

SEA STATEMENT

FOR THE

BLESSINGTON LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025

for: **Wicklow County Council**



by: **CAAS Ltd.**



JULY 2025

Table of Contents

Section 1	Introduction	1
1.1	Introduction and Legislative Context	1
1.2	Content of the SEA Statement	1
1.3	Implications of SEA for the Plan.....	1
Section 2	How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Plan ..	2
2.1	Overview	2
2.2	Consultations	2
2.3	Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process	2
2.4	Appropriate Assessment.....	2
2.5	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	3
2.6	Consideration of Alternatives	3
2.7	Integration of environmental considerations into the Plan’s Zoning provisions.....	3
2.8	Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Plan	3
2.9	Integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plan	3
2.10	Instance whereby Environmental Considerations were not fully integrated into the Plan ..	26
Section 3	Environmental Report and Submissions/ Observations.....	31
3.1	Introduction.....	31
3.2	SEA Scoping Notices and Submissions.....	31
3.3	Submissions on the Environmental Report for the Draft Plan	34
3.4	SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report	34
Section 4	Summary of Alternatives considered	35
4.1	Introduction.....	35
4.2	Limitations in Available Alternatives	36
4.3	Alternatives Description and Assessment Summary	36
4.4	Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered.....	42
Section 5	Monitoring Measures	45
5.1	Introduction.....	45
5.2	Indicators and Targets.....	45
5.3	Sources	45
5.4	Reporting	46

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Legislative Context

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic and social considerations.

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, referred to hereafter as the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use. The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The Regulations have been amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

1.2 Content of the SEA Statement

Where SEA is undertaken, the Regulations require that a Statement is made available to the public and the competent environmental authorities after the making of the Plan.

This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement.

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
- b) how the following have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan:
 - the environmental report,
 - submissions and observations made to the planning authority on the Draft Plan and Environmental Report, and
 - any transboundary consultations (these are not relevant to this SEA).
- c) the reasons for choosing the Plan in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- d) the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

1.3 Implications of SEA for the Plan

SEA has been undertaken on the Plan and the findings of the SEA are expressed in an Environmental Report, the first published version of which accompanied the Draft Plan on public display. The Environmental Report was updated in order to take account of changes to the original Draft Plan that were made on foot of submissions and recommendations in the submissions.

Wicklow County Council have been provided with the findings of SEA output during their consideration of the Plan and before the Plan was adopted.

Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Plan

2.1 Overview

Environmental considerations were presented to the Council for its consideration through:

1. Consultations;
2. Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process;
3. Appropriate Assessment;
4. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
5. Consideration of alternatives;
6. Integration of environmental considerations into the Plan's Zoning provisions; and
7. Integration of individual SEA and AA provisions into the Plan.

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Amendments and Further Modifications.

2.2 Consultations

As environmental authorities identified under the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, the following authorities were sent SEA scoping notices indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to: the Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council; South Dublin County Council; Kildare County Council; Carlow County Council; and Wexford County Council.

Detail on submissions made on foot of the SEA scoping notice is provided under Section 3.2.

Detail is also provided on submissions that were made on the Draft Plan and/or the SEA Environmental Report while they were on public display (see Section 3.3).

2.3 Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan before it was placed on public display. Individual sensitivities that were considered by the Planning Team preparing the Plan included the following:

- European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas);
- Other Ecological Designations;
- Status of Surface and Ground Waters;
- Various entries to the Water Framework Directive's Register of Protected Areas;
- Groundwater Vulnerability;
- Water Services Capacity, Performance and Demand;
- Cultural heritage (archaeological and architectural) sensitivities; and
- Landscape Designations.

A number of these sensitivities are mapped on Figures 2.1 to 2.3.

2.4 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA have been undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of any European Site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.¹ The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

¹ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) no alternative solution available, (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

2.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan. The requirement for SFRA is provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SFRA have informed both the Plan and the SEA.

2.6 Consideration of Alternatives

Consideration of the environmental effects arising from a variety of different alternatives for the Plan (see Section 4) has contributed towards the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area.

2.7 Integration of environmental considerations into the Plan's Zoning provisions

Environmental considerations, including those relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water, were integrated into the Local Area Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach which was informed by the environmental considerations identified by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

Zoning has been applied in a way that, in general, primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied) (for exceptions to this approach please refer to Section 2.10).

Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the County Development Plan and related

provisions have been integrated into the LAP. In addition, land use zoning contained within the Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk.

2.8 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Plan

Various provisions have been integrated into the text of the Plan through the Plan-preparation and SEA, SFRA and AA processes. Both the Planning and the assessment teams contributed towards the mitigation which was developed over multiple iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Table 2.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

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

In addition to the individual provisions integrated into the text of the Local Area Plan, individual provisions relating to environmental protection and management have been integrated into the existing Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied). These measures, which must be complied with by development under the Local Area Plan, are identified alongside the Local Area Plan measures on Table 2.1.

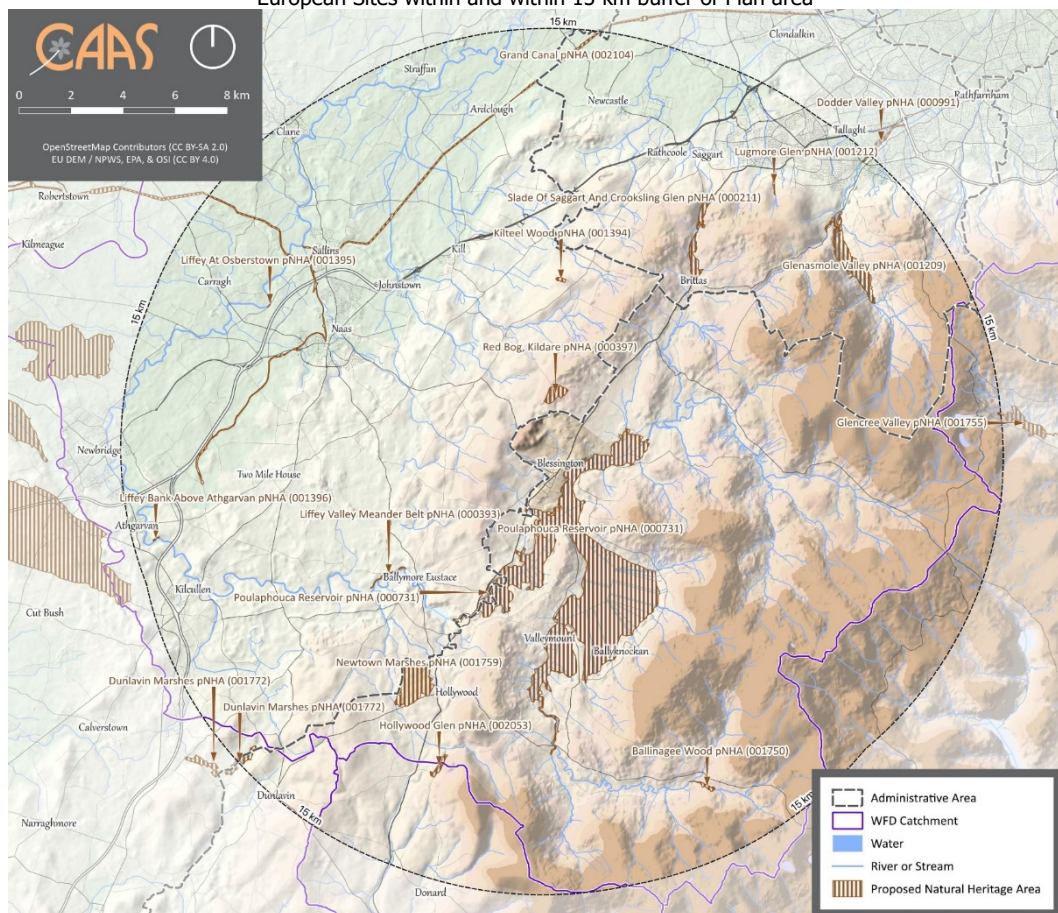
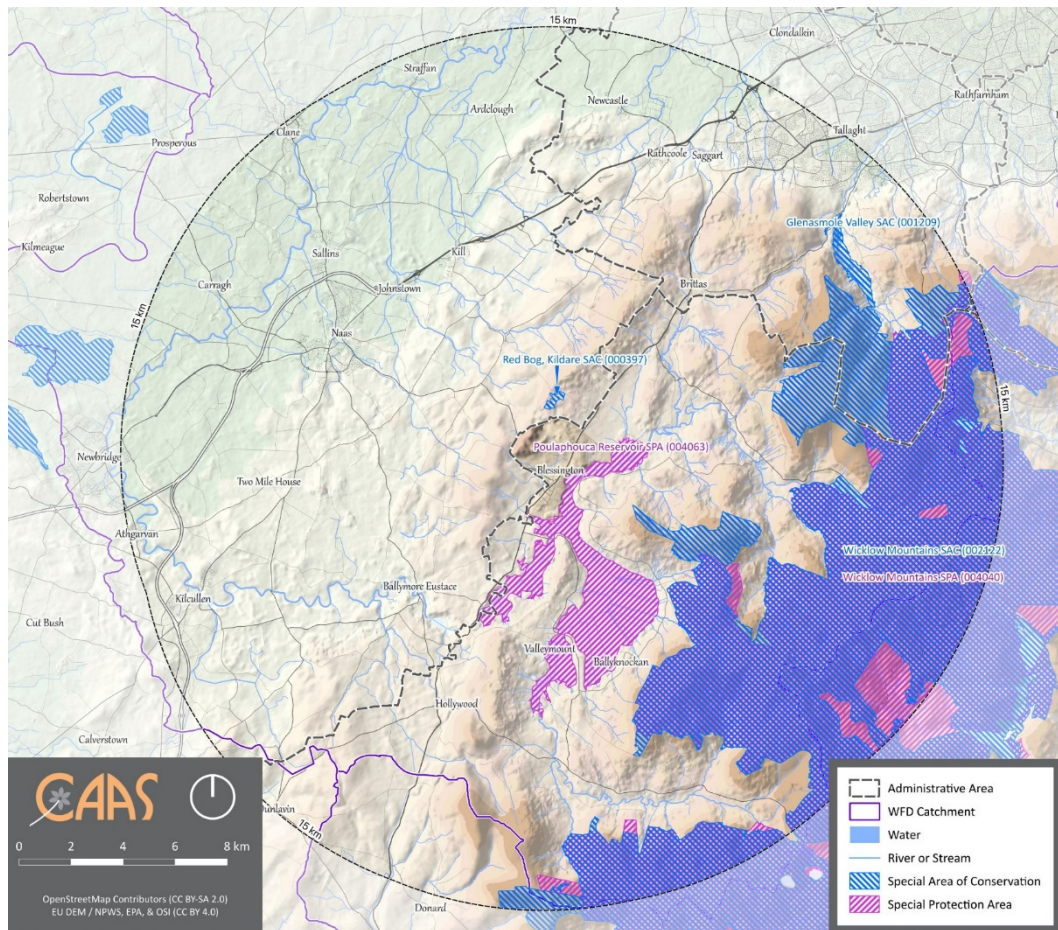
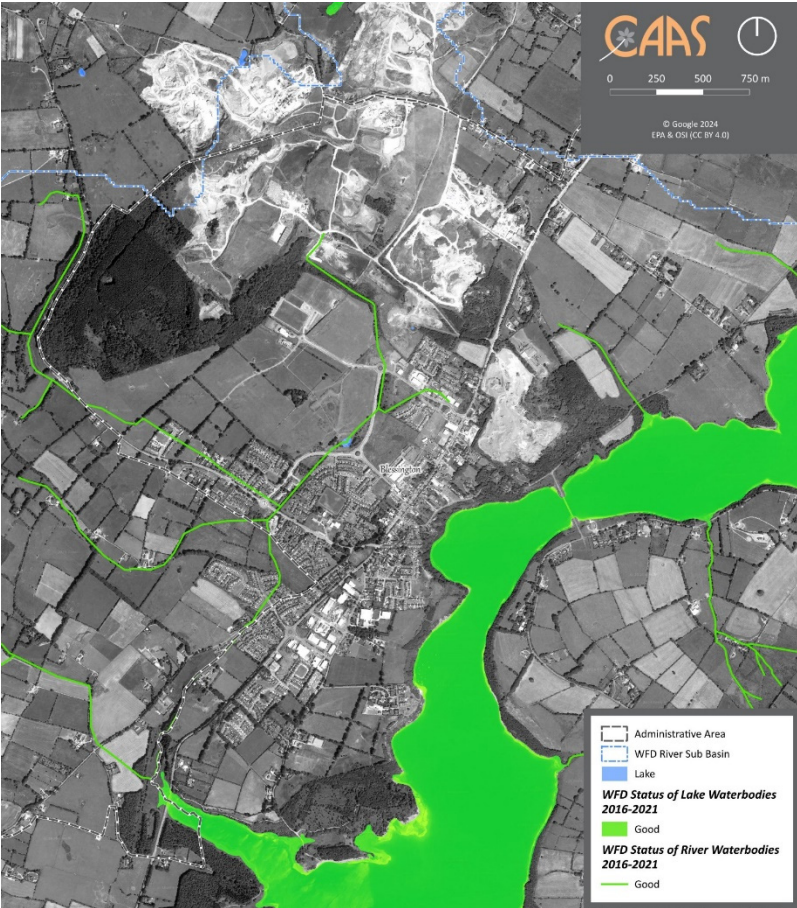
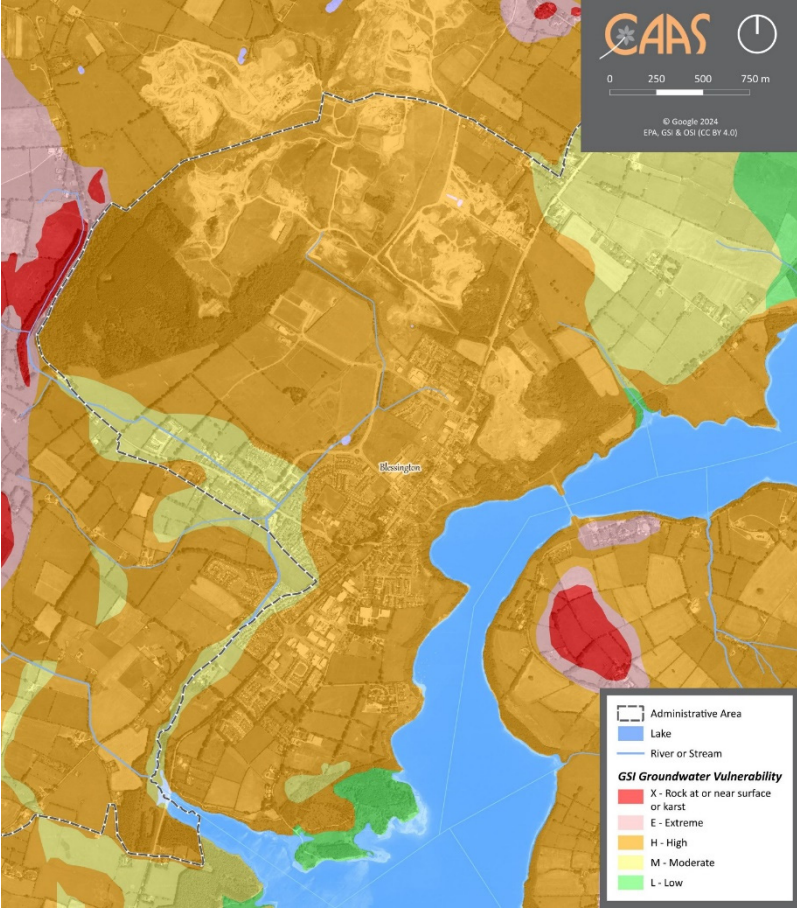


