Disturbance to species, reduction in species populations and density;
- Changes in ecological functions and/or features that are essential for the ecological requirements of habitats and species (e.g. water quality and quantity);
- Interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the site.



The implementation of the Draft Plan will not result in any source of negative environmental impacts that may combine with effects occurring due to other plans or projects to create an 'in-combination' significant effect on a European site.

It is clear the Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impact that may result in a negative effect on any European site.

3.3 European Sites within the Zone of Influence (Zoi)

The OPR (2021) AA Screening practice note states that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. The S-P-R model has been used to identify the Zoi to ensure that relevant European sites are identified. The S-P-R model minimises the risk of overlooking distant or obscure effect pathways, while also avoiding an over reliance on buffer zones (e.g. 15 km), within which all European sites should be considered. This approach follows the DoEHLG (2009 rev 2010) guidance on AA which states that:

“For projects, the distance could be much less than 15 km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects”

As detailed in Section 1.5 in order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. The potential impacts of the plan are set out in Section 3.2 of this report. The impact is essentially the 'source' in the S-P-R model.

These impacts may be very localised and confined to defined area with no potential connectivity to a European site and therefore no potential for effects. Alternatively, where an ecological or functional pathway exists, they may give rise to a potential effect to a Qualifying Interest of a European site.

The dominant ecological pathways to consider are:

- Direct physical interactions or changes to the local environment;
- Air dispersal (noise, dust, odour emissions etc.);
- Hydrological interactions; and
- Dispersal patterns of mobile species

Based on the precautionary principal, the Zone of Influence of the proposed plan has been defined as:

- All European sites locally either solely or partially in County Kildare
- All hydrologically connected European Sites to waterbodies within County Kildare; and
- All European sites within a 15km buffer of County Kildare

All European sites within the Zone of Influence of the Plan area or which are connected to the Plan area ecologically, hydrologically or through hydrogeology have been identified - having appropriate regard to the interaction criteria defined in Section 1.5.



A map showing these European sites in or connected to the plan area is presented in Figure 3-1. Background information on these European sites is presented in Appendix 1, including:

- Quality and site characteristics of European sites considered in the assessment.
- Background data for European sites considered in the assessment; including the Qualifying features (Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests).



3.4 Consideration of in-combination Effects with other Plans or Projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives”.

It is therefore required that the likely significant effects of the plan are considered in-combination with other plans or projects within the Zone of Influence.

The consideration of in-combination effects with other plans or projects, focused on the sources of impacts identified for the plan in Section 3.2. The principal plans that are related to the Draft Plan are defined in Section 2.2.

The Draft Plan is in harmony and consistent with all inter-related plans, including land use plans relevant to the plan area, higher order heritage related plans such as Heritage Ireland 2030 and Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028, the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, the national Climate Action Plan and the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. The range of positive effects that may be realised by the implementation of the Draft Plan have the potential to interact and combine with positive effects associated with heritage measures defined in these inter-related plans to create larger, more significant positive effects.

All actions in the Draft Plan are aimed at protecting and where possible, enhancing heritage assets in the Plan Area. The implementation of the Draft Plan will not give rise to likely significant negative effects on the environment that have the potential to interact and combine with negative effects associated with measures defined in these inter-related plans or projects to create larger, more significant negative effects.

The Draft Plan does not therefore have any potential to contribute to in-combination likely significant effects on European sites that may occur due to the wider implementation of inter-related plans or projects.



3.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Table 3-2 examines whether there is potential for effects on identified European sites considering information provided above and the background information on the relevant European sites provided in Appendix 1.

Table 3-2: Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Plan

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
000391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC	0	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
000396	Pollardstown Fen SAC	0	Geyer's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>) [1013], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016], Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210], Alkaline fens [7230], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
000397	Red Bog, Kildare SAC	0	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
001387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC	0	Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065], Alkaline fens [7230], Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC	0	Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220], Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	0	Reefs [1170], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099], Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) [1103], Killarney fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>) [1421], White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092], European dry heaths [4030], Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410], Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029], Estuaries [1130], Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016], Nore Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i>) [1990], Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
002331	Mouds Bog SAC	0	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	0	Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183], Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	0.37	Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) [A229]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC	0.38	Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Alkaline fens [7230], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC	0.57	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	2.49	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0], Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) [1103], Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410], Estuaries [1130], Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096], Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			[1330], Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]				
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC	2.8	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
001757	Holdenstown Bog SAC	3.05	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
002342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC	4.13	Active raised bogs [7110], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	6.12	Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
			<i>(Littorelletalia uniflorae)</i> [3110], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], European dry heaths [4030]				
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	6.47	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210], <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
002141	Mountmellick SAC	8.76	Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	9.07	Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098], Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects
004080	Boyne Estuary SPA	37.55	Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143], Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144], Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195], Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142], Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156], Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141], Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169], Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140], Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162], Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects



Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Feature (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects	Likely Significant Effects
001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC	38.49	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Estuaries [1130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130]	The Draft Plan will not generate any source of negative environmental impacts that may result in a negative significant effect on this European Site.	No	No	No likely significant effects



4. SCREENING CONCLUSION

This report presents an examination of whether the County Kildare Draft Heritage Plan 2026-2031 is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

It can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information, that the Draft Plan, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on European sites. The principal reasons for this are as follows:

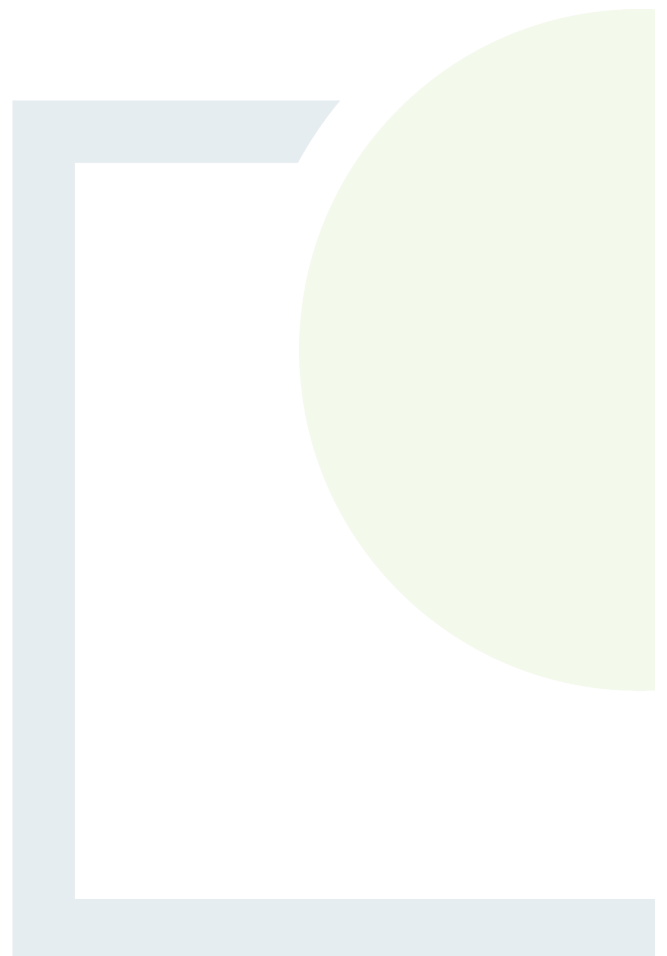
- The Draft Plan does not introduce any source of negative environmental impact that can result in a likely, significant effect on any European site.
- All actions in the Draft Plan are aimed at protecting and enhancing heritage assets. There is no requirement to integrate further environmental considerations into the Draft Plan given its intrinsic nature, its stated aims and objectives, and the potential positive effects associated with its actions.
- The Draft Plan is in alignment with nature legislation and higher order policy such as the Heritage Ireland 2030, the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023-2030) and inter-related plans and programmes.
- The actions in the Draft Plan do not support intensive land use or development projects sitting outside the land use planning framework that can cause likely significant negative environmental effects.
- The Draft Plan is not a statutory land use plan. The Draft Plan will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent. It aligns with and supports the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029.



DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

APPENDIX 1

Background Information on
European Sites



Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
000397	Red Bog Kildare SAC	The site displays a succession from open water (eutrophic in status) to ombrotrophic bog. Transition mire vegetation is considered to be well represented at this site with some typical species. A small colony of <i>Larus ridibundus</i> has bred in the past (current status unknown) which is one of few nesting sites in eastern Ireland and the site also has breeding <i>Aythya fuligula</i> and <i>Fulica atra</i> .	The site comprises a relatively small wetland which lies between moranic ridges. Open water is a principal habitat though there are no obvious inflowing or outflowing streams. Open water is fringed by various wetland habitats with bog (raised type) fens and freshwater marsh. Some willow (<i>Salix</i> spp.) occurs. The surrounding land is improved grassland. An extensive quarrying operation occurs to the east and south of site.
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	Estuaries and intertidal sand and mud flats are particularly well represented in this site with salinity ranging from full freshwater to full seawater. The quality of these habitats is generally good. The Slaney River and its tributaries display good examples of floating river vegetation. An important area of alluvial forest is found at Macmine while old oak woodlands occur at Toomnafinnoge the latter being a remnant of the ancient oak woods of Shillelagh. The site is of high importance for the conservation of fish species notably <i>Salmo salar</i> <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> <i>L. planeri</i> and the very localised <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> . <i>Lutra lutra</i> is well distributed throughout while a significant population of <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> occurs on the Derreen River. The site provides year-round haul-out habitat for the Annex II species <i>Phoca vitulina</i> and includes regionally significant breeding and moulting sites. The site has high ornithological importance especially for wintering waterfowl with internationally important populations of <i>Branta bernicla</i> <i>hrota</i> <i>Cygnus olor</i> <i>Limosa limosa</i> and <i>Limosa lapponica</i> . There is at least a further 14 species of wintering waterfowl which occur in numbers of national importance. Wintering <i>Larus</i> gulls are well represented especially <i>Larus ridibundus</i> and <i>Larus fuscus</i> . A nesting colony of <i>Egretta garzetta</i> has recently become established within the site and birds are present in the area throughout the year. The site supports one of the best breeding concentrations of <i>Acrocephalus scirpaesus</i> in the country. A range of flora and fauna species listed as Red Data Book species occur within the site.	This site comprises almost the entire Slaney system from the headwater streams in the Wicklow Mountains to the extensive estuarine area of Wexford Harbour. The main river tributaries included are the Bann Glasha Clody Derry Derreen Douglas and Carrigower Rivers. The tidal influence extends upriver as far as Enniscorthy. In the upper and central regions the geology consists of granite. Above Kilcarr Bridge the Slaney has cut a gorge into the granite plain. The Derry and Bann Rivers are bounded by a narrow line of uplands which corresponds to schist outcrops. South of Kildavin the Slaney flows through an area of Ordovician slates and grits. The river is often fringed by woodland and/or swamp vegetation. Other habitats which occur alongside the river include wet grassland scrub and in higher areas heath and bog. Improved grassland and arable land is included alongside the river for water quality reasons. Salt marshes are a feature of the lower estuarine area of the site.