Figure 2.1 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (1 of 3)

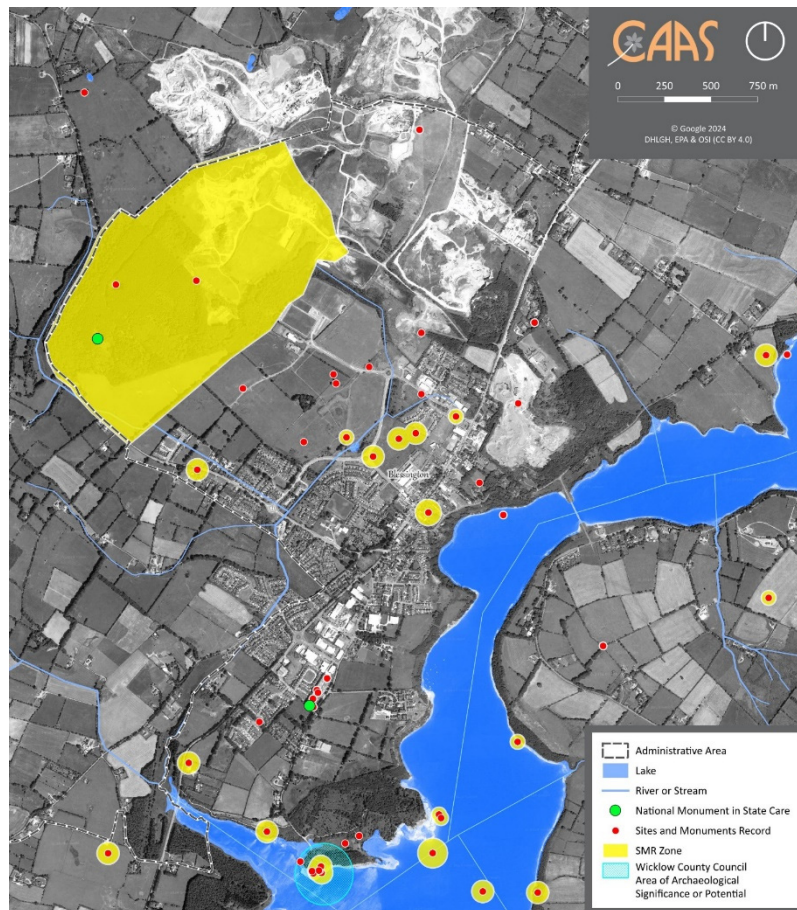


WFD Surface Waterbodies and WFD Ground Waterbodies Status (2016-2021)



Groundwater Vulnerability

Figure 2.2 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (2 of 3)



Archaeological Heritage



Architectural Heritage

Figure 2.3 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (3 of 3)

Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan²

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

² Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in this report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit, proposals should include measures to preserve and, where necessary, improve ecological connectivity and biodiversity value across said assets/corridors.</p> <p>BLESS40 To facilitate the development of new green corridors within the plan area where opportunities may be identified, and barriers in ecological connectivity rectified, via the development management process. In particular, the following additional green corridors will be facilitated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The creation of green corridors through Quarry Lands, and where relevant SLO3, to link the Deepark watercourse and Glen Ding Forest with the plan boundary in the direction of the Red Bog SAC. - The creation of green corridors linking the Deepark Watercourse to Local Biodiversity Areas and existing wooded areas on the eastern boundary of SLO3 (refer to SLO3 below). - The creation of a green corridor through the grounds of St. Mary's Senior National School to improve the connectivity between existing green corridors along Oak Drive/Blessington Business Park and Blessington Main Street. This link may in turn improve ecological connectivity to the lakeshore via boundary hedging on the grounds of the Church of Our Lady and the 'Priest's Walk' through the Rectory residential development. <p>BLESS41 To enforce a general presumption against the culverting of watercourses within the plan area, except where absolutely necessary. Where development is proposed within sites that contain culverted watercourses, proposals should be included to restore or 'daylight' said watercourses with an appropriate riparian zoned in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan. Similarly, where development includes significant works to existing roads with culverted crossings of watercourses, proposals should be included, where practical, to improve the ecological connectivity of these crossings, e.g. the replacement of culverts with clear span bridges, box culverts with wildlife ledges, etc.</p> <p>BLESS42 Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Mitigation integrated into Part B.8 are requirements under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Local Objective 1 – Lands at Naas Road Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The restoration of the culverted watercourses within the SLO to open watercourses with associated riparian zones corresponding to lands zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'. This must not increase flood risk in adjacent areas, e.g. Glen Ding estate. ◦ The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value. <p>The delivery of the road objective linking the Naas Road to the Blessington GAA grounds, as located within SLO1. The design of this road objective should aim to minimise the loss of trees and existing hedgerows. The road objective may only cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022- 2028.</p>	<p>CPO 17.3 To support and promote the implementation of the County Wicklow Heritage Plan and the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>Protected sites and species</p> <p>CPO 17.4 To contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Wildlife Sites (including proposed Natural Heritage Areas); Salmonid Waters; Flora Protection Order sites; Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979); Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).</p> <p>To contribute towards compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including but not limited to the following and any updated/superseding documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) , the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) , the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC); EU 'Guidance on integrating ecosystems and their services into decision-making' (European Commission 2019) • National legislation, including the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2010 (as amended) , European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008 (as amended) and the Flora Protection order 2015. • National policy guidelines (including any clarifying circulars or superseding versions of same), including 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (2018), 'Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development' (2003), 'Tree Preservation Guidelines', 'Landscape and Landscape Assessment' (draft 2000), 'Appropriate Assessment Guidance' (2010); • Catchment and water resource management plans, including the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (including any superseding versions of same), • Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 (including any superseding versions of same) and the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan; • Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 (EPA), including any superseding versions of same), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges. <p>CPO 17.5 Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan.</p> <p>CPO 17.6 Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats directive. All projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>CPO 17.7 To maintain the conservation value of all proposed and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and to protect other designated ecological sites in Wicklow.</p> <p>CPO 17.8 Ensure ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, Annex I habitats, or rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CPO 17.9 The Council recognises the natural heritage and amenity value of the Wicklow Mountains National Park and shall consult at all times with National Park management regarding any developments likely to impact upon the conservation value of the park, or on issues regarding visitor areas.</p> <p>CPO 17.10 To support the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the development of site specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) for designated sites.</p> <p>Sites & Corridors of ecological & biodiversity value</p> <p>CPO 17.12 To protect non-designated sites from inappropriate development, ensuring that ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on locally important natural habitats, species or wildlife corridors. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CPO 17.13 To facilitate, in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, the ongoing identification and recording of locally</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific Local Objective 2 – Blessington Demesne (West) Any development proposals for this SLO shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 (Parcel A) zoning may be occupied until the new town park, which shall include a dog park, located on lands zoned OS1, is completed in full. The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas). The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including area identified as LBAs. Specific Local Objective 3 – Quarry Employment Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including Local Biodiversity Areas. A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland within the SLO shall be included as part of any planning application Specific Local Objective 4 – Doran's Pit Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value, including Local Biodiversity Areas A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland in this area shall be included as part of any planning application. Specific Local Objective 5 – Burgage More (North) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value. In particular, lands zoned for tourism purposes should be developed for low density and 'low impact' uses without a substantial number of structures, e.g. campsites, aires parks, etc, with the following mitigation measures at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limitation on the size of development versus retained green space, with no more of 50% of the zone 	<p>important biodiversity areas and species in County Wicklow, not otherwise protected by legislation and ensure that consideration is given to these in the development management process.</p> <p>CPO 17.14 Ensure that development proposals support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the plan area in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, including linear landscape features like watercourses(rivers, streams, canals, ponds, drainage channels, etc), woodlands, trees, hedgerows, road and railway margins, semi-natural grasslands, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, features which act as stepping stones, such as marshes and woodlands, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones that taken as a whole help to improve the coherence of the European network in Wicklow.</p> <p>CPO 17.15 To protect and enhance wetland sites that are listed as being of C+ or higher importance in the County Wicklow wetlands survey and any subsequent updates or revisions thereof and to implement the recommendations of the County Wicklow wetlands survey.</p> <p>CPO 17.16 Require pollinator friendly landscape management and planting within new developments and on Council owned land.</p> <p>CPO 17.17 Work with statutory authorities to prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species and require, where appropriate Invasive Species Management Plans to be prepared as part of the development management process where necessary.</p> <p>Woodlands, trees and hedgerows</p> <p>CPO 17.18 To promote the preservation of trees, groups of trees or woodlands in particular native tree species, and those trees associated with demesne planting, in the interest of long-term sustainability of a stable ecosystem amenity or the environment generally, as set out in Schedule 10.08 and Map 10.08 A, B & C of this plan.</p> <p>CPO 17.19 To consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect trees and woodlands of high amenity value generally and in particular where it appears that they are in danger of being felled and in response to requests from local communities.</p> <p>CPO 17.20 Development that requires the felling of mature trees of environmental and/or amenity value, even though they may not have a TPO in place, will be discouraged.</p> <p>CPO 17.21 To strongly discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and encourage tree surgery rather than felling if such is essential to enable development to proceed.</p> <p>CPO 17.22 To require and ensure the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees, as part of the development management process, and require the planting of native broad leaved species, and species of local provenance in all new developments.</p> <p>CPO 17.23 To require the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the County. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length and set back within the site in advance of the commencement of construction works on the site (unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority).</p> <p>CPO 18.3 New development and redevelopment proposals shall wherever possible, integrate nature based solutions to the design, layout and landscaping of development proposals, and in particular to the delivery of linear parks and connected open spaces along watercourses in order to enhance the existing green infrastructure of the local area. All such proposals will be subject to ecological impact assessment.</p> <p>CPO 18.4 To facilitate the development and enhancement of suitable access to and connectivity between areas of interest for residents, wildlife and biodiversity, with focus on promoting river corridors, Natura 2000 sites, nature reserves and other distinctive landscapes as focal features for linkages between natural, semi natural and formalised green spaces where feasible and ensuring that there is no adverse impact (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>CPO 18.5 To identify and facilitate the provision of linkages along and between green / river corridors within the county and adjoining counties to create inter connected routes and develop riverside parks and create linkages between them to form 'necklace' effect routes including development of walkways, cycleways, bridleways and wildlife corridors where feasible and ensuring that there is no adverse impact (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>CPO 18.7 To facilitate the development of green bridges / wildlife crossings over existing physical transport barriers to repair fragmentation of the green infrastructure network caused by such grey infrastructure developments.</p> <p>CPO 18.11 To support the development of greenways, blueways and other access routes along natural corridors while ensuring that there is no adverse impact on the flora and fauna, biodiversity or water quality of natural assets. Wicklow County Council prioritises environmental protection in our design and construction of routes and surface selection.</p> <p>In particular, to support the development of existing and examine the feasibility of new walking, cycling, horse riding and water based routes and trails along the following routes:</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>occupied at full use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ancillary buildings and service structures for the tourism uses shall re-use or be clustered around the existing farmhouse and outbuildings on lands zoned T 'Tourism' and RE 'Existing Residential'. ○ Minimal landscaping of undeveloped areas within the development, other than low impact access paths to site facilities. ○ Connectivity must be fully retained (corridors through any physical barriers) ○ Lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines ○ Mature trees retained; compensatory tree planting programme for ash trees lost due to die-back ○ Biodiversity plan developed (for example, ponds, pollinator friendly planting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Local Objective 6 – Burgage More (Central) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: Lands zoned MU may be developed for a range of uses, including (but not limited) to tourism (including tourism accommodation), sport, community (including cemeteries), employment and residential use, subject to the following criteria: Lands to the east of north-south hedgerow / tree line: a) All mature trees and hedgerows on the lands shall be maintained other than strictly required to facilitate appropriate development and detailed compensatory landscaping and tree planting to account for any loss due to the development and natural die back b) No uses will be considered that require floodlighting; street lighting and residential lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines c) Any development shall be designed following detailed ecological evaluation to ensure no adverse impacts, either directly or indirect, on biodiversity, protected species, European Sites or ecological corridors • Specific Local Objective 7 – Burgage More (South) Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development within this SLO shall maintain the hedgerows and rural character of Burgage More lane to the west and provide an appropriate buffer to this lane for such purposes. ○ Lighting must be bat friendly as per Dark Sky guidelines. • Specific Local Objective 9 – Blessington Demesne (East) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any development proposals on these lands shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following: ○ Lands identified as OS2 shall be retained and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from Bray Head, via the Sugarloaf Mountains, joining up with The Wicklow Way; • the extension of the 'Blessington Greenway' walk around the Phoulaphuca reservoir; • the expansion of a lakeshore walk around the Vartry reservoir; • the extension of the old Shillelagh branch recreational trail - railway walk from Arklow to Shillelagh; • the development of a route along the disused Great Southern and Western Railway line (Naas to Tullow branch) through Dunlavin and Baltinglass. • the development of a coastal route from Bray to Arklow as well as links between this potential route and the coast road; • the Wicklow Way and St. Kevin's Way (as permissive waymarked routes). • the Wicklow to Glendalough "pilgrim walk" incorporating ancient wells. • 'Mountains to the Sea' amenity route incorporating Glendalough, Laragh, Annamoe, Roundwood, Newtownmountkennedy and Kilcoole-Newcastle. <p>Recreation and Tourism</p> <p>CPO 11.4 To only permit the development of a tourism or recreational facility in a rural area in cases where the product or activity is dependent on its location in a rural situation and where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development does not adversely affect the character, environmental quality and amenity of the rural area or the vitality of any settlement and the provision of infrastructure therein. The natural resource / tourist product / tourist attraction that is essential to the activity shall be located at the site or in close proximity to the site, of the proposed development. The need to locate in a particular area must be balanced against the environmental impact of the development and benefits to the local community.</p> <p>CPO 11.6 To ensure that tourism and recreation related developments are appropriately located in the County. Subject to the following exceptions, all tourist and recreation related developments are 'open for consideration' in all landscape areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following tourist uses will not be permitted within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (both the Mountain Uplands Area and the Coastal Area): Static caravans and mobile homes; • Holiday homes will not be permitted in any landscape category other than urban zones except where they comply with objectives CPO 11.13, CPO 11.14, CPO 11.15 and CPO 11.16. <p>CPO 11.32 To encourage eco-tourism projects or those tourism projects with a strong environmentally sustainable design and operational ethos.</p> <p>CPO 11.42 To promote and encourage the recreational use of coastline, rivers and lakes and the development of 'blueways' in the County subject to normal environmental protection and management criteria. Where such recreational uses involve the development of structures or facilities, the Planning Authority will ensure that the proposals will respect the natural amenity and character of the area, listed views and prospects onto and from the area in question. Where possible, such structures should be set back an appropriate distance from the actual amenity itself and should not adversely affect the unique sustainable quality of these resources.</p> <p>CPO 11.47 Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the plan, shall manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant environmental effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities; visitor/habitat management plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>CPO 11.48 Ensure the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.</p> <p>CPO 11.49 Where projects for new tourism projects identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable development.</p> <p>Light Pollution Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.17 To ensure that all external lighting whether free standing or attached to a building shall be designed and constructed so as not to cause excessive light spillage, glare, or dazzle motorists, and thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties, traffic and wildlife.</p> <p>CPO 15.18 To require proposals for new developments with the potential to create light pollution or light impacts on adjacent residences to mitigate impacts, in accordance with the Development & Design Standards set out in this plan.</p> <p>CPO 15.19 To promote the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting.</p> <p>CPO 15.20 To require the design and implementation of a hierarchy of light intensity zones in development schemes to ensure that environmental impact is minimised as far as possible particularly in areas proximate to ecological corridors.</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>maintained in a natural condition; no development proposed on foot of this plan shall interfere with river / stream beds, banks and channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BLESS OP5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hedgerows and mature trees should be retained on the site to the north/northwestern, eastern, and southern boundaries. Vehicular access to the site should be via the western boundary, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority. The potential of the site should be maximised through use of the sloping topography of the lands. Strong urban and active frontages should be provided on the northern and eastern frontages subject to maximum retention of mature trees. Text at end of Zoning table in Part B.8 Zoning: Essential infrastructure, including roads / footpaths / cycleways and utilities that are necessary to support development lands, are generally permissible in all zones. Where such infrastructure would be required in OS1 or OS2 zones, and no other routes are viable, such infrastructure shall only be considered where it is shown it will not undermine the purpose of this zoning or give rise to significant adverse environmental impacts. 	
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. <p>BLESS14 To facilitate and support the incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area with a high quality public realm, active frontages, and safe active travel accessibility. New applications for employment</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Seveso Sites</p> <p>CPO 9.16 The Seveso Directive 96/82/EC as amended by Directive 2003/105/EC and more recently by Directive 2012/18/EU is concerned with the prevention of major accidents that involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequences for humans and the environment. It applies to establishments where dangerous substances are produced, used, handled or stored. This EU directive seeks to ensure the safety of people and the environment in relation to major industrial accidents involving dangerous substances.</p> <p>The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (the "COMAH Regulations", (SI No. 209 of 2015) implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU) and are the main regulations that give effect to this Directive in Irish law. The National Authority for Occupational Safety Health (i.e. the Health and Safety Authority – HSA) has been designated as the central competent authority for enforcement of these regulations.</p> <p>There is one Seveso site in County Wicklow (as of July 2019), located at Sigma Aldrich Fine Chemicals, Arklow.</p> <p>In relation to the Prevention of Major Accidents (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) legislation, it is the objective of the Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents; where proposals are being considered for the following: (i) new establishments at risk of causing major accidents, (ii) the expansion of existing establishments designated under the Directive, and (iii) other developments proposed near to existing establishments; the Council will require that applicants must demonstrate that the following considerations are taken into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances, b) public health and safeguarding of public health, and c) protection of the environment; ensure that land use objectives must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest; and have regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when dealing with proposals relating to Seveso sites and land use plans in the vicinity of such sites.