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
000925	The Long Derries Edenderry SAC	<p>This is an important site for several reasons. It supports good quality dry calcareous esker grassland in which occurs a substantial population of the rare and protected <i>Orchis morio</i>. An interesting transition between this habitat and acid peaty grassland is found on the eastern side of the site. Gravel quarries on the site support other rare plant species: <i>Acinos arvensis</i> (a protected species) and <i>Erigeron acer</i> as well as the uncommon introduced <i>Minuartia hybrida</i>. The site is an important ornithological site; the most notable species <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> (Nightjar) of which only about thirty pairs are known to breed in Ireland breeds on the site. Several other important bird species also occur.</p>	<p>The site forms part of a low esker ridge which primarily consists of glacial gravels interspersed with loam and peat soils. The site comprises a mosaic of dry esker grassland (calcareous) <i>Cretagus</i> scrub gravel quarries (used and disused) and humid grassland. The north-eastern side of the site grades into peatland and here an interesting mixture of acid and base loving plants occurs. Much of the western half of the site was previously used as a golf course. A wide variety of activities occur on the site and the western half is the most disturbed.</p>
001387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC	<p>Alkaline fen is a main habitat at this site occurring in mosaic with a range of swamp and transitional bog communities as well as fen woodland. The fen is well-developed and of good quality and represents one of the best examples in eastern Ireland. The site also contains a relict population of <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>. Confirmed record for 1997 and noted to be a large population. All recently surveyed sites with confirmed populations of this species are considered important. The site supports a population of <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> and contains a number of other rare invertebrate species some of which are good wetland indicator species including the mollusc <i>Pisidium pseudosphaerium</i> the lepidopterans <i>Ectoedemia argyropeza</i> and <i>Apomyelois bistriatella subcognata</i> and the coleopterans <i>Chlaenius tristis</i> and <i>Philonthus corvinus</i>. Of some local importance for wintering waterfowl.</p>	<p>The site comprises a former reservoir (generally called Ballynafagh Lake) and an associated canal feeder (Blackwood feeder) the latter now disused and mostly dry. The lake is shallow and is now very overgrown with various wetland vegetation types with only a small area of open water remaining. Fen is the predominant habitat with reed-swamp wet grassland and some bog or heath also occurring. A strip of deciduous woodland occurs on some drier ground. The main habitats along the canal feeder are dry grassland (partly improved) wet grassland swamp vegetation and scrub.</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	<p>The site supports good examples of both upland and woodland bird communities. It has breeding <i>Falco columbarius</i> and <i>Falco peregrinus</i> as well as <i>Turdus torquatus</i> and <i>Lagopus lagopus</i> both of the latter being Red-listed in Ireland. It is the only site in Ireland where <i>Mergus merganser</i> breeds regularly. It is important for rare breeding passerines of oakwoods notably <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> and <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>. It also has <i>Sylvia borin</i> and <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>.</p>	<p>This is an extensive upland site comprising a substantial part of the Wicklow Mountains. The underlying geology of the site is mainly of Leinster granites flanked by Ordovician schists mudstones and volcanics. The area was subject to glaciation and features fine examples of glacial lakes deep valleys and moraines. Most of site is over 300 m with much ground over 600 m and the highest peak of Lugnaquilla at 925 m. The substrate over much of site is peat with poor mineral soil occurring on the slopes and lower ground. Exposed rock and scree are features of the site.</p> <p>The dominant habitats present are blanket bog heaths and upland grassland. Fine examples of native Oak woodlands are found in the Glendalough area. The site which is within the Wicklow Mountains National Park is fragmented into about 20 separate parcels of land.</p>
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	<p>The importance of the site lies in the presence of a number of rare plant and animal species and a rare habitat i.e. thermal mineral petrifying spring. The spring gives rise to a calcareous marsh the habitat for <i>Vertigo angustior</i> and <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>. This marsh is species-rich and holds a number of plant and insect species which are rare or locally uncommon in Ireland. Four Red Data Book plant species have been recorded from the site two of which <i>Hypericum hirsutum</i> and <i>Viola hirta</i> are legally protected. The woods at the eastern end of the site have some ornithological interest.</p>	<p>A river valley site which includes at its western end a large area of estate woodland and an artificial lake. The eastern section of the site includes a section of railway canal and aqueduct; it continues as far as Leixlip town. The site is underlain by carboniferous limestone over which has been laid a layer of glacial drift.</p>