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		developments will be considered subject to the inclusion of proposals for the above public realm improvements. New applications for developments deemed to be 'product'-based, or applications concerning existing developments of that type, will be further required to demonstrate that HGV traffic sufficient to create a hazard to active travel users within and around a subject site would not be generated.	
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical. Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir. <p>BLESS13 To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.</p> <p>BLESS15 To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>Soils & Geology</p> <p>CPO 17.27 Geological and soil mapping where available shall be considered in planning decisions relating to settlement, excavation, flooding, food production value and carbon sequestration, to identify prime agricultural lands (for food production), degraded/contaminated lands (which may have implications for water quality, health, fauna), lands with unstable soils / geology or at risk of landslides, and those which are essential for habitat protection, or have geological significance.</p> <p>CPO 17.28 Protect and enhance 'County Geological Sites' (Schedule 10.10 and Map 10.10 of this plan) from inappropriate development at or in the vicinity of a site, such that would adversely affect their existence, or value.</p> <p>CPO 17.29 To consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland as is deemed necessary, when dealing with any proposals for major developments, which will entail 'significant' ground excavation, such as quarrying, road cuttings, tunnels, major drainage works, and foundations for industrial or large buildings and complexes.</p> <p>CPO 17.30 To facilitate public access to County Geological Heritage Sites, on the principle of "agreed access" subject to appropriate measures being put in place to ensure public health and safety and subject to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>CPO 17.31 To facilitate the Geological Survey of Ireland, and other interested bodies with the interpretation of geological heritage in Wicklow, and to facilitate the development of a "Wicklow Rock Trail", Geopark or other similar geo-tourism initiatives.</p> <p>CPO 17.32 To facilitate the exploitation of mineral resources, in an environmentally sensitive manner, in accordance with the objectives and control measures set out in Chapter 9 and in the Design & Development standards of this plan.</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; <p>BLESS15 To facilitate and encourage the exploration and exploitation of aggregates and minerals, in a manner which is consistent with the principle of sustainability, the protection of residential, environmental and tourism amenities within the plan area and the objectives relating to the Extractive Industry in Chapter 9 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p> <p>BLESS41 To enforce a general presumption against the culverting of watercourses within the plan area, except where absolutely necessary. Where development is proposed within sites that contain culverted watercourses, proposals should be included to restore or 'daylight' said watercourses with an appropriate riparian zoned in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan. Similarly, where development includes significant works to existing roads with culverted crossings of watercourses, proposals should be included, where practical, to improve the ecological connectivity of these crossings, e.g. the replacement of culverts with clear span bridges, box culverts with wildlife ledges, etc.</p> <p>BLESS42 Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>BLESS52 Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area identified as at risk of flooding (Flood Zones A and B) as set out in the SFRA and flood maps appended to this plan OR in Flood Zone C but within an area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that is deemed by the Local Authority at any time to be at possible risk of flooding having regard to new information with respect to flood risk in the area that has come to light; or - that is identified as at possible future risk of flooding having regard to climate change scenarios either on Maps 4C/4D attached to this plan or on any future maps prepared by the OPW during the lifetime of the plan; <p>shall comply with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of 'the Planning System and Flood Risk Management' Guidelines 2009 (as may be amended, supplemented or replaced during the lifetime of this plan) and shall be accompanied by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and the plan SFRA.</p> <p>BLESS53 To support the continued upgrade of Blessington Waste Water</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>CPO4.14 To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.</p> <p>CPO 9.39 To ensure that agricultural developments do not cause increased pollution to watercourses. Developments will be required to adhere to the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC), the Nitrates National Action Programme and the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended), with regard to storage facilities, concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources. Developments will be required to comply with relevant measures, which operate to protect water quality from pollution by agricultural sources. The disposal and storage of agricultural waste shall comply with the standards required by Council.</p> <p>Strategic Objective: To promote the development of the County's sea and river fishing industry, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the County's economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment.</p> <p>CPO 9.49 To support the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture industry in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Inland Fisheries Ireland. The Council will not permit development that has a detrimental impact on the environment. In particular, development that has a detrimental impact on the environmental/ ecological/ water quality of seas, rivers and streams, will not be permitted.</p> <p>CPO 9.50 To facilitate the provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing and aquaculture industry. Infrastructure and buildings in coastal or riverbank locations should be located in proximity to existing landing facilities and shall be of a design that is compatible with the area. Any development, which by reason of its nature or scale is detrimental to the character or amenity of an area, will not be permitted. Any development in the coastal zone shall comply with the objectives of this plan, as set out in Chapter 19.</p> <p>Water Quality Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.1 To ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>CPO 13.2 To prevent development that would pollute water bodies and in particular, to regulate the installation of effluent storage and disposal systems in the vicinity of natural water bodies or development that would exacerbate existing underlying water contamination.</p> <p>CPO 13.3 To minimise alterations or interference with river / stream beds, banks and channels, except for reasons of overriding public health and safety (e.g. to reduce risk of flooding); a buffer of generally 25m along watercourses should be provided (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority having particular regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland for urban location) free from inappropriate development, with undeveloped riparian vegetation strips, wetlands and floodplains generally being retained in as natural a state as possible.</p> <p>CPO 13.4 To ensure that any development or activity with the potential to impact on ground water has regard to the GSI Groundwater Protection Scheme.</p> <p>CPO 13.5 To ensure compliance with and to implement the provisions of the Nitrates Directive in so far as it falls within the remit of the Council to do so.</p> <p>CPO 13.6 To encourage and promote the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>CPO 13.7 To support and facilitate projects and programmes that aim to improve scientific knowledge and public awareness of the importance of natural water quality, and in particular to support the LAWPRO programme in County Wicklow and adjoining counties as appropriate.</p> <p>Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.</p> <p>CPO 13.22 To promote the use of green infrastructure, such as swales and wetlands, where feasible as landscape features in new development to provide storm / surface runoff storage and reduce pollutants, as well as habitat, recreation and aesthetic functions.</p> <p>Flood Management Objectives</p> <p>CPO 14.01 To support the implementation of recommendations in the OPW Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>CPO14.02 To support and facilitate flood management activities, projects or programmes as may arise, including but not limited to those relating to the management of upstream catchments and the use of 'natural water retention' measures , and ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Treatment Plant and/or additional Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the plan area, subject to the full environmental protection of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and associated watercourses.</p> <p>BLESS-54 To protect both ground and surface water sources, to avoid water quality deterioration and reduce the level of treatment required in the production of drinking water, in accordance with Drinking Water and Water Framework Directives. New developments which could pose an unacceptable risk to drinking water sources will not be permitted.</p> <p>BLESS-55 To support and facilitate the improvement of the quality of surface water runoff that directly (or indirectly) will reach Poulaphouca Reservoir. This shall be applied to both new/expanded developments and to any planned improvements to existing urban spaces. In this regard, developments shall be designed in accordance with the guidance document "Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO 2024.</p>	<p>the time.</p> <p>CPO14.03 To recognise the concept of coastal evolution and fluvial flooding as part of our dynamic physical environment, and adopt an adaptive approach to working with these natural processes. The focus of a flood management strategy should not solely be driven by conservation of existing lands; it should recognise that marshes, mud flats and other associated eco-systems evolve and degenerate, and appropriate consideration should be given to the realignment of defences and use of managed retreat and sacrificial flood protection lands to maintain such habitats as part of an overall strategy.</p> <p>CPO14.05 To continue to work with the OPW and other agencies to deliver Flood Defence Schemes in the County as identified in current and future FRMPs, and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoca River (Arklow) Flood Defence Scheme; - Avoca River (Avoca) Flood Defence Scheme; - Low cost works in accordance with the OPW's Minor Works Scheme; - Coastal Protection Projects, where funding allows; and - Ensure that development proposals support, and do not impede or prevent, progression of such schemes. <p>CPO 14.06 To implement the 'Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009).</p> <p>CPO 14.07 To prepare new or update existing flood risk assessments and flood zone maps for all zoned lands within the County as part of the review process for Local Area Plans, zoning variations and Small Town Plans, where considered necessary.</p> <p>CPO 14.08 The zoning of land that has been identified as being at a high or moderate probability of flooding (flood zones A or B) shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and in particular the 'justification test for development plans' (as set out in Section 4.23 and Box 4.1 of the guidelines).</p> <p>CPO 14.09 Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. • An appropriately detailed flood risk assessment will be required with all planning applications, to ensure that the development itself is not at risk of flooding and the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment (both up and down stream of the application site), taking into account all sources of flooding. • Restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B to that which are 'appropriate' to each flood zone, as set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the guidelines for Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009, as amended) unless the 'plan making justification test' has been applied and passed. • Where a site has been subject to and satisfied the 'plan making justification test' development will only be permitted where a proposal complies with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines. • Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA. <p>Where flood zone mapping does not indicate a risk of flooding but the planning authority is of the opinion that flood risk may arise or new information has come to light that may alter the flood designation of the land, an appropriate flood risk assessment will be required to be submitted by an applicant for planning permission and the sequential approach shall be applied as the 'plan making justification test' will not be satisfied.</p> <p>CPO 14.10 To prohibit development in river flood plains or other areas known to provide natural attenuation for floodwaters except where the development can clearly be justified with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 'Justification Test'.</p> <p>CPO 14.11 To limit or break up large areas of hard surfacing in new developments and to require all surface car parks to integrate permeability measures such as permeable paving.</p> <p>CPO 14.12 Excessive hard surfacing shall not be permitted for new, or extensions to, residential or commercial developments and all applications will be required to show that sustainable drainage techniques have been employed in the design of the development.</p> <p>CPO 14.13 Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design; Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.</p> <p>CPO 14.14 Underground tanks and storage systems shall be permitted as a last resort only where it can be demonstrated the other more sustainable SuDS infrastructure measures are not feasible. In any case underground tanks and storage systems shall not be permitted under public open space, unless there is no other feasible alternative.</p> <p>CPO 14.15 To promote the use of green infrastructure, such as swales and wetlands, where feasible as landscape features in new development to provide storm / surface runoff storage and reduce pollutants, as well as habitat, recreation and aesthetic functions.</p> <p>CPO 14.16 For developments adjacent to all watercourses or where it is necessary to maintain the ecological or environmental quality of the watercourse, any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse in</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>accordance with the guidelines in 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland.</p> <p>Water Systems</p> <p>CPO 17.24 To ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>CPO 17.25 Ensure that floodplains and wetlands are retained for their biodiversity and ecosystems services value and resist development and activities that would interfere with the natural water cycle to a degree that would interfere with the survival and stability of these natural habitats.</p> <p>CPO 17.26 Protect rivers, streams and other water courses by avoiding interference with river / stream beds, banks and channels and maintaining a core riparian buffer zone of generally 25m along watercourses (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority having particular regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland for urban location) free from inappropriate development, with undeveloped riparian vegetation strips, wetlands and floodplains generally being retained in as natural a state as possible. Structures such as bridges should be clear span, and designed and built in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance.</p> <p>CPO 18.16 To protect the quality of bathing waters and to endeavour to ensure that bathing waters achieve "sufficient or better status" and increase the number of bathing waters classified as "good" or "excellent", in accordance with the Bathing Water Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC).</p>
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<p>As detailed at the beginning of the Plan: It is also important to note that the land-use objectives of this plan aim to support other plans and strategies prepared by Wicklow County Council, including the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan, the Wicklow Climate Action Plan, Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan, Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan, Wicklow Heritage Plan etc., all which have a wider remit than this LAP.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington; To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County 	<p>Air Pollution Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.9 To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to emissions to air (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).</p> <p>CPO 15.10 To require proposals for new developments with the potential for the accidental release of chemicals or dust generation, to submit and have approved by the Local Authority construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.</p> <p>CPO 15.11 To require activities likely to give rise to air emissions to implement measures to control such emissions, to undertake air quality monitoring and to provide an annual air quality audit.</p> <p>Noise Pollution Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.12 To implement the Wicklow County Council Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure</p> <p>CPO 15.13 To enforce, where applicable, the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003, and EPA Noise Regulations 2006.</p> <p>CPO 15.14 To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).</p> <p>CPO 15.15 To require proposals for new developments with the potential to create excessive noise to prepare a construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.</p> <p>CPO 15.16 To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures to undertake noise monitoring and to provide an annual monitoring audit.</p> <p>Climatic Factors</p> <p>Climate change action is one of three cross-cutting key principles of the Plan and has been integrated into the Plan in a proactive way with the inclusion of relevant policies and objectives; strategic policy outcomes incorporating climate change mitigation and adaptation into land-use planning, supported by land-use policies and objectives that where relevant incorporate objectives that both mitigate against the source of the causes of climate change and adapt to reduce the impacts of climate change. Climate change action informs objectives in relation to all chapters of the Plan, including the town and settlement plans and the Plan appendices.</p> <p>Given the Plan's remit as a land use framework not all sources and impacts are addressed in the Plan objectives (e.g. impact on insurance costs). The Plan's role in addressing climate change is part of a combined overall effort by Wicklow County Council to fulfil its role in addressing the climate change challenge. Climate change poses a real threat to ecosystems, however these ecosystems including wetlands and woodlands, are important for their role as carbon sinks, water attenuation and flooding protection. As it noted in the RSES, careful land management is needed to ensure that land use changes do not impact on the ability of the natural environment to absorb climate impacts. The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment also have a key role to play in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>The approach taken in crafting the Plan is to identify what are the impacts and sources of climate change, identify the key sectors of the sources of impacts that are relevant to the County Plan as a land use plan and to ensure that these are considered in the crafting of all policies and objectives.</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. <p>Various Opportunity Site provisions under Part B.1, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BLESS OP1, OP2 & OP3 Blessington Town Centre, Main Street & Market Square: "To provide for a new pedestrian/cyclist street through an existing gap in street frontage (two adjacent gates and, if necessary, a single storey extension to the south) between Blessington Main Street and north of the Newtown Centre in OP2. Active frontages and an attractive public realm should be provided along this new pedestrian link. Existing vernacular buildings of heritage value should be retained." BLESS OP4, OP5 & OP6 Downshire Lodge, Dempsey's, and Downshire Park: "The development of these opportunity sites may require the reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square to remove the necessity of traffic entering the sites traversing the full circuit around the Newtown Centre/OP1. Rather, vehicular traffic should spend as little time as possible traversing the town centre, e.g. potential two-way access from the south-west corner of the Newtown to allow vehicular traffic to immediately proceed to the Blessington Inner Relief Road." <p>BLESS1 To support and facilitate activities and developments that will improve the vitality, connectivity and vibrancy of Blessington Town Centre.</p> <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical. Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and 	<p>Under the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Local Authorities are required to prepare local Climate Action Plans outlining how they are implementing their adopted Climate Action Adaptation and Mitigation strategies. Wicklow's is Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is adopted and being implemented.</p> <p>Building on existing climate action policies, the RSES identifies the following five areas where Climate Change Action should be targeted in the region namely Built Environment, Sustainable Transport, Energy and Waste, Flood Resilience and Water, and Green Infrastructure and Eco-system services. Provisions relating to these areas have been integrated throughout the County Development Plan.</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir.</p> <p>BLESS3 To support and facilitate improvements to the public realm in Blessington Town Centre to provide an attractive, comfortable environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Such improvements could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street • The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre. • The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square. • Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square • The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre. • The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street. <p>BLESS17 To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle. • Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub. • Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat. • Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist services at Doran's Pit. <p>BLESS18 To facilitate and support future tourism projects in the Blessington lakeside area including but not limited to links between the town centre and the lakes, and a possible extension to the existing Blessington Greenway.</p> <p>BLESS19 To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as a Visitor Hub supporting future tourism projects in the Blessington area.</p> <p>BLESS20 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of lakeshore tourism supporting infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Lakeshore Tourism Supporting Infrastructure.</p> <p>BLESS21 To facilitate active travel links to nearby tourist attractions, e.g. Russborough House, and other settlements in the area.</p> <p>BLESS38 To promote and support the development of enhanced or new greenways and amenity walks at the following locations and require development in the vicinity of same to enhance existing routes and / or provide new links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poulaphouca Reservoir (Blessington Greenway/future tourism projects in the Lakeside area) - Glen Ding Forest - Wooded areas at Doran's Pit - Blessington Demesne (Town Park) <p>The enhancement of existing, and development of new, recreational facilities along the lakeshore area, such as walking routes, car parking areas, signage, changing / toilet facilities and water based clubs/facilities, will be considered subject to compliance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and other planning considerations.</p> <p>BLESS44 Support the implementation of proposed road safety and</p>	

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>active travel projects, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme - The Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme - The Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme - The possible extension of the existing Blessington Greenway and future tourism projects in the lakeside area, as it relates to the plan area. <p>BLESS45 Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of new regional/distributor roads and road improvements³, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road (northern and southern sections). - The provision of a road objective through Doran's Pit, linking the N81 to Kilbride Road. - The completion of a partly constructed link road in Blessington Demesne, linking the GAA grounds/educational/care facilities with Naas Road. - The delivery of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme. Any development within the preferred route corridor will be assessed for acceptability having regard to the potential effects on the future viability of the proposed road. Active travel routes from the town centre to Glen Ding should be facilitated in the final design of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme. <p>BLESS46 Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of safe active travel routes along the existing road network and along new off-road routes, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The delivery of the Greater Dublin Area cycle network, as it relates to the plan area. - The delivery of the National Cycle Network, as it relates to the plan area (exact route from Blessington to Naas to be determined). - The delivery of local/greenway feeder routes within the plan area (refer to Map 6A/6B Active Travel and the accompanying Transport Assessment). - The delivery of identified, and other, permeability improvements within the settlement (refer to Map No. 6A/6B Active Travel). - The delivery of identified, and other, traffic management measures within the settlement (refer to Map No. 5A/5B Transport Strategy and the accompanying Transport Assessment). - The delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6A/6B Active Travel. - The delivery of additional pedestrian and cyclist routes where development occurs along the boundaries of green corridors – on sites containing or immediately adjacent to OS2 lands, appropriate pedestrian and cycle routes should be laid out along the OS2 boundary, with permeability improvements and short sections linking to other routes where necessary at site boundaries. <p>BLESS47 To ensure that development along the route of the existing</p>	

³ The detail associated with new transport or green/blue infrastructure projects referred to in this Plan and accompanying Transport Assessment, including locations and associated mapping, that are not already permitted or provided for by existing plans / programmes / etc. is non-binding and indicative. Such new projects shall be subject to feasibility assessment, taking into account the environmental constraints and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for such projects where appropriate. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Blessington Greenway (and possible extension were such a route to be determined), and along indicated greenway feeder routes (see Map No. 6A/6B Active Travel), minimises the creation of additional entrances/junctions to only those absolutely necessary, in order to reduce potential conflict between greenway users and vehicular traffic.</p> <p>BLESS48 New development should, where relevant, have regard to the indicated street descriptions shown on Map No. 5A/5B Transport Strategy (refer to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets), subject to the completion of the necessary road objectives to allow that function (as set out in the accompanying Transport Assessment.) Streets without an indicated description should be considered 'local' streets.</p> <p>BLESS49 Support the development of additional car parking areas within the plan area, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A public transport park and ride in Blessington along the N81. - A car park in Doran's Pit for potential greenway parking and access to adjacent woodland. - A car park on Active Open Space lands in Blessington Demesne to serve those lands and as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding. <p>BLESS50 To continue to work with the NTA to promote the delivery of improved and new bus services, facilities and infrastructure within the plan area and connecting the plan area to the wider region by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supporting the development and delivery of bus service enhancement projects, under the Connecting Ireland and Bus Connects programmes and measures to improve bus priority such as additional bus lanes and priority signalling etc as may be deemed appropriate; - facilitating the needs of existing or new bus providers with regard to bus stops and garaging facilities (although unnecessary duplication of bus stops on the same routes / roads will not be permitted); - supporting the development of enhanced bus shelters, of secure covered bicycle parking facilities at key locations along bus routes; - to promote and support the improvement of N81 in a manner capable of facilitating greater free flow of public transport; - to support and facilitate the existing service providers and encourage the further development of the Local Link Rural Transport Programme (and any other or subsequent rural transport programmes); - Enhancing pedestrian and cycling connectivity to public transport services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Local Objective 8 – Santryhill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Access into the SLO shall be via the planned Blessington Inner Relief Road. No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be occupied until (a) the northern section of the Blessington Inner Relief Road is completed in full from the Naas Road to the N81 and (b) continuous footpaths along the N81 from the town centre to the BIRR-N81 roundabout to the north of the site are completed. • Specific Local Objective 10 – Milltown Gate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No dwelling units that may be permitted on foot of the RN1 zoning may be occupied until the 'Blessington Gateway' road safety improvement scheme along the N81 is completed. 	

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and various Land Use Zoning provisions.</p> <p>Part A.4 Overall Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key parameters for the future physical development of Blessington are based around protection of the environment, sustainability, compact growth and developing the settlement in a manner that will generate the minimal number of private car journeys and maximise walking, cycling and use of public transport. Consolidate the existing built pattern in Blessington by maximising the development potential of large sites close to the core and any infill sites and backland sites along the main roads within the town core of Blessington; To provide a framework for the future development of Blessington town centre to facilitate the development of this core area as the centre/focus of the settlement. To enhance the public realm in this centre and enhance connections and linkages to the residential areas surrounding the centre, as well as providing connections between this area and important recreational assets such as the Poulaphouca Reservoir. To promote and encourage the appropriate regeneration of quarry lands with a mix of uses including residential and other such uses that provide local job opportunities, and uses that support the existing town centre; To facilitate the appropriate development of greenfield residential lands that are serviced and serviceable within the settlement, particularly to the west of the town on the grounds of the former Blessington Demesne, in a managed / phased manner so as to align with the housing / population growth targets set out in the County Development Plan and the delivery of commensurate community services; To provide for new employment opportunities on serviced / serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates; To provide for new community, educational and recreational opportunities on serviced/ serviceable greenfield lands at appropriate locations that are connected to local residential areas with walking, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that have the potential for new schools, community infrastructure and recreation / sports facilities, primarily along a part-constructed link road to the west of the town centre, south from the GAA grounds and towards Naas Road. <p>BLESS5 To promote the development of opportunity sites within Blessington Town Centre in accordance with the specific criteria set out for each identified area within this Local Area Plan. Regard should also be had to concept and access plans for opportunity sites as included in the Blessington Town Centre First Plan (or any update thereof).</p> <p>BLESS13 To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and various Land Use and Phasing provisions.</p> <p>Strategic Objective: To support and facilitate the exploitation of County Wicklow's natural aggregate resources in a manner, which does not unduly impinge on the environmental quality, and the visual and residential amenity of an area.</p> <p>CPO 9.54 To have regard to the following guidance documents (as may be amended, replaced or supplemented) in the assessment of planning applications for quarries and ancillary facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004, DoEHLG); 'Environmental Management Guidelines – Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non Scheduled Minerals)', EPA 2006; 'Archaeological Code of Practice between the DoEHLG and the Irish Concrete Federation' 2009; 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry', 2008; and 'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry – Guidelines for the protection of biodiversity within the extractive industry', NPWS 2009. <p>Strategic Objective: To support and facilitate the exploitation of County Wicklow's natural aggregate resources in a manner, which does not unduly impinge on the environmental quality, and the visual and residential amenity of an area.</p> <p>Water Infrastructure Objectives</p> <p>Water Supply Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.8 In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy and settlement strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, to ensure the provision of sufficient storage, supply and pressure of potable water to serve all lands zoned for development and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic water supply schemes and any other smaller, localised water improvement schemes required during the lifetime of the plan, as well as programmes to consolidate, and improve supply and resilience under the National Water Resource Plan. In particular, to support and facilitate the delivery of new / improved water treatment supplies and storage infrastructure in the following settlements/areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newtownmountkennedy - Rathdrum - Dunlavin - The areas and settlements covered by the Mid Wicklow Water Supply Scheme <p>CPO 13.9 To protect existing and potential water resources of the County, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plans, the Groundwater Protection Scheme and source protection plans for public water supplies.</p> <p>CPO 13.10 To require new developments to connect to public water supplies where services are adequate or where they will be provided in the near future, or where extension of an adjacent water supply system is technically and environmentally feasible.</p> <p>CPO 13.11 Where connection to an existing public water supply is not possible, or the existing supply system does not have sufficient capacity, the provision of a private water supply will be only permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in EU and national legislation and guidance, would not be prejudicial to public health, would not impact on the source or yield of an existing supply, particularly a public supply or would not adversely affect the ability of water bodies to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. Private water supplies for multi-house developments will not be permitted.</p> <p>Water Demand Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.14 To require all new developments to integrate water demand reduction designs and technologies in all aspects of the development including but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of water efficient equipment; - Provision of dual flush toilets, cistern bags or other similar technologies; - Construction of grey water systems to allow for the re-use of wastewater from sinks, shower drains or washing machines; - Provision of rainwater harvesting equipment; - The use of low maintenance plants in the design of landscaping; - In manufacturing, use of process or cooling loops, counter current rinsing and batch processing, or increasing the recycle rate of cooling towers. <p>Waste Water Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.15 In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, to ensure that all lands zoned or identified for development are serviced by an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic wastewater schemes. In particular, to support and facilitate the delivery of new / improved wastewater treatment plants in the following settlements:</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.</p> <p>BLESS17 To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle. • Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub. • Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat. • Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist services at Doran's Pit. <p>BLESS18 To facilitate and support future tourism projects in the Blessington lakeside area including but not limited to links between the town centre and the lakes, and a possible extension to the existing Blessington Greenway.</p> <p>BLESS19 To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as a Visitor Hub supporting future tourism projects in the Blessington area.</p> <p>BLESS20 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of lakeshore tourism supporting infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Lakeshore Tourism Supporting Infrastructure.</p> <p>BLESS21 To facilitate active travel links to nearby tourist attractions, e.g. Russborough House, and other settlements in the area.</p> <p>BLESS24 The Planning Authority will resist developments that entail the loss of existing community, education and open space/recreation lands or buildings unless it can be demonstrated that (a) adequate community, education and open space/recreation lands and buildings would be retained in the settlement having regard to the planned future population of the settlement or (b) the particular lands or buildings are not suitable or needed for current or future educational, community or open space / recreational usage. In particular, developments that would unduly constrain the ability of existing schools to expand will not be permitted.</p> <p>BLESS25 To facilitate the provision of schools on lands zoned Community and Education (CE) and to consider the provision of schools on any land use zoning, excluding OS1 and OS2 zones, where it is in line with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan, relevant planning guidelines (including the Department of Education guidelines) and proper planning.</p> <p>BLESS26 To facilitate and support the provision of new childcare facilities in a manner, which is compatible with land-use and transportation policies and adheres to the principles of sustainable development. To facilitate and encourage the co-location of childcare facilities with other educational facilities such as schools. Applications for the development of new educational facilities, or the significant redevelopment or extensions of existing facilities, should consider the provision of co-located childcare facilities within the development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arklow - Blessington - Aughrim - Tinahely - Avoca - Laragh – Glendalough - Lakes area around Blessington - Large and Small Villages <p>CPO 13.16 Permission will be considered for private wastewater treatment plants for single rural houses where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the specific ground conditions have been shown to be suitable for the construction of a treatment plant and any associated percolation area; • the system will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on ground waters / aquifers and the type of treatment proposed has been drawn up in accordance with the appropriate groundwater protection response set out in the Wicklow Groundwater Protection Scheme (2003); • the proposed method of treatment and disposal complies with Wicklow County Council's Policy for Wastewater Treatment & Disposal Systems for Single Houses (PE ≤ 10) and the Environmental Protection Agency "Waste Water Treatment Manuals"; and • in all cases the protection of ground and surface water quality shall remain the overriding priority and proposals must definitively demonstrate that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on water quality standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance documents. <p>CPO 13.17 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not be permitted.</p> <p>CPO 13.18 Private wastewater treatment plants for commercial / employment generating development will only be considered where:</p> <p>Irish Water has confirmed the site is due to be connected to a future public system in the area or Irish Water has confirmed there are no plans for a public system in the area;</p> <p>It can clearly demonstrated that the proposed system can meet all EPA / Local Authority environmental criteria; and</p> <p>An annually renewed contract for the management and maintenance of the system is contracted with a reputable company / person, details of which shall be provided to the Local Authority.</p> <p>CPO 13.19 Where any application for a private treatment plant would require a discharge licence under the Water Pollution Acts, a simultaneous application for same shall be required to be made when submitting the planning application.</p> <p>Storm & Surface Water Infrastructure Objectives</p> <p>CPO 13.20 Ensure the separation of foul and surface water discharges in new developments through the provision of separate networks.</p> <p>CPO 13.21 Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design;</p> <p>Solid Waste Management Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.1 To require all developments likely to give rise to significant quantities of waste, either by virtue of the scale of the development or the nature of the development (e.g. one that involves demolition) to submit a construction management plan, which will outline, amongst other things, the plan to minimise waste generation and the plan to protect the environment with the safe and efficient disposal of waste from the site.</p> <p>CPO 15.2 To require all new developments, whether residential, community, agricultural or commercial to make provision for storage and recycling facilities (in accordance with the standards set out in Development & Design Standards of this plan).</p> <p>CPO 15.3 To facilitate the development of existing and new waste prevention and recovery facilities and in particular, to facilitate the development of 'green waste' recovery sites.</p> <p>CPO 15.4 To facilitate the development of waste-to-energy facilities, particularly the use of landfill gas and biological waste.</p> <p>CPO 15.5 To have regard to the Council's duty under the 1996 Waste Management Act (as amended), to provide and operate, or arrange for the provision and operation of, such facilities as may be necessary to promote reuse or for the recovery and disposal of household waste arising within its functional area.</p> <p>CPO 15.6 To facilitate the development of sites, services and facilities necessary to achieve implementation of the objectives of the Regional Waste Management Plan.</p> <p>Hazardous Waste Objectives</p> <p>CPO 15.7 To facilitate the development of sites, services and facilities for the disposal of hazardous household wastes in accordance with the objectives of the Regional Waste Management Plan.</p> <p>CPO 15.8 In relation to the Prevention of Major Accidents (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) legislation, it is an objective to:</p>