001757	Holdenstown Bog SAC	<p>The site supports an important though small example of transition mire vegetation. Transition mires associated with raised bogs are particularly rare in the region and this is probably the most easterly example in the country. It has many of the expected plant species for the habitat including the locally rare <i>Carex limosa</i>. The site appears to be in a fairly natural state.</p>	<p>The site is a small wetland in a kettle hole amongst morainic deposits. It is mostly dominated by raised bog but there is some open water. Birch woodland is invading the drier areas of the bog. An area of semi-improved grassland is included for practical boundary purposes. The area surrounding site is agricultural land.</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC	<p>While the site has a good diversity of coastal habitats including fixed dunes most have been modified in some way. The containment of the main tidal channel has altered the tidal pattern which affects the functioning of the various estuarine habitats. Both dune systems were formerly far more extensive but much of the stable areas have now been converted to golf courses. Site is important for wintering waterfowl supporting nine species in nationally important numbers including <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> an Annex I EU Birds Directive species. <i>Sterna albifrons</i> breeds or attempts to breed in most years.</p>	<p>This moderately sized coastal site which is situated below the town of Drogheda comprises most of the estuary of the Boyne River a substantial river which drains a large catchment. On the seaward side the site extends north and south for several kilometres to include the remaining intact areas of dune systems at Baltray and Mornington as well as the adjacent beaches and intertidal sand flats. The main channel of the Boyne is contained by training walls for navigable purposes. As well as intertidal sand and mud flats the inner part of the site has salt marshes and <i>Spartina</i> swards.</p>
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	<p>The site comprises the largest complex of upland habitats in eastern Ireland with important examples of blanket bog wet heath and dry heath extensive in area and mostly of good quality. Alpine heath occurs at high levels along with calcareous and siliceous rocky habitats harbouring an arctic-alpine flora.</p> <p>A fine series of oligotrophic lakes occur and some have <i>Salvelinus alpinus</i>. Several oakwoods of moderate quality typical of the dry acidic woods of eastern Ireland are found. Seven Red Data Book plant species occur including the rare <i>Alchemilla alpina</i> and <i>Nitella gracilis</i> at its only Irish station. The site supports significant populations of breeding <i>Falco columbarius</i> and <i>Falco peregrinus</i>. The site is important for rare breeding passerines of oakwoods notably <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> and <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>. The site also has breeding <i>Turdus torquatus</i> and <i>Lagopus lagopus</i>. <i>Lutra lutra</i> occurs on several of the riverine systems.</p>	<p>An extensive upland site comprising much of the Wicklow Mountains and extending into Co. Dublin. The solid geology is mainly Leinster granites flanked by Ordovician schists mudstones and volcanics. The area has been glaciated and features fine examples of high corrie lakes deep valleys and moraines.</p> <p>Most of the site is over 300m with much ground over 600m and the highest peak of Lugnaquilla at 925m. The site includes the headwaters of several major rivers including the Liffey the Dargle and the Slaney. The substrate over much of the site is peat with poor mineral soil on the slopes and lower ground. Exposed rock and scree is a feature. The dominant habitats on the site are blanket bog heaths and upland grassland.</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
002342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC	<p>Mount Hevey Bog is one of the most easterly relatively intact raised bogs in Ireland and represents one of the largest bog areas in the eastern half of the country. Although more than half of the site area consists of cutover bog there is a large area of active raised bog. The active areas support well-developed pool areas and have a high Sphagnum cover which include the rare species <i>Sphagnum fuscum</i> and <i>S. imbricatum</i>. A soak area which has developed from an infilled lake and now supports some <i>Betula pubescens</i> trees adds diversity to the bog surface. A substantial area of uncut high bog that is classified as degraded raised big is present. The degraded bog supports a wide range of plant communities depending on factors such as height of water table and past burning events. The bog and especially the active parts contains substantial areas of Rhynchosporion vegetation which have a typical species composition and generally exist in a well-preserved condition. The cutover areas which surround the high bog contain large areas of scrub woodland dominated by <i>Betula pubescens</i>.</p>	<p>Mount Hevey is a large midland raised bog which is situated 3 km north-east of Kinnegad village and lies on the border of counties Meath and Westmeath. The bog overlies Carboniferous limestone bedrock and occurs in four sections. Two of these are small and lie to the north of a railway line while two larger lobes lie to the south of the railway line. These two larger lobes are of higher ecological value due to the presence of active bog. Cutover bog surrounds the uncut high bog. Part of the high bog and also part of the cutover has been afforested with conifers. Other parts of the cutover has been invaded by <i>Betula pubescens</i> scrub and small amounts of broad-leaved woodland. Some of the cutover has been converted to semi-improved grassland.</p>