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>BLESS27 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of new open spaces, parks and multi-purpose sport uses close to the built-up area of Blessington, including covered spaces. In particular,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To require the delivery of significant areas of outdoor play space on lands zoned AOS as part of SLO-2 and SLO-4. - To require the delivery of public parks on lands zoned OS1 in SLO-1 and SLO-2. <p>BLESS28 To facilitate and encourage the continued operation of existing and development of new community infrastructure, including (but not limited to) indoor multi-functional community spaces, youth centres etc., in Blessington. In particular, to require the development of a community hall in the redevelopment of Doran's Pit in line with SLO 4, and the development of a community building in line with SLO9.</p> <p>BLESS29 To facilitate and encourage the continued operation of existing and development of new care and health related facilities, including (but not limited to) primary care centres, general practitioners surgeries, care / nursing homes and respite / hospice centres facilities particularly within the built-up area of Blessington.</p> <p>BLESS30 To facilitate and support the development of a swimming pool/leisure centre within Blessington.</p> <p>BLESS53 To support the continued upgrade of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant and/or additional Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the plan area, subject to the full environmental protection of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and associated watercourses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents; • where proposals are being considered for the following: (i) new establishments at risk of causing major accidents, (ii) the expansion of existing establishments designated under the Directive, and (iii) other developments proposed near to existing establishments; the Council will require that applicants must demonstrate that the following considerations are taken into account: (i) prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances, (ii) public health and safeguarding of public health, and (iii) protection of the environment; • ensure that land use objectives must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest; and • have regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when dealing with proposals relating to Seveso sites and land use plans in the vicinity of such sites. <p>CPO 18.2 To protect existing green infrastructure resources and to facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the benefits that can be achieved with regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of open space amenities, • sustainable management of water, • protection and management of biodiversity, • protection of cultural heritage, and • protection of protected landscape sensitivities. <p>CPO 19.1 To review and update the County Development Plan if necessary to ensure that it is consistent with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the National Marine Planning Framework following its adoption, and • the Marine Planning and Development Management Act (following its enactment)
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<p>Various Opportunity Site provisions under Part B.1, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLESS OP1, OP2 & OP3 Blessington Town Centre, Main Street & Market Square: "Development proposals should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area." • BLESS OP4, OP5 & OP6 Downshire Lodge, Dempsey's, and Downshire Park: "To provide for mixed use town centre infill development (which shall include residential use, particularly on upper floors). Indicative block formats, plot lines, and active frontages are provided in the below concept parameters and access plans. Development should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area." <p>BLESS2 To encourage the development of infill sites and back lands within Blessington Town Centre in a manner that preserves/creates fine grain building plots and presents strong urban frontages to existing and proposed streets. Active frontages at ground floor level will be encouraged. Traditional arches on Blessington Main Street should be used/reused as primarily pedestrian and cyclist passages to back lands, with vehicular traffic accessing plots from alternative locations if practical.</p> <p>Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan. • Back lands of premises on Blessington Main Street facing onto Kilbride Road, between the junction with Blessington Main Street and the Rectory residential development, subject to the preservation of historic boundary walls and landscape amenity in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir. <p>BLESS3 To support and facilitate improvements to the public realm in</p>	<p>CPO 4.14 To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.</p> <p>CPO 5.17 To harness and integrate the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive reuse, recognising its important contribution to placemaking. New development should respect and complement the historic fabric of existing towns and villages – the traditional street patterns, plot sizes, mix of building types, distinctive paving and attractive street furniture.</p> <p>CPO 5.18 To protect, integrate and enhance heritage assets, including attractive streetscapes and historic buildings, through appropriate reuse and regeneration and restrict inappropriate development that would undermine the settlement's identity, heritage and sense of place.</p> <p>Archaeology Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.1 To secure the preservation of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally. In the development management process, there will be a presumption of favour of preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record. In securing such preservation the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>CPO 8.2 No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) or any other site of archaeological interest will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.</p> <p>CPO 8.3 Any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance as identified in Schedules 08.01 & 08.02 and Maps 8.01 & 8.02 of this plan) shall be subject to an archaeological assessment.</p> <p>CPO 8.4 To require archaeological assessment for all developments with the potential to impact on the archaeological heritage of riverine, intertidal or sub tidal environments.</p> <p>CPO 8.5 To facilitate new or improved public access to and erection of appropriate interpretive signage at National Monuments, archaeological sites, castles, sites of historic interest and archaeological landscapes in State or private ownership, as identified in Schedule 08.02 and Map 8.02 of this plan, in co-operation with landowners.</p> <p>CPO 8.6 To protect the integrity of Baltinglass Hills archaeological landscape including identified monuments and their wider setting by resisting development that may adversely impact upon the significance and understanding of this important landscape.</p> <p>CPO 8.7 To support the inscription of Glendalough to Ireland's tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site list and promote a conservation led approach to facilitating visitor access and enjoyment of this internationally significant landscape.</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Wicklow County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Blessington Town Centre to provide an attractive, comfortable environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Such improvements could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street • The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre. • The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square. • Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square • The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre. • The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street. <p>BLESS13 To encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the plan area and to consider allowing 'relaxation' in normal development standards on such sites to promote their redevelopment, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a development of the highest quality, that does not create an adverse or unacceptable working environment or create unacceptable impacts on the built, natural or social environment, will be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, the redevelopment of quarry lands for employment purposes should not generally require the relaxation of standards due to the scale of employment lands in this area.</p> <p>BLESS31 To consolidate and safeguard the historical and architectural character of Blessington through the protection of individual buildings, structures, shopfronts and elements of the public realm that contribute greatly to this character⁴.</p> <p>BLESS32 To protect those features that have been identified in the Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal as contributing to the town centre's overall appearance and heritage value and to ensure that new development contributes positively to the designated Architectural Conservation Area.</p> <p>BLESS33 To promote the sustainable use and re-use of heritage vernacular buildings along Blessington Main Street/N81, Market Square, and Kilbride Road, and to resist the demolition of any such building unless absolutely necessary.</p> <p>BLESS34 Protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of natural, architectural and archaeological heritage assets, and in particular those features of the natural landscape and built structures that contribute to their special interest. The natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area shall be protected in accordance with the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan. In particular, the heritage assets of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and Glen Ding Forest shall be rigorously protected.</p>	<p>CPO 8.8 To protect and promote the characteristics of historic towns in County Wicklow identified as zones of archaeological potential in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), ensuring that cognisance is given in relevant development proposals to retaining existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.</p> <p>CPO 8.9 To protect and promote the conservation of historic burial grounds (those that are generally no longer in use but which may contain sites and features on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and/or RPS) and support greater public access to these where possible.</p> <p>Architectural Heritage Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.10 To protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Wicklow and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations.</p> <p>CPO 8.11 To support the work of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in collecting data relating to the architectural heritage, including the historic gardens and designed landscapes, of the County, and in the making of this information widely accessible to the public, and property owners.</p> <p>CPO 8.12 To have regard to 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011) in the assessment of proposals affecting architectural heritage.</p> <p>Record of Protected Structures Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.13 To ensure the protection of all structures, items and features contained in the Record of Protected Structures.</p> <p>CPO 8.14 To positively consider proposals to alter or change the use of protected structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to architectural heritage assessment and to demonstration by a suitably qualified Conservation Architect / or other relevant expertise that the structure, character, appearance and setting will not be adversely affected and suitable design, materials and construction methods will be utilised.</p> <p>CPO 8.15 All development works on or at the sites of protected structures, including any site works necessary, shall be carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures / site that render it worthy of protection.</p> <p>CPO 8.16 To support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc) previously existed.</p> <p>CPO 8.17 To strongly resist the demolition of protected structures or features of special interest unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist. All such cases will be subject to full heritage impact assessment and mitigation.</p> <p>Other Structures & Vernacular Architecture Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.18 To seek (through the development management process) the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings, historic shopfronts, thatched roofs and historic features such as stone walls and milestones. The demolition of vernacular buildings will be discouraged.</p> <p>CPO 8.19 Development proposals affecting vernacular buildings and structures will be required to submit a detailed, true measured survey, photographic records and written analysis as part of the planning application process.</p> <p>CPO 8.20 Where an item or a structure (or any feature of a structure) is considered to be of heritage merit (where not identified in the RPS), the Planning Authority reserves the right to refuse permission to remove or alter that structure / item, in the interests of the protection of the County's architectural heritage.</p> <p>Architectural Conservation Area Objectives</p> <p>CPO 8.21 Within Architectural Conservation Areas, all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects of the environment which form an essential part of their character, as set out in their character appraisals, shall be considered for protection. The repair and refurbishment of existing buildings within the ACA will be favoured over demolition/new build in so far as practicable.</p> <p>CPO 8.22 The design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of an existing building, should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole. Schemes for the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of Architectural Conservation Areas will be promoted. In consideration of applications for new buildings, alterations and extensions affecting Architectural Conservation Areas, the following principles will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals will only be considered where they positively enhance the character of the ACA. • The siting of new buildings should, where appropriate retain the existing street building line. • The mass of the new building should be in scale and harmony with the adjoining buildings, and the area as a whole, and the proportions of its parts should relate to each other, and to the adjoining buildings. • Architectural details on buildings of high architectural value should be retained wherever possible. Original features, which

⁴ The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage can be utilised as a source of information with regard to the architectural value of any such features, but should not be considered an exhaustive list of buildings worthy of protection.

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

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

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

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

2.10 Instance whereby Environmental Considerations were not fully integrated into the Plan

Against the advice of the Executive, the Members decided to adopt certain Proposed Material Amendments as part of the Plan. The Material Amendments that did not fully integrate environmental considerations into the Plan, together with the advice to Members provided in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display, are detailed on Table 2.2 below.

With respect to Amendments No's. 6, 19 and 24, these were adopted with further modification as indicated on the table.

Table 2.2 Material Amendments that did not fully integrate environmental considerations into the Plan and associated SEA commentary

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display	Further Modification
6 and 28	<p>Amendment No. 6 proposes the addition of a new Opportunity Site. Amendment No. 28 proposes the change in land use zoning from OS1 to TC to accommodate the Opportunity Site.</p> <p>As previously identified by the Chief Executive: "The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the CE Report, namely: "The rationale for the zoning of this land OS1 'Open Space' is set out in some detail in the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. The Audit includes the report of the WCC Biodiversity Officer, which made reference to the Ecological Impact Assessment raised in the submission, and clearly states that uses such as substantial numbers of structures, hard surfacing, etc. would be considered inappropriate with regard to the essential biodiversity quality and ecological function/connectivity of the lands".</p> <p>As has already been identified in the SEA Environmental Report that was placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input seeks to facilitate zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity. <p>These Proposed Amendments would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and have the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); and Increased loadings on water bodies. <p>Objective BLESS OP9 and the Opportunity Site Concept Plan, both of which are proposed by Amendment No. 6, would contribute towards the mitigation of adverse effects on ecology.</p>	<p>Amendment No. 6 was adopted with further modification involving the addition of the following text: "Any lighting proposed should have regard to best practice guidance on bats and artificial lighting."</p>
7, 8, 36	<p>Amendments No. 7 and No. 8 propose changes to two conditions that must be satisfied for permission to be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands.</p> <p>These amendments include the addition of the following text to one of the conditions: "or after 3 years following adoption of the LAP, less than 50% of the RN1 lands have been activated". In response to this text, the Chief Executive has identified that:</p> <p>"The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the following reasons:</p> <p>The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy; Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022). 	None.

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display	Further Modification
	<p>In these regards, the request for greater flexibility in the criteria for the development of RN2 lands could result in a situation whereby RN2 lands may be developed ahead of certain RN1 lands, such that RN1 lands may not then be able to be developed within the constraints of the prevailing Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan. This could result in 'leapfrogging' and peripheral development, contrary to Section 6.3.4 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028."</p> <p>Amendment No. 36 applies changes proposed by Amendment No. 8 to BLESS7 as it appears in Appendix 6 and Amendment No. 37 provides Implementation Tables to be included under Appendix 6 including the changes proposed by Amendment No.'s 7 and 8.</p> <p>The above quoted text from these Proposed Amendments would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components as a result of increasing the likelihood that these lands will be developed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur); • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur); • Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects would occur); • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); • Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); and • Increased loadings on water bodies. 	
19	<p>Proposed Material Amendment No. 19 includes: the merging of SLO2 and SLO8; the amendment of land use of zoning of c. 10.4ha in SLO2 from AOS 'Active Open Space' to RN1 'New Residential Priority 1'; the amendment of c. 2.3ha in SLO2 from RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' to RN1 'New Residential - Priority 1'; and amendments to SLO2 and SLO8 Specific Local Objectives' areas and text.</p> <p>As identified by the Chief Executive:</p> <p>"The CE does not support the proposed amendment.</p> <p>The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy; • Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022). <p>In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land for residential use as detailed in this proposal would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended) • Result in a reduction in AOS 'Active Open Space' zoned lands. These are essential zonings that are necessary to support the sustainable development of the plan area, and the location and area of these zones has been carefully determined in order to meet Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and sustainable development principles. <p>The subject lands represents a significant area of Active Open Space land which, if re-zoned as proposed, would reduce the overall provision of AOS within the draft plan area from c. 18.2ha to 7.8ha, below that recommended by the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit."</p> <p>As has already been identified in the SEA Environmental Report that was placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. • Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. • The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input seeks to facilitate zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity. <p>This Proposed Amendment would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur); 	<p>Amendment No. 19 was adopted with further modification relating to "... general good permeability via pedestrian/cyclist linkages through and between the SLO lands and surrounding areas".</p>

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display	Further Modification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur); • Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects would occur); • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); • Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); and • Increased loadings on water bodies. 	
22	<p>Proposed Material Amendment No. 22 comprises the: amendment of zoning of land at Santryhill/New Paddocks measuring c. 2.4ha from 'RN2 New Residential – Priority 2' to 'RN1 New Residential – Priority 1'; and addition of a new SLO area.</p> <p>The Chief Executive has identified that:</p> <p>"The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the CE Report, namely:</p> <p>'The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy; • Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022). <p>In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1' as detailed in this submission would exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended)."</p> <p>This Proposed Amendment would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components as a result of increasing the likelihood that these lands will be developed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur); • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur); • Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects would occur); • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); • Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); and • Increased loadings on water bodies. 	None.
24	<p>Proposed Material Amendment No. 24 comprises the: amendment of zoning of land at Burgage More measuring c. 1.3ha from 'E – Employment' to 'RN1 - New Residential Priority 1'; and the addition of a new SLO.</p> <p>The Chief Executive has identified that:</p> <p>"The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the CE Report, namely:</p> <p>The residential zoning provisions of the draft plan have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the Wicklow Core Strategy; • Sound spatial principles in accordance in particular with the requirements of guidance set out in the NPF and Ministerial Guidelines 'Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022). <p>In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land for residential use as detailed in this submission would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which is precluded under Section 19(2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended) • Result in a reduction in E 'Employment' zoned lands. These are essential zonings that are necessary to support the sustainable development of the plan area, and the location and area of these zones has been carefully determined in order to meet Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and sustainable development principles. The subject lands represents one of a relatively small number of undeveloped employment sites within the built-up area, and as such its re-zoning may undermine the expansion of existing businesses in Blessington or the establishment of new businesses requiring employment lands of this scale." 	Amendment No. 6 was adopted with further modification, omitting the following text relating to a road safety improvement scheme along the N81: "(currently being developed by the TII)".

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display	Further Modification
	<p>This Proposed Amendment would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility (including with reference to loss of an extent of potential employment development close to the town centre, close to existing services and within walking / cycling distance of the resident population) and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects may occur); • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects may occur); and • Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects may occur). • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites); • Occurrence of visual impacts (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites); and • Increased loadings on water bodies (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites). 	
29	<p>Proposed Material Amendment No. 24 comprises the amendment of zoning of lands at Blessington Demesne, north of Oak Drive, measuring c. 0.5ha from 'E – Employment' to 'SLC – Small Local Centre'.</p> <p>The Chief Executive has identified that:</p> <p>"The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the CE Report, namely:</p> <p>'In relation to the lands zoned E 'Employment', the subject lands are located outside the Blessington Core Retail Area as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and outside of lands zoned TC 'Town Centre' in the Draft LAP. The Draft Blessington LAP 2025 Written Statement states the following: 'Blessington is fortunate in that retail uses are currently concentrated within Blessington Town Centre, with no large out-of-centre retail activity. The current, and envisioned, spatial extent of Blessington does not indicate that such out-of-centre or 'neighbourhood centre' retail areas are currently required or desirable.' Therefore, rezoning the subject lands to allow for retail uses would undermine objective BLESS4, which states the following:</p> <p>'To direct retail development into the Core Retail Area as a first priority, as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (or any update thereof), in line with its position in the County Retail Hierarchy & Strategy. This will be accomplished as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no quantitative restriction on the development of retail floorspace within the Blessington Core Retail Area. • All developments for additional retail floorspace, which are both outside the Core Retail Area and within Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes), will be required to be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment in line with 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Retail Planning' 2012 and any updated or relevant guidelines. • The development of retail floorspace outside of Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes) will not be facilitated unless absolutely necessary.'" <p>This Proposed Amendment would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility (including by facilitating out-of-centre retail) and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects may occur); • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects may occur); and • Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects may occur). • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites); • Occurrence of visual impacts (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites); and • Increased loadings on water bodies (demand for an extent of employment development may have to be met elsewhere, possibly on more peripheral and sensitive sites). 	None.

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display	Further Modification
30 and 33 ⁵	<p>Amendment No. 30 proposes a change to zoning of c. 6.9ha at Deerpark from 'EX – Extractive Industry' to 'AOS – Active Open Space'. Amendment No. 33 proposes the addition of a pedestrian/cyclist route to the lands that are the subject of Amendment No. 30.</p> <p>In response to this proposal, the Chief Executive has identified that:</p> <p>"The CE does not support the proposed amendment for the reasons already set out in the CE Report, namely:</p> <p>'The CE is satisfied, on the basis of the detailed analysis carried out in the Social Infrastructure Audit, that the draft plan makes appropriate provision of land zoned for future sports development in the plan area (land zoned AOS).</p> <p>The CE is satisfied that the areas identified, based on sound planning principles, for new AOS in the draft plan are the most suitable to serve the needs of the settlement and its wider catchment, in terms of proximity to the built up parts of the town, existing and planned residential areas, as well as being most accessible to active travel infrastructure and public transport routes. The main areas identified for future AOS use are located in very close proximity to the existing GAA grounds and are better located than the lands suggested in the submission, which are peripheral.'</p> <p>In addition, the CE is concerned with the potential impact on the proposed zoning on the protection of the N81 re-alignment corridor."</p> <p>This Proposed Amendment would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility (including by: facilitating the development of AOS uses further from central and residential areas, further from existing services and not within as short a walking / cycling distance of resident populations; and potentially affecting future N81 re-alignment) and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects may occur); • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects may occur); and • Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects may occur). 	None.

⁵ Note that as per ongoing advice to the Members and the 2nd Chief Executive's Report on submissions received during the public display of the Proposed Material Amendments, neither of these Proposed Material Amendments were recommended. However, the 2nd Chief Executive's Report on submissions received during the public display of the Proposed Material Amendments also stated that should the Members decide to proceed with Proposed Material Amendment 30, it is recommended that the Members proceed to make Proposed Material Amendment 31. As Proposed Material Amendment 30 was proceeded with, Proposed Material Amendment 33 was therefore recommended by the Chief Executive at the point of adoption. This does not change the SEA commentary provided with respect to both of these Proposed Material Amendments.

Section 3 Environmental Report and Submissions/ Observations

3.1 Introduction

This section details how both the Environmental Report and submissions and observations made to Wicklow County Council on the Environmental Report and SEA process have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan and the SEA.

3.2 SEA Scoping Notices and Submissions

As part of the SEA scoping process for preparation of the Plan, environmental authorities⁶ were notified that a submission or observation in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report could be made to the Council.

Detailed submissions were received from the following:

- Environmental Protection Agency; and
- Geological Survey of Ireland which is part of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (now Department of Climate, Energy and Environment).

The issues raised in this submission and how these issues have been taken into account during preparation of the Plan and the SEA are provided on Table 3.1 below. Taking into account the submission from the Environmental Protection Agency environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan, including through the selection of Plan provisions identified on Table 2.1.

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

Table 3.1 Taking into account SEA Scoping Submissions

No.	Submission text/Summary	Response
1	Submission from Environmental Protection Agency	
A	We acknowledge your notice, dated 18th August 2023, in relation to the Blessington Local Area Plan 2023-2029 (the 'Plan').	Noted.
B	The EPA is one of the statutory environmental authorities under the SEA Regulations. In our role as an SEA environmental authority, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the plan. Our functions as an SEA environmental authority do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans.	Noted.
C	As a priority, we focus our efforts on reviewing and commenting on key sector plans. For land use plans at county and local level, we provide a 'self-service approach' via the guidance document 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources'. This document is updated regularly and sets out our key recommendations for integrating environmental considerations into Local Authority land use Plans. We recommend that you take this guidance document into account in preparing the Plan and SEA.	The 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources' document has been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be kept on file for reference throughout the SEA process.
D	In preparing the Plan, Wicklow County Council should also ensure that the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region.	The SEA will seek to ensure that the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region.
E	The EPA may provide additional comments upon receipt of the SEA Environmental Report and Draft Plan/Programme/Variation at the next stage of the SEA process.	Noted – any submissions received will be taken into account as relevant and appropriate.
F	Available Guidance & Resources Our website contains various SEA resources and guidance, including: - SEA process guidance and checklists - Inventory of spatial datasets relevant to SEA - topic specific SEA guidance (including Good practice note on Cumulative Effects Assessment (EPA, 2020), Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2020), Integrating climatic factors into SEA (EPA, 2019), Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015), and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (EPA, 2012)) You can access these guidance notes and other resources at: https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-topic-and-sector-specific-guidance/	These resources and guidance have been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be accessed, as relevant, for reference throughout the SEA process.
G	Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool The ESM Webtool is a decision support tool to assist SEA and planning processes in Ireland. The tool brings together over 100 datasets and allows users to explore environmental considerations within a particular area and create plan-specific environmental sensitivity maps. These maps can help planners anticipate potential land-use conflicts and help identify suitable development locations, while also protecting the environment. The ESM Webtool is available at www.enviromap.ie .	The ESM Webtool has been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be considered throughout the SEA process, where relevant.
H	EPA SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool Our SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool is publicly available through EPA Maps at https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA . It allows public authorities to produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in a specific geographic area. It is intended to assist public authorities in SEA screening and scoping exercises.	Available online EPA resources, including mapping resources, have been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be considered throughout the SEA and AA processes.
I	EPA WFD Application Our WFD Application provides a single point of access to water quality and catchment data from the national WFD monitoring programme. The Application is available via www.catchments.ie .	
J	Catchments.ie Our https://www.catchments.ie/maps/ website provides a single point of access to water quality and catchment data from the National WFD monitoring programme.	
K	EPA AA GeoTool Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to a select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for each European Site within the area. It is also available through EPA https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool .	

No.	Submission text/Summary	Response
L	<p>State of the Environment Report – Ireland’s Environment 2020</p> <p>In preparing the Plan and SEA, the recommendations, key issues and challenges described within our State of the Environment Report Ireland’s Environment – An Assessment 2020 (EPA, 2020) should be considered, as relevant and appropriate to the Plan. This should also be taken into account, in preparing the Plan and SEA.</p>	<p>The recommendations, key issues and challenges described within the current version of Ireland’s Environment will be considered in the preparation of the Plan and SEA.</p>
M	<p>Transition to a low carbon climate resilient economy and society</p> <p>You should ensure that the Plan aligns with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans.</p>	<p>The SEA will seek to ensure that the Plan aligns with national commitments on climate change and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans.</p>
N	<p>Environmental Authorities</p> <p>Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Agency; • Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage; • Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications; and • Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. • any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan. 	<p>Notice has been given to relevant environmental authorities as part of the SEA scoping process.</p>
O	<p>If you have any queries or need further information in relation to this submission, please contact me directly. I would be grateful if you could send an email confirming receipt of this submission to: sea@epa.ie.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
2	Geological Survey of Ireland	
A	<p>Geological Survey Ireland make a submission addressing issues relating to geology under topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoheritage • Culture and Tourism • Dimension Stone/Stone Built Ireland • Groundwater • Geological Mapping • Geotechnical Database Resources • Geohazards • Geothermal Energy • Natural Resources (Minerals/Aggregates) • Geochemistry of soils, surface waters and sediments 	<p>This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.</p>

3.3 Submissions on the Environmental Report for the Draft Plan

Various submissions were made on the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Amendments and/or associated environmental assessment documents, including the SEA Environmental Report and AA/SFRA documents, while these documents were on public display.

Updates made to the Plan and associated environmental assessment documents on foot of submissions include:

- To amend text in Section 4.9 "Water" of the SEA Environmental Report as follows (existing text in black, text to be deleted in ~~red strikethrough~~, text to be inserted in green):

"The reservoir receives water from the River Liffey, at the northern end, and the Kings River, at the southern end. The exit is ~~into the River Liffey gorge through the~~ at the western end of the reservoir towards Golden Falls Reservoir."

- To add the following text to Section 4.9 "Water" of the SEA Environmental Report as follows (text to be inserted in green):

"As identified in Appendix I, the Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of water resources. The Water Action Plan enhances and builds upon the work of the first and second-cycle plans. The Plan identifies stretches of the River Liffey, including at Ballymore Eustace, as Prioritised Areas for Action. These areas will be provided focuses action and collaboration by local, authorities, public bodies, and stakeholders as part of the implementation of the 3rd cycle for implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Ireland."

For further information on how submissions were considered, refer to the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Draft Plan and associated documents and the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Proposed Material Amendments and associated documentation – both available at <https://www.wicklow.ie/>

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Amendments and Further Modifications. The mitigation integrated into

the final, adopted Plan includes that identified at Table 2.1 of this report.