000391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC	<p>Ballynafagh Bog is a small raised bog site which contains examples of the Annex 1 habitats active raised bog degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion vegetation. The bog is one of the most easterly examples of a relatively intact raised bog in Ireland and together with Mouds Bog is one of only two such systems in Co. Kildare. A central depression on the high bog dome supports a substantial area of active raised bog with a locally high Sphagnum cover.</p> <p>The site is also of ornithological interest being within the breeding territory of a pair of <i>Falco columbarius</i> and providing habitat for breeding <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> and <i>Numenius arquata</i>. <i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i> occurs within the site.</p>	<p>This area is directly underlain by muddy fossiliferous limestones interbedded with calcareous shales. A reverse fault runs directly under the bog so that the NW of the bog is underlain by fossiliferous mudmounds. Both have low permeabilities. The subsoils are predominantly clay rich tills of low permeability. Part of the site has been planted with conifers.</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
000396	Pollardstown Fen SAC	<p>The largest spring-fed fen in Ireland largely intact and responding well to restoration measures. Supports one of the largest stands of Cladium fen and is one of the most studied examples of its kind in Ireland. Type locality for the <i>Cirsio dissecti-Schoenetum nigricantis</i> and contains a significant number of rare and threatened species. A number of internationally important invertebrates have been recorded and rare sub-aquatic invertebrates are particularly well represented. Pollardstown is the only known site in Ireland (or Europe) to support all three Annex II <i>Vertigo</i> species (<i>V.geyeri</i> <i>V.angustior</i> <i>V. moulinsiana</i>) and thus provides unique opportunity to study their different habitat and hydrological requirements. Re-flooding of reclaimed areas has increased the ornithological value of the site.</p>	<p>A large spring-fed fen situated in a shallow basin composed of up to 6m of marl/peat overlying clay. The fen contains the feeder channel of the Grand Canal and has survived several attempts at drainage and reclamation. Supports extensive areas of Cladium fen Schoenus fen reed and sedge swamp Molinia grassland and species-rich seepage areas. Restoration of the central fen area following partial reclamation in 1979 has caused re-flooding and allowed the re-establishment and expansion of aquatic and reedswamp vegetation and their associated fauna.</p>
002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC	<p>The main channel of the Boyne contains a good example of alluvial woodland of the <i>Salicetum albo-fragilis</i> type which has developed on three alluvium islands. Alkaline fen vegetation is well represented at Lough Shesk where there is a very fine example of habitat succession from open water to raised bog. The Boyne and its tributaries is one of Ireland's premier game fisheries and offers a wide range of angling from fishing for spring salmon and grilse to sea trout fishing and extensive brown trout fishing. The site is one of the most important in eastern Ireland for <i>Salmo salar</i> and has very extensive spawning grounds. The site also has an important population of <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> though the distribution or abundance of this species is not well known. <i>Lutra lutra</i> is widespread throughout the site. Some of the grassland areas along the Boyne and Blackwater are used by a nationally important winter flock of <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>. Several Red Data Book plants occur within the site with <i>Pyrola rotundifolia</i> <i>Poa palustris</i> and <i>Juncus compressus</i>.</p>	<p>This site comprises most of the freshwater element of the River Boyne from upriver of the Boyne Aqueduct at Drogheda the Blackwater River as far as Lough Ramor and the principal Boyne tributaries notably the Deel Stoneyford and Tremblestown Rivers. This system drains a considerable area of Cos. Meath and Westmeath and smaller areas of Cavan and Louth. The underlying geology is Carboniferous Limestone for the most part with areas of Upper Lower and Middle well represented. In the vicinity of Kells Silurian Quartzite is present while close to Trim are Carboniferous Shales and Sandstones. The rivers flow through a landscape dominated by intensive agriculture mostly of improved grassland but also cereals. Much of the river channels were subject to arterial drainage schemes in the past. Natural flood-plains now exist along only limited stretches of river though often there is a fringe of reed swamp freshwater marsh wet grassland or deciduous wet woodland. Along some parts notably between Drogheda and Slane are stands of tall mature mixed woodland.</p>

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		<p>Also occurring are a number of Red Data Book animals notably <i>Meles meles</i>, <i>Martes martes</i> and <i>Rana temporaria</i>. The River Boyne is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.</p>	<p>Substantial areas of improved grassland and arable land are included in site for water quality reasons. There are many medium to large sized towns adjacent to but not within the site.</p>
002331	Mouds Bog SAC	<p>Mouds Bog is the largest relatively intact raised bog in Co. Kildare and thus is the most easterly site remaining in the country. Although there is extensive industrial peat extraction in the west of the site there is still a fairly large area of wet bog surface present including some active raised bog with a small soak system. The degraded bog is typical of the habitat but displays some diversity by way of a number of dry flushes. <i>Rhynchosporion</i> vegetation is well represented in the wetter areas and includes <i>Drosera anglica</i> a relatively scarce species in Co. Kildare. The site contains one of the few Irish populations of the introduced insectivorous plant species <i>Sarracenia purpurea</i>. <i>Lagopus lagopus</i> a Red listed species in Ireland has been recorded.</p>	<p>Mouds Bog is a large raised bog complex located 3 km north-west of Newbridge Co. Kildare. The bog occurs as two basins separated by a central mineral ridge. Approximately half the site comprises uncut high bog though this is predominantly degraded bog. Much of the western end of the site is affected by industrial extraction of peat. Old cutover surrounds the remainder of the high bog though some of this has been reclaimed for pasture grassland. Part of the cutover has been invaded by <i>Betula pubescens</i> scrub.</p>
004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	<p>The site is of national importance for its population of <i>Anser anser</i> which is one of the largest in the country. The site provides the main roost for the birds with feeding mostly on improved grassland outside of the site. A range of other waterfowl species occur in relatively low numbers including <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, <i>Anas penelope</i> and <i>Bucephala clangula</i>. The reservoir attracts roosting gulls during winter most notably a large population of <i>Larus fuscus</i> which in Ireland is rare in winter away from the south coast.</p>	<p>Poulaphouca Reservoir located in the western foothills of the Wicklow Mountains was created in 1944 by damming of the River Liffey for the purpose of generating electricity from hydropower. The reservoir covers an area of approximately 20 square kilometres and is the largest inland water body in the mid-east and south-east regions. The reservoir receives water from two main sources the River Liffey at the northern end and the Kings River at the southern end. The exit is into the Liffey gorge at the western end. Underlying the reservoir are sands and gravels deposited during the last glaciation. The shores of the lake are mostly sandy. When water levels are low exposed lake muds are colonised by an ephemeral flora of annual plant species.</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	The site has important examples of petrifying springs. The physical and chemical properties of the springs have been studied. Good examples of orchid rich calcareous grassland including <i>Pseudorchis albida</i> (legally protected) and <i>Orchis morio</i> (Red Data Book species) are found. The quality of grassland is variable owing to agricultural improvement. <i>Molinia</i> meadows are also represented. Several other Red Data Book plant species occur along with a host of rare or scarce plant species for Co. Dublin. The botany of this site has been well studied since the 19th century. The site has <i>Alcedo</i> at this and is important for bats with four Red Data Book species present (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i> <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> <i>Plecotus auritus</i>).	Glenasmole Valley lies at the northern foothills of the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains. It is a glaciated valley with drift deposits consisting of fluvioglacial sands and gravels of varying thickness and rich in Carboniferous limestone occurring on the slopes. Spring lines occur along both sides of the northern part of the valley. The River Dodder flows through the valley and within the site the river has been impounded to form two reservoirs. Associated with the reservoirs are areas of swamp and marsh vegetation. The valley is heavily wooded mostly with mixed woodland of both deciduous and coniferous species but also some native woodland. Dry calcareous pasture grassland improved to varying degrees is a main habitat of the valley sides and occurs in association with wet grassland and in places of seepage fen or marsh type vegetation.
002141	Mountmellick SAC	Site contains a relict population of <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> . Confirmed record for 1997. Typical wetland habitat. All recently surveyed sites with confirmed populations of this species are considered important.	Site comprises a disused section of the Grand Canal at Dungan's Bridge approximately 3 km east of Mountmellick in Co. Laois. The habitat is fen type vegetation with <i>Typha latifolia</i> <i>Glyceria maxima</i> and <i>Iris pseudacorus</i> . At present the site is not used for any particular activity.
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	The site supports many Annexed habitats including the priority habitats of alluvial woodland and petrifying springs. Quality of habitat is generally good. The site also supports a number of Annex II animal species - <i>Salmo salar</i> <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> <i>M. m. durrovensis</i> <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> <i>Lutra lutra</i> <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> and <i>L. planeri</i> . Annex I Bird species include <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> <i>Falco peregrinus</i> <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> <i>Limosa lapponica</i> <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> and <i>Alcedo atthis</i> . A range of rare plants and invertebrates are found in the woods along these rivers and rare plants are also associated with the saltmarsh.	This site consists of most of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow/Nore River catchments. The Barrow is tidal as far upriver as Graiguenamanagh while the Nore is tidal as far upriver as Inishtioige. The site also includes the extreme lower reaches of the River Suir and all of the estuarine component of Waterford Harbour extending to Creadan Head. The larger of the many tributaries include the Lerr Fushoge Mountain Aughavaud Owenass Boherbaun and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow and the Delour Dinin Erkina Owveg Munster Arrigle and King's Rivers on the Nore. Both rivers rise in the Old Red Sandstone of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. They traverse limestone bedrock for a good proportion of their routes though the middle reaches of the Barrow and many of the eastern tributaries run through Leinster Granite.

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
			<p>A wide range of habitats associated with the rivers are included within the site including substantial areas of woodland (deciduous mixed) dry heath wet grassland swamp and marsh vegetation salt marshes a small dune system biogenic reefs and intertidal sand and mud flats. Areas of improved grassland arable land and coniferous plantations are included in the site for water quality reasons.</p>
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC	<p>An estimated 35 hectares 45% of the site area consists of the Annex 1 Priority Habitat orchid-rich calcareous grassland which supports a rich diversity of both calcicole and calcifuge species the latter occurring on mineral poor drift. The site has an exceptionally rich mycoflora and this is a better indication of grassland quality (in terms of continuity lack of disturbance and low nutrient status) than the vascular flora. The Irish Hare <i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i> recorded as occurring in the site. This sub-species is listed in Annex III of the Bern Convention and in the Red Data Book as Internationally Important. It is legally protected by the Wildlife Act (1976).</p>	<p>The site consists of a limestone plateau supporting open calcareous grassland with occasional rocky scarps and valleys but with little surface water and no streams. Soils are thin on the plateau but deeper with local drift in low areas and valley bottom. Scrub of <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> <i>Prunus spinosa</i> <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> with bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> or Gorse Scrub of <i>Ulex europaea</i> is frequent in the east and north of the site. Scrub woodland of predominantly Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> with <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> and a well developed ground flora occurs in the extreme west of the site. There are also a few ponds scattered within the site.</p>
004080	Boyne Estuary SPA	<p>The Boyne Estuary is one of the most important sites for wintering waterfowl on the east coast. It has a total of 10 species with populations of national importance - of particular note is that it supports 7.0% of the national total of <i>Calidris canutus</i> and 4.0% of the total for <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>. Other species which have populations of national importance include <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> <i>Limosa limosa</i> <i>Tringa totanus</i> and <i>Arenaria interpres</i>. The site provides both feeding and roosting areas for the birds. <i>Sterna albifrons</i> bred in the past but successful breeding has not occurred since 1996.</p>	<p>This moderately-sized coastal site which is situated below the town of Drogheda comprises most of the estuary of the Boyne River a substantial river which drains a large catchment. Apart from one section which is over 1 km wide the width is mostly less than 500 m. The main river channel which is navigable and dredged is defined by training walls the latter being breached in places. Intertidal flats occur on the sides of the channelled river. The sediments vary from fine muds in the innermost areas to sandy muds or sands towards the mouth. The linear stretches of intertidal flats to the north and south of the river mouth are mainly sands. Intertidal areas are fringed by salt marshes in the inner sheltered areas. <i>Spartina</i> is frequent on the flats and salt marshes.</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Quality of Site	Other Site Characteristics
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	<p>The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA supports nationally important numbers of Alcedo atthis. Other species which occur within the site include Cygnus olor Anas crecca Anas platyrhynchos Phalacrocorax carbo Ardea cinerea Gallinula chloropus Gallinago gallinago and Riparia riparia.</p>	<p>The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA is a long linear site that comprises stretches of the River Boyne and several of its tributaries: most of the site is in Co Meath but it extends also into Counties Cavan, Louth and Westmeath. It includes the following river sections: The River Boyne from the M1 motorway bridge west of Drogheda to the junction with the Royal Canal west of Longwood Co Meath; the River Blackwater from its junction with the River Boyne in Navan to the junction with Lough Ramor in Co Cavan; the Tremblestown River (and Athboy River) from the junction with the River Boyne at Kilnagross Bridge to the bridge in Athboy Co Meath; the Stoneyford River from its junction with the River Boyne to Stonestone Bridge in Co. Westmeath; the River Deel from its junction with the River Boyne to Cummer Bridge Co. Westmeath. The site includes the river channel and marginal vegetation.</p>



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