3.4 SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report

The Draft Plan and accompanying documents (including SEA Environmental Report and AA and SFRA documents) were placed on public display, having integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Responses to submissions made during the public display of the Draft Plan and associated SEA, AA and SFRA documents were integrated into a Chief Executive's Report and considered by Wicklow County Council.

A number of material amendments were proposed after public display of the Draft Plan. The Proposed Material Amendments were subject to Screening for SEA and Screening for AA. A small number of Proposed Material Amendments were subject to SEA. Responses to submissions made during the public display of the Proposed Material Amendments and associated SEA, AA and SFRA documents were integrated into a Chief Executive's Report and considered by Wicklow County Council. Further modifications were considered by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

On adoption of the Plan, the Environmental Report that had been placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan was updated to become a final Environmental Report that is consistent with the adopted Plan, taking into account all changes that were made to the original Draft Plan that was placed on public display.

Section 4 Summary of Alternatives considered

4.1 Introduction

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

Six alternatives for the Local Area Plan are identified and considered under a number of different future development scenarios, as follow:

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

Alternatives were assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs). SEOs are methodological measures developed from policies that generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level e.g. the environmental protection objectives of various European Directives that have been transposed into Irish law and which are required to be implemented. The SEOs are set out under a range of topics (see Table 4.1) and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives are evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if – in the case of adverse effects – unmitigated.

Table 4.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure • Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels • Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies • Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development • Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes • Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, cities and grids
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture • Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency • Promote continuing improvement in air quality • Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution • Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive • Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels
Climatic Factors	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses • Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) • Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets • Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change • Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention

4.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

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

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

4.3 Alternatives Description and Assessment Summary

An overall comparative assessment of the alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Table 4.1) is provided on Table 4.2. The basis of this assessment is provided under subsections 4.3.1 to 4.3.6 below.

4.3.1 Alternative 1: Maximum Environmental Protection

By limiting development within parts of the Plan area, including those that are most sensitive to development, this alternative would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from development within the Plan area⁷ (although this potential would remain, albeit to a reduced degree) and benefit the protection and management of following environmental components within the Plan area⁸:

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

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-served and less-well connected⁹. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited¹⁰.

By allowing for development targets to be met within the Plan area, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a moderate degree¹¹. New development would have to be accompanied by appropriate levels of infrastructure and services¹².

4.3.2 Alternative 2: Sustainable Transportation

By focusing on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to the more sustainable modes of walking, cycling and using public transport, and by providing for higher densities, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a greater degree¹³ and conflict with these efforts to a lesser degree¹⁴.

⁷ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

⁸ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

⁹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹⁰ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹¹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹² See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **MA A C PHH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹³ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹⁴ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **MA A C PHH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

Dezoning undeveloped greenfield lands, including parts of the Strategic Land Bank (SLB) that is not within 12-minute walking distance of public transport would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from development at these locations¹⁵ (although the potential would remain elsewhere, including as a result of new and enhanced transport infrastructure) and benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape¹⁶.

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected¹⁷. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited¹⁸.

4.3.3 Alternative 3: Compact Growth

By allowing for development targets to be met within the Plan area, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a moderate degree¹⁹. New development would have to be accompanied by appropriate levels of infrastructure and services²⁰.

Dezoning all undeveloped greenfield lands would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from development at these locations²¹ (although the potential would remain elsewhere, including as a result of town and village centre development and mixed use, high density residential development on infill sites previously zoned for employment uses within the built-up area) and benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape²².

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected²³. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited²⁴.

4.3.4 Alternative 4: Housing Market Driven

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

By providing for

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

this alternative would:

- benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a lesser degree²⁵; and

¹⁵ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹⁶ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹⁷ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹⁸ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

¹⁹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²⁰ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²¹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²² See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²³ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²⁴ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** - SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²⁵ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

- conflict with these efforts to a greater degree²⁶.

This alternative would provide zoning for ten years of housing needs, unlike the other alternatives that would make provisions over a six-year lifespan and be reviewed towards the end of this six-year period. Furthermore, demand would be met through lower densities, requiring a greater extent of lands to be zoned for development. The extent of greenfield development provided and the lack of a focus on infill/regeneration development would present a greater potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from such development within the Plan area under this alternative²⁷ and consequently benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape, in the Plan area to a lesser degree²⁸.

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected²⁹. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited³⁰.

4.3.5 Alternative 5: Community Driven

By focusing on healthy communities, where residents have all necessary facilities and services within short walking/cycling distance of their homes, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a greater degree³¹ and conflict with these efforts to a lesser degree³².

Providing for a strengthened town centre and more opportunity sites for the redevelopment of brownfield sites would help to reduce demand for greenfield development within the Plan area and associated potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from such development³³ (although the potential would remain) and benefit the protection and management of environmental components such as biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil and landscape, especially in peripheral parts of the Plan area³⁴.

This alternative would allow for development targets to be met within the Plan area, reducing demand and associated potential for dispersed adverse environmental effects to occur as a result of development occurring outside of the Plan area, in areas that are potentially more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected³⁵. As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited³⁶.

4.3.6 Assessment of Alternative 6: Extractive Industry & Economy Driven

By maximising the potential for growth of jobs locally (including prioritising lands in proximity to public transport for employment use to facilitate the sustainable commuting), where workers and resident workers would have all necessary facilities and services within short walking/cycling distance of their workplaces and homes, this alternative would benefit efforts to maximise sustainable mobility (including associated interactions with air, climate mitigation and human health) and infrastructural and services efficiencies (including associated interactions with population) to a moderate degree³⁷ and conflict with

²⁶ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **MA A C PHH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²⁷ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** • SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²⁸ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** • SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

²⁹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** ■ SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³⁰ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** ■ SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³¹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³² See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **MA A C PHH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³³ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, likely to occur: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** • SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³⁴ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** • SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³⁵ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** ■ SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³⁶ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** ■ SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³⁷ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **MA A C PPH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

these efforts to a moderate degree³⁸. Zoning all quarry lands for extractive industry uses would hinder the sustainable development of other mixed uses at some of these sites, such as Doran's Pit, while the loss of local road objectives through quarry lands, such as the link between Blessington Bridge and the N81, could hinder efforts to improve sustainable mobility.

Although there are environmentally sensitive locations within and adjacent to the Plan area, providing for the economic development of lands within the Plan area, including those associated with existing industries (tourism and quarrying), would help to reduce demand for greenfield development elsewhere and associated potential for adverse environmental effects to occur from such development³⁹ (including effects that could arise in previously undeveloped areas that are more sensitive, less well-serviced and less-well connected⁴⁰). As a result, the protection and management of environmental components beyond the Plan area would be benefited⁴¹.













³⁸ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **MA A C PHH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

³⁹ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.

⁴⁰ See potentially significant adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated: **BFF PHH S A W L CH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.


⁴¹ See significant positive environmental effects, likely to occur: **A C S BFF W PHH MA L CH** SEO interactions in Table 4.2.


Table 4.2 Overall Comparative Assessment of Alternatives against SEOs⁴²

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

■ = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area (as a result of directing incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas within the Plan area and focusing on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area)

■ = These interactions relate to the potential for direct adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated (arising from development within the Plan area)

 = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment beyond the Plan area (as a result of providing development within the Plan area)

 = These interactions relate to adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, (arising from development occurring beyond the Plan area)

⁴² For more detail on Strategic Environmental Objectives refer to Table 4.1.

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

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

- from "Alternative 1: Maximum Environmental Protection"
 - The protection to European Sites (SAC and SPA) and NHAs. Include a significant conservation buffer surrounding all sites to enhance the protection of SAC, SPA and NHA sites;
 - Restrict development outward from the existing built-up area in the direction of the Poulaphouca Reservoir;
 - Protect mature trees and hedgerows where they are not on the TPO list;
 - Protection of watercourses in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' 2020;
 - Protection of landscape;
 - Enhance the protection of views and prospects with restricted development within the view/prospect; and
 - Rezone the majority of lands identified as 'Local Biodiversity Areas' as Natural Areas (OS2) or Open Space (OS1).
- from "Alternative 2: Sustainable Transportation"
 - The Plan facilitates the significant reduction, or removal, of through traffic through the town centre;
 - The Plan facilitates a reallocation of road space in the town centre from car parking to pedestrians and cyclists;
 - The Plan facilitates enhanced pedestrian connections throughout the settlement;
 - The Plan facilitates new pedestrian/cycling links between the existing built-up area and Glen Ding Forest;
 - The Plan facilitates the expansion of the Blessington Greenway around Poulaphouca Reservoir;
 - The Plan facilitates an increase in pedestrian/cyclist permeability between Blessington Main Street and adjacent areas of the built-up area and other areas of zoned land (e.g. Kilbride Road, existing residential areas to west, Doran's Pit, etc.);
 - The Plan facilitates enhanced cycle routes and connections throughout the settlement in line with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network 2022, and where required elsewhere; and
 - The Plan facilitates a 'Park and Ride' site adjacent to Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- from "Alternative 3: Compact Growth"
 - Zone those lands between Newtown Square and the under-construction town park, to the immediate west of the town centre development, for residential development; and
 - All Town Centre sites are zoned for high density mixed use.
- from "Alternative 4: Housing Market Driven"
 - Provide for extra housing units above that of the Core Strategy as 'Priority 2' on the next best lands.

- from “Alternative 5: Community Driven”
 - Extra lands, above the minimum requirement for new schools are zoned close to residential areas;
 - Extra lands are zoned for Community Education (CE) and Active Open Space (AOS) (e.g. for playing pitches, leisure centres/swimming pools, community halls, theatres, cultural facilities, running tracks, landscaped parks, dog parks, all other recreation/sports etc.);
 - New walking routes / cycling routes are designated throughout the settlement, along with routes around the Poulaphouca Reservoir, routes to Glen Ding Forest; and
 - Extra lands are zoned for employment to facilitate people working locally.
- from “Alternative 6: Extractive Industry and Economy Driven”
 - Extra lands, above the minimum requirement to meet a 0.7 jobs ratio, are zoned for employment purposes to maximise the potential for resident workers to work in the settlement, maximise the potential for strategic employment uses to relocate to the settlement, and thus reduce commuting times and unemployment; and
 - Land between the existing built-up area and the Poulaphouca Reservoir are zoned for ‘T – Tourism’ uses, with a buffer from the SPA boundary, to capitalise on the attraction provided by the Blessington Greenway, and to provide accommodation for tourists in an area of lakeside high amenity.

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

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

An assessment of the ‘Selected Alternative’ against SEOs is provided at Table 4.3. The ‘Selected Alternative’ will help to:

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

Table 4.3 Assessment of 'Selected Alternative' against SEOs⁴³

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

▪ = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area (directing incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas within the Plan area and focusing on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area)

▪ = These interactions relate to the potential for direct adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated (arising from development within the Plan area)

▒ = These interactions relate to positive effects on the protection and management of the environment beyond the Plan area (as a result of providing development within the Plan area)

▒ = These interactions relate to adverse environmental effects, if unmitigated, (arising from development occurring beyond the Plan area)

⁴³ For more detail on Strategic Environmental Objectives refer to Table 4.1.

Section 5 Monitoring Measures

5.1 Introduction

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

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

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

5.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives that were used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. Given the position of the Local Area Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied), the measures identified in that County Development Plan SEA have been used as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 5.1 shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated.

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

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

5.3 Sources

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

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

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

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁴⁴ basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

⁴⁴ The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

5.4 Reporting

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. Monitoring frequencies of indicators tend to change although where they are consistent frequencies are identified. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 5.1.

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

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

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

Table 5.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁴⁵
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity Action Plans Confirmation of compliance with Plan provisions relating to the protection of European Sites and sustaining resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)⁴⁶ DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)⁴⁷ Internal review of local land use plans Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity Action Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. under the County Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 17 “Natural Heritage and Biodiversity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 17 “Natural Heritage and Biodiversity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic Development” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 9 “Economic Development” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DCEE

⁴⁵ Where remedial action is required, consultations with government agencies (e.g. DCEE, DT, EPA, HSE, NPWS, Regional Assembly, Uisce Éireann) may be undertaken in order to confirm causes of any identified changes in the environment and in order to develop appropriate responses.

⁴⁶ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

⁴⁷ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁴⁵
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of published information from the Health Service Executive and EPA Internal consultations with the Council's Environment Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Soil (and Land)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance⁴⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.

⁴⁸ Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁴⁵
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data EPA Air Quality Monitoring Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above
Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of progress in implementing of Wicklow County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions 	

SEA Statement for the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁴⁵
		may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030)	reporting • Internal review of implementation of Plan provisions relating to renewable energy in transport, including facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure	
	• Greenhouse gas emissions	• Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050)		
	• Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating	• To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating		
	• Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels	• Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the City using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel	• CSO data • Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives	• Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
	• Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures	• Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel	• CSO data • Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives	• Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Cultural Heritage	• Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• Internal review of development management / grants of permission	• Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.
	• Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan	• Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan	• Internal review of development management / grants of permission	
Landscape	• Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• Internal review of development management / grants of permission	• Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation