

## 14. LANDSCAPE, RECREATION & AMENITY



### AIM

To provide for the protection, management and enhancement of the landscape of the county and to ensure that development does not disproportionately impact on the landscape character areas, scenic routes or protected views, through the implementation of appropriate policies and objectives to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



## 14.1 BACKGROUND

Landscape embraces all that is visible when one looks across an area of land. As well as being an important part of people's lives, giving individuals a sense of identity and belonging, landscape is the context in which all changes take place.

The landscape of County Kildare comprises a central plain bounded to the east by the Kildare uplands, which lie at the foot-hills of the Wicklow and Dublin Mountains. The Curragh, the boglands of north-west Kildare and the fertile lowlands of the south all comprise part of the central plain. The plain lands are interrupted by two groups of isolated hills, the Chair of Kildare and the Newtown Hills. The location of these hills within the central plain has a considerable impact on the landscape of Kildare. Inland waters comprise the River Liffey, River Barrow, River Slate, River Boyne, Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Rye Water River that traverse the county, providing important landscape features.

## 14.2 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of planning in its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This requires that development plans include objectives for the preservation of landscape, views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty. It also provides for the designation of Landscape Conservation Areas (LCA), Areas of Special Amenity (ASA) and the assessment of landscape character.

In 2000, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government issued *Landscape Assessment – Consultation of Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG, 2000). These seek to ensure that:

*“the environment and heritage generally are maintained in a sustainable manner, while at the same time enabling a proactive approach to development”.*

In 2015, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government issued *A National Landscape Strategy of Ireland 2015–2025*, which states that:

*“Landscape Character Assessments will be prepared at local and intra-local authority level, building on the National Landscape Character Assessment, using Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines. These regional and local landscape character assessments will inform and guide landscape policy, action plans and local authority development plans.”*

The Council will undertake a review of its Landscape Character Assessment on foot of any actions from the forthcoming National Landscape Character Assessment.

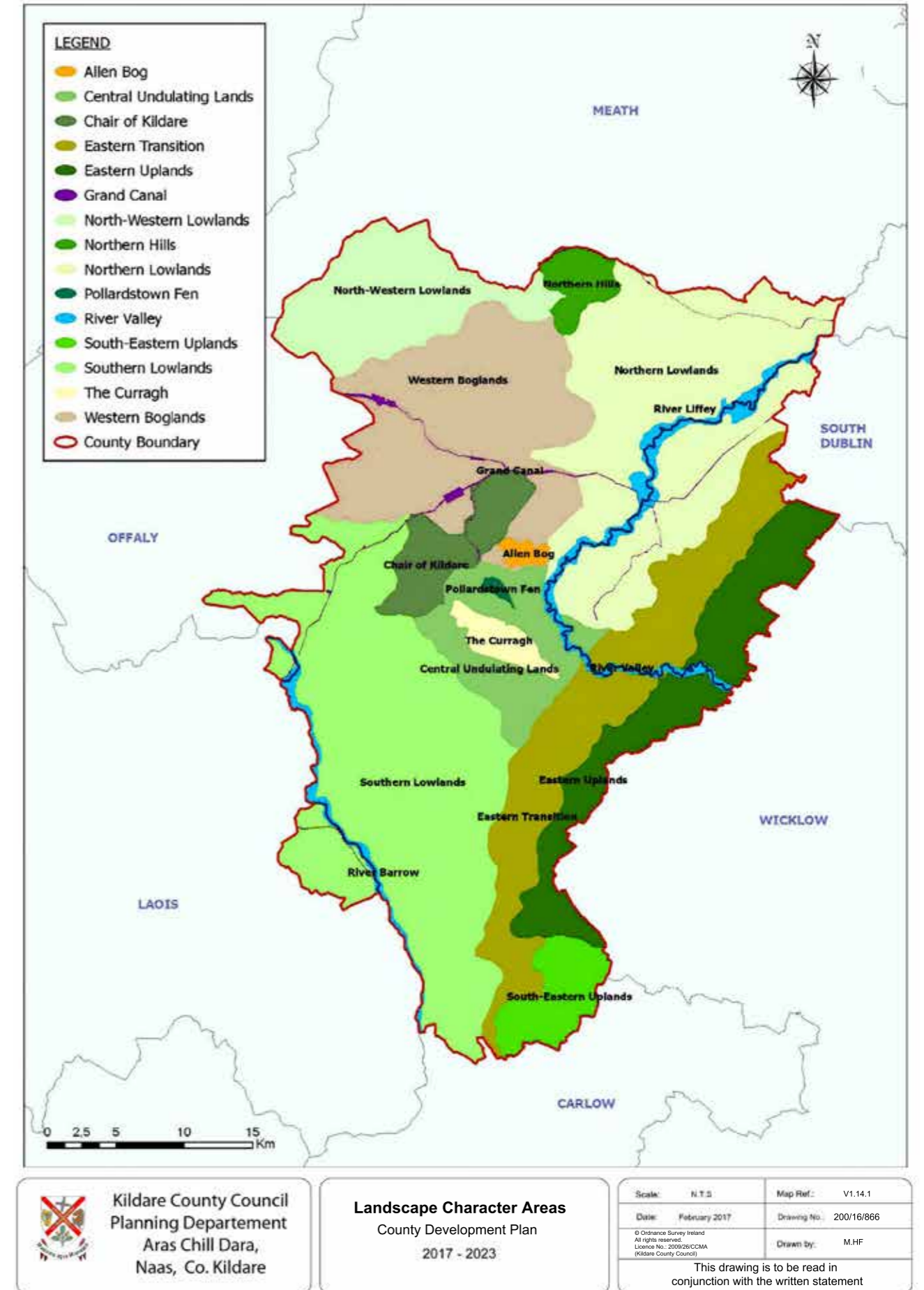
## 14.3 STRATEGY

The natural diversity of the landscape, coupled with human interaction in the form of introduced features such as hedgerows, woodlands, archaeological monuments, settlements and buildings, all serve to give Kildare its distinctive characteristic landscape. All development which takes place has the ability to impact on this landscape, positively and negatively. It is essential therefore that the landscape is protected and managed in a sustainable and coherent manner. A review of the Kildare County Development Plan landscape provisions was undertaken to provide a robust strategy which classifies the landscape of the county, appraises landscape sensitivity, making a judgement on sensitivity to change and taking into account historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape.

## 14.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

In 2004, a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the county was undertaken and is contained in Volume II of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005–2011. The LCA focused on characterisation i.e. the discernment of the character of the landscape based on its land cover and landform, but also on its values, such as historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape. It concentrates on the distinctiveness of different landscapes and on the sensitivity of that landscape to development. Map 14.1 outlines the indicative Landscape Character Areas of the county. Landscape Character Areas are areas that generally share the same characteristics. Minor or very small distinctive features that arise from localised topographic circumstances – are outcrops, rivers, bogs, fens – are mapped [see map 14.1] as Subordinate Landscape Areas. Table 14.1 indicates the dominant sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area. It is important to note that within each of these areas there can be a wide variety of local conditions that can significantly increase or decrease sensitivity. Notwithstanding this observation, it is possible to identify a dominant sensitivity within each area – as highlighted in Table 14.1. This is determined by examining the presence/absence or dominance of sensitivity factors within each area by using landscape sensitivity. The resulting classification is then used to produce an evidenced-based Landscape Sensitivity Map.

Map 14.1  
Landscape Character Areas








**Table 14.1**  
Landscape Sensitivity Classification to Landscape Character Areas

Sensitivity of Principal Landscape Character Assessment (Dominant Sensitivity Outlined)	Class 1 Low Sensitivity	Class 2 Medium Sensitivity	Class 3 High Sensitivity	Class 4 Special Sensitivity	Class 5 Unique Sensitivity
North Western Lowlands	<b>Class 1</b>				
Northern Lowlands	<b>Class 1</b>				
Central Undulating Lands	<b>Class 1</b>				
Western Boglands			<b>Class 3</b>		
Southern Lowlands	<b>Class 1</b>				
Eastern Transition		<b>Class 2</b>			
Eastern Uplands			<b>Class 3</b>		
South-Eastern Uplands		<b>Class 2</b>			
Sub-ordinate Landscape Areas					
Northern Hills				<b>Class 4</b>	
Chair of Kildare				<b>Class 4</b>	
The Curragh					<b>Class 5</b>
Pollardstown Fen					<b>Class 5</b>
Allen Bog				<b>Class 4</b>	
River Liffey				<b>Class 4</b>	
River Barrow				<b>Class 4</b>	

#### 14.4.1 Landscape Sensitivity

Based on the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment a landscape sensitivity rating was developed for each of the Landscape Character Areas. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. It is determined using the following factors: slope, ridgeline, water bodies, land use and prior development. The Landscape Character Areas have been mapped according to their landscape sensitivity (Tables 14.1, 14.2 and Map 14.2 refer).

**Table 14.2**  
Landscape Sensitivity Classification to Landscape Character Areas

Sensitivity	Landscape Character Area	Location	Description
Class 1 Low Sensitivity	North-Western Lowlands Northern Lowlands Central Undulating Lands Southern Lowlands		Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area.
Class 2 Medium Sensitivity	Eastern Transition Lands South-Eastern Uplands		Areas with the capacity to accommodate a range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regards to localised sensitivity factors.
Class 3 High Sensitivity	Western Boglands Eastern Uplands		Areas with reduced capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to prevalent sensitivity factors.
Class 4 Special	Chair of Kildare Northern Hills River Liffey River Barrow		Areas with low capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to special sensitivity factors.
Class 5 Unique	The Curragh Pollardstown Fen		Areas with little or no capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to unique and special sensitivity factors.







**14.4.2 Impact of Development on Landscape**

In order to determine the likely perceived impact of a particular development on the landscape, the potential impact of the development must be viewed in light of the sensitivity of the area. Table 14.3 below provides guidance on the likely compatibility between a range of land-use classes

and the principle landscape areas of the county classified by sensitivity. Table 14.4 identifies the likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and proximity of less than 300m to the principle Landscape Sensitivity Factors. It should be noted that all developments are unique and at micro / local level landscapes vary in terms of their ability to absorb development and each site should be assessed on its individual merits.

**Table 14.3**  
Likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and Principle Landscape Areas.

Compatibility Key		Sensitivity Class											
Most	High	Agriculture and Forestry		Housing		Urbanisation		Infrastructure		Extraction		Energy	
Medium	Low	Agriculture	Forestry	Rural Housing	Urban Expansion	Industrial Projects	Tourism Projects	Major Powerlines *	Sand & Gravel	Rock	Windfarm	Solar	
Least													
Principal Landscape Character Areas													
North Western Lowlands	1												
Northern Lowlands	1												
Western Boglands	3												
Eastern Transition	2												
Eastern Uplands	3												
South-Eastern Uplands	2												
Sub-ordinate Landscape Areas													
Northern Hills	4												
Chair of Kildare	4												
The Curragh	5												
Pollardstown Fen	5												
Allen Bog	4												
River Liffey	4												
River Barrow	4												

\* Major Powerlines are intended to include only those conveyed entirely on lattice towers – [i.e. 220kV and 400kV]

**Table 14.4**  
Likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and proximity to Principal Landscape Sensitivity Factors.

5 - Likely to be very compatible in most circumstances. 4 - Likely to be compatible with reasonable care. 3 - Likely to be compatible with great care. 2 - Compatible only in certain circumstances. 1 - Compatible only in exceptional circumstances. 0 - Very unlikely to be compatible.	Agriculture and Forestry		Housing		Urbanisation		Infrastructure		Extraction		Energy	
	Agriculture	Forestry	Rural Housing	Urban Expansion	Industrial Projects	Tourism Projects	Major Powerlines	Sand and Gravel	Rock	Windfarm	Solar	
Proximity within 300m of Principal Landscape Sensitivity Factors.												
Major Rivers and Water bodies	5	5	2	2	2	3	2	1	0	1	0	
Canals	5	5	2	2	2	3	2	1	0	1	1	
Ridgelines	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	
Green Urban Areas	4	5	2	0	0	4	3	3	3	2	2	
Broad-Leaved Forestry	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	
Mixed Forestry	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	
Natural Grasslands	5	2	2	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	
Moors and Heathlands	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	1	
Agricultural Land with Natural Vegetation	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	
Peat Bogs	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	
Scenic View	5	5	2	1	1	5	1	3	0	0	2	
Scenic Route	5	5	2	1	1	5	1	3	0	0	2	

## 14.5 AREAS OF HIGH AMENITY

In addition to Landscape Character Areas and the sensitivity of these areas to development, there are certain special landscape areas within the county, some of which overlap with sensitive landscapes. For the purposes of this Plan these areas have been defined as Areas of High Amenity. They are classified because of their outstanding natural beauty and/or unique interest value and are generally sensitive to the impacts of development. These areas are outlined in the following sub-sections.

### 14.5.1 The Curragh and Environs

The Curragh, located between Newbridge and Kildare Town, is the largest area of unenclosed natural grassland in the country and provides a valuable amenity area for the surrounding towns of Kildare, Newbridge and Kilcullen. The Curragh Camp and the Curragh Racecourse are located within the plain.

The Curragh constitutes a unique national asset from the point of view of landscape and geomorphology which extends over 2000 hectares and is a historic open plain of high conservation value. Extensive views can be obtained from the south-east of the site, at St. Ledgers Bottoms, around much of the perimeter of the site. The sense of openness has been diminished over the years with the development of the military camp, the racecourse complex, the railway, the new motorway and power lines.

The Curragh is of conservation value for a number of reasons. It is most unusual in an Irish and European context, in that it is an extensive open plain area of lowland acidic grassland, succeeding to dry heath in places. It has been grazed but unfertilised for hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of years. Due to the management regime on the open grassland, nationally important populations of rare fungi are found which only occur in ancient grasslands.

Land-use at the Curragh is dominated by sheep grazing on the open plains, which are commonage. Horse exercising and training are carried out on the many gallops. There is a military range at the south east of the Curragh where target practice is regularly carried out.

### 14.5.2 Pollardstown Fen

Pollardstown Fen is situated on the northern margin of the Curragh, approximately 3km west-north-west of Newbridge. It lies in a shallow depression, running in a north-west/south-east direction. Pollardstown Fen is the largest remaining calcareous spring-fed fen in Ireland. Covering an area of 220 ha, it is recognised as an internationally important fen ecosystem with unique and endangered plant communities. From a landscape point of view, the unique vegetation and the low-lying nature of the area allows for extensive vistas of the site along the local roads, as well as to the hilltops in the vicinity (e.g. The Hill of Allen). Consequently, development can have a disproportionate visual impact in the local context, due to an inherent inability to be visually absorbed by the existing topography.

### 14.5.3 The River Liffey and the River Barrow Valleys

The River Liffey and River Barrow valleys are of significance in terms of landscape and amenity value and as such are sensitive to development. They are characterised by smooth terrain and low vegetation, with extensive upland views (i.e. the Chair of Kildare to the west and the Eastern Uplands to the east) and distant views including the neighbouring Wicklow Mountains. The topography is such that it allows vistas over long distances without disruption along the river corridor. As a result development on the banks of the rivers can have a disproportionate visual impact, due to an inherent inability to be visually absorbed. However, the undulating topography occurring within the river valleys provides physical shielding and has the potential to visually enclose the built form within the river valley, where it does not break the skyline. Shelter vegetation exists along some stretches of the valleys with the presence of natural and native woodland that grows on the floodplains of the rivers, as well as by conifer plantation in adjacent lands. This vegetation has a shielding and absorbing quality in landscape terms. It can provide a natural visual barrier as well as adding to the complexity of a vista, breaking it up to provide scale and containment for built forms.

Many views of the river valleys are available from local roads and from viewing points located along the valleys. While river valleys represent potentially vulnerable linear landscape features, as they are often highly distinctive in the context of the general landscape, in certain circumstances landscape sensitivities may be localised or site-specific.

### 14.5.4 The Grand and Royal Canal Corridors

The Grand Canal and the Royal Canal are extensive water corridors that flow through the county. The Grand Canal flows in an east to south-west direction and divides at Sallins into the Naas and Corbally Branch, and is further divided in three branches at Robertstown; the Milltown Feeder, the Barrow Line and the continuation of the Grand Canal into neighbouring County Offaly.

The Royal Canal flows in an east to west direction along the northern boundary of the county through Leixlip, Maynooth and Kilcock and continues into County Meath.

The canal corridors and their adjacent lands have been landscaped and enhanced along the sections where the canals flow through urban areas. Canal locks are distinctive features of these water corridors. The smooth terrain, generally gentle landform and low canal bank grassland that characterise the canal corridors allow vistas over long distances without disruption, where the canal flows in a straight-line direction. Consequently, development can have a disproportionate visual impact along the water corridor and it can prove difficult for the existing topography to visually absorb development. The occurrence of natural vegetation, coniferous and mixed plantations adjacent to the water corridors can have shielding and absorbing qualities in landscape terms, by providing natural visual barriers.

Canal corridors are potentially vulnerable linear landscape features, as they are often highly distinctive in the context of the general landscape. In some cases landscape sensitivities may be localised or site-specific.



### 14.5.5 East Kildare Uplands

The Eastern Uplands are located in the east of the county and are part of the Wicklow Mountain complex. The topography rises from the lowland plains, through undulating terrain to the highest point of 379m above sea level (O. D.) at Cupidstownhill, east of Kiltel. The elevated nature of this area provides a defined skyline with scenic views over the central plains of Kildare and the neighbouring Wicklow Mountain which further define the skyline and the extent of visibility. The East Kildare Uplands are rural in character with a number of scenic views from elevated vantage points. The general land use on the uplands is pasture, with some tillage, quarrying and forestry.

Along a number of roads, which cross the upper and lower slopes of the uplands, there are long-distance views towards the Kildare lowlands and the Chair of Kildare. The sloping land provides this area with its distinctive character and intensifies the visual prominence and potential adverse impact of any feature over greater distances. Slope also provides an increased potential for development to penetrate primary and secondary ridgelines when viewed from lower areas. In the Eastern Kildare Uplands, nearly all ridgelines are secondary when viewed from the lowland areas, as the Wicklow Mountains to the east define the skyline (i.e. form primary ridgelines). Gently undulating topography and shelter vegetation provided by conifer and woodland plantation can provide a shielding of built form. Views of the River Liffey Valley as well as of the Poulaphouca Reservoir are available from the hilltops and high points on some of the local roads.

## 14.6 SCENIC ROUTES AND PROTECTED VIEWS

Scenic routes and protected views consist of important and valued views and prospects within the county. Table 14.5 lists the specific scenic routes which provide views of the landscape of the county and many built and archaeological features. Maps 14.2 and 14.3 also outline the scenic routes within the county. In addition to scenic routes there are a number of protected views throughout the county. These are located particularly along water corridors and to and from the hills in the countryside.

The Council recognises the need to protect the character of the county by protecting views and scenic routes. However, it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances, some development may be necessary.





In this regard, appropriate location, siting and design criteria should strictly apply. All proposals will be assessed taking into account the overall character of the scenic route and the character of the landscapes through which the route passes, in accordance with the criteria outlined in section 14.4.2.

#### 14.6.1 Views to and from the county's waterways: Grand Canal, Royal Canal, River Liffey, River Barrow and the Rye Water River.

River floodplains and canal banks are generally sensitive to development to varying degrees. Both the rivers and the canal corridors provide a contrast of form and colour on the landscape. The widths of rivers and canals vary throughout their corridors and with that the visual amenity also varies. In some areas the vegetation along the banks of water corridors has been cleared and pasturelands characterise the surrounding landscape while at other points debris and vegetation cover the banks. Debris material affects both the quality of the waters and the scenic views at some locations.

Urban and rural development has taken place along some sections of the canals and rivers, interrupting the integrity of these linear landscape features and in some cases significantly affecting their scenic amenity value. It is important that development does not further interrupt the integrity of river and canal corridors.

Tables 14.6-14.10 identify the protected views to and from the Royal and Grand Canal and to and from the River Liffey, River Barrow and Rye River.

#### 14.6.2 Views to and from Hills

As the landform of the county is generally flat, with very little variation in topography and predominantly low vegetation, extensive views can be obtained from hilltops, allowing vistas over long distances, and similarly from the lowland areas the eye is drawn to the primary and secondary ridgelines that define the skyline throughout the county.

Ridgelines are conspicuous features of the natural landscape as they perform an important role as dominant landscape focal points. It is important that development does not interrupt the integrity of ridgelines. Development on steeply sloping land can be viewed over greater distances.

#### 14.7 ADVERTISING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The proliferation of signs and hoardings in the countryside detracts from the visual amenity of the Kildare rural landscape. This signage is a distraction to road users and may constitute a traffic hazard.

Table 14.5  
Scenic Routes in County Kildare

No	Description	Location
1	Views of Old Kilcullen, from N78 Motorway Interchange to South of Moortown House	Knockbounce, Old Kilcullen, Hacklow, Halverstown
2	Views to the East of Yellowbogcommon, from N9 Motorway Interchange to Halverstown Cross Roads	Yellowbogcommon, Glebe South
3	Views of Curragh Plains, from the M7 Interchange to St. Ledgers Bottoms	St. Ledgers Bottoms, Curragh
4	Views of Curragh Plains including Little Curragh; County Road from Kildare Town Boundary to Military Ranges, R413 from Kildare Town Boundary to Motorway Interchange	Curraghfarm, Strawhall, Curragh, Little Curragh
5	Views of Moat and Ardscurr, N78 from Russelstown Cross Roads to Kilmead	Tullygorey, Aghanure, Ardscurr, Youngstown
6	Views of Robertstown Countryside and Views across the Canal	Mylerstown, Lowtown, Littletown, Derrymullen, Robertstown East
7	Views of Blessington Lake; N81 from Poulaphouca Bridge to County Boundary at Bishopslane and from County Boundary at Glashina to County Boundary at Glebe	Bishopslane, Crosscoolharbour, Pipershall, Hempstown, Common Glebe East, Glemore, Barrettstown
8	Views of Bogland Plains; L3002 from Kilmoney Cross Roads to Feighcullen Cross Roads at Boston Hill	Bostoncommon, Drinnastown, Kilmoney North
9	Views of River Liffey; R411 Liffey Bridge at Ballymore Eustace to Cross Roads Boundary at Silverhill Upper Townland	Broadleas Commons, Bishopslane
10	Views of the West Plains on the Oughterard Road (L2009)	Bishopscourt Lower, Boston
11	Views of the Upland Areas on the Oughterard Road (L6018)	Pluckerstown, Oughterard, Castlewarden North
12	Views West of Kildare Plains from Redbog Area and Views towards Caureen; from Rathmore Cross Roads to Pipershall	Greenmount, Redbog, Pipershall, Rathmore West
13	Views to the River Liffey on the R413 from Brannockstown Cross Roads to Ballymore Eustace.	Rochestown, Gaganstown, Ardenode East Cross Roads to Ballymore Eustace, Ballymore Eustace West
14	Views to and from Red Hill and Views of Central Kildare Plains and Boglands on the R401 and adjoining Roads	Redhill, Loughandys, Water Grange, Knocknagalliagh, Rathwalkin
15	Views to and from Dunmurray and Views of Central Kildare Plains and Boglands on the R401 and adjoining roads	Kilmoney South, Carrickanearla, Guidenstown, Dunmurray
16	Views of Chair of Kildare and Views of Central Kildare Plains and Boglands on the R415 and adjoining roads	Grange Common, Blakestown, Conlanstown, Canonstown, Carrickanearla
17	Views of Kildare Plains and Boglands from Hill of Allen	Dunbyrne, Barncrow, Baronstown West
18	Views from South/South-East Side of the Hill of Allen on the Milltown/Allen Road; R415 from Baronstown Barnacrow to Allen cross roads	Barnacrow
19	Views of Canal, River Slate and Surrounding Countryside from R414 at Rathangan	Bonaghmore, Kilmoney North, Mullantine, Mount Prospect, Newtown

20	Views of Plains of Kildare and West Central Boglands. Views to and from Newtown Hills (including county roads 5027, 1007)	Newtown, Grange, Kilbridge, Ovidstown, Killickaneeny, Nicholastown.
21	Views to and from Corballis Hills; County Roads from Carrigeen to Sherrifhill Cross Roads	Corballis, Tankardstown, Ballynacarrick Upper/ Lower, Sherrifhill, Alymerstown
22	Views to the North-West of the Open Countryside; from Kilteel Village to Rathmore Village	Furryhill, Kilteel Lower, Rathmore East
23	Views East at Brewel; L413 from Kingland Castle Ruins to Ballintaggart	Brewel East, Ballintaggart
24	Views across the Barrow Valley; L397 from Pinhill cross roads to Burton cross roads	Burton Big, Ballinadrum, Glassely
25	Views to the North-West of Kildare Plains; N78 South of Moortown House to Tippeen Lower.	Moortown, Thomastown, Ballyshannon, Tippeen Lower
26	Views to and from Hughestown Hill (L8052)	Hughestown, Carrigeen Hill, Ballynacarrick Lower, Davidstown
27	Views to the south of open countryside; from L138 Kilmeague cross roads to Coolaght	Kilmeague, Coolaght
28	Views from county roads (L5017 & L26) of Carbury Castle and Hill: Teelough road junction with the R402 and upland area at Mylerstown	Calfstown, Mylerstown, Knockcor, Carbury, Coolcor.
29	Views of countryside and East Kildare Uplands from Bishopshill Commons	Carrigeen, Barrettstown
30	Within Carton Demesne Walls: Views to and from Carton House, the Lake and Woodland Areas	Carton
31	Views within Castletown - Donaghcumper Rural Area; Views to the South and North from Castletown House, including axial views to the Obelisk and the Wonderful Barn.	Castletown, Barrogstown, Barnhall, Rinawade, Crodaun
32	Views of the River Liffey from the main avenue of Castletown House	Castletown
33	Views to and from the Ridgeline on the East Kildare Uplands and Views of the Central Plains	Cromwellstownhill, Cupidstown Hill, Rathbane, Punchestown, Caureen, Hempstown Common, Pipershall, Crosscoolharbour
34	Views towards Lyons Hill, Liffey Valley, Clonaghilis and Oughterard; R403 from Barberstown Cross Roads to Saint Patrick's Hill	Barberstown Lower, Ardrass Upper, Castledillon Lower, Friarstown
35	Views of Dún Ailinne from the N78 - to Knockbounce	Moortowncastle, Moortown, Old Kilcullen, Glebe North, Knockaulin, Knockbounce
36	Views of the Gibbet Rath and the Curragh from the N7 at St. Ledgers Bottoms	St. Ledgers Bottoms
37	Views of Pollardstown Fen	
38	Views of Allenwood to Lullymore Local Road	
39	Views of Lullymore to Rathangan Local Road	
40	Views of Ballynafagh Lake	

**Table 14.6**  
Views of the River Liffey from Bridges

View Reference	Bridge Townland/Location
RL 1	Leixlip Bridge Leixlip
RL 2	New Bridge Coneyburrow
RL 3	Celbridge Bridge Celbridge
RL 4	Straffan Bridge Lodgepark Straffan
RL 5	Alexandra Bridge Abbeyland
RL 6	Millicent Bridge Castlesize
RL 7	Caragh Bridge Halverstown/ Gingerstown
RL 8	Victoria Bridge Moortown/ Yeomanstown
RL 9	New Bridge Droichead Nua (Newbridge)
RL 10	Athgarvan Bridge Rosetown/Athgarvan
RL 11	Kilcullen Bridge Kilcullen
RL 12	New Bridge Cramersvalley/Carnalway
RL 13	Ballymore Bridge Ballymore Eustace

**Table 14.7**  
Views of the Rye Water River from Bridges

View Reference	Bridge Townland / Location
RW1	Black Bridge Kellystown / Blakestown
RW2	Carton Bridge Carton Demesne
RW3	Sandfords Bridge Carton Demesne
RW4	Kildare Bridge Carton Demesne

**Table 14.8**  
Views of the River Barrow from bridges, adjacent lands and roads

View Reference	Bridge Townland / Location
RB 1	Greese Bridge Jerusalem Newtownpilsworth
RB 2	Maganey Bridge Maganey Lower
RB 3	Tankardstown Bridge Grangemellon
RB 4	Bert Bridge Tyrellstown
RB 5	Dunrally Bridge Lowtown
RB 6	Pass Bridge Passlands
RB 7	Mill Bridge
RB 8	Baylough Bridge

**Table 14.9**  
Views to and from bridges on the Grand Canal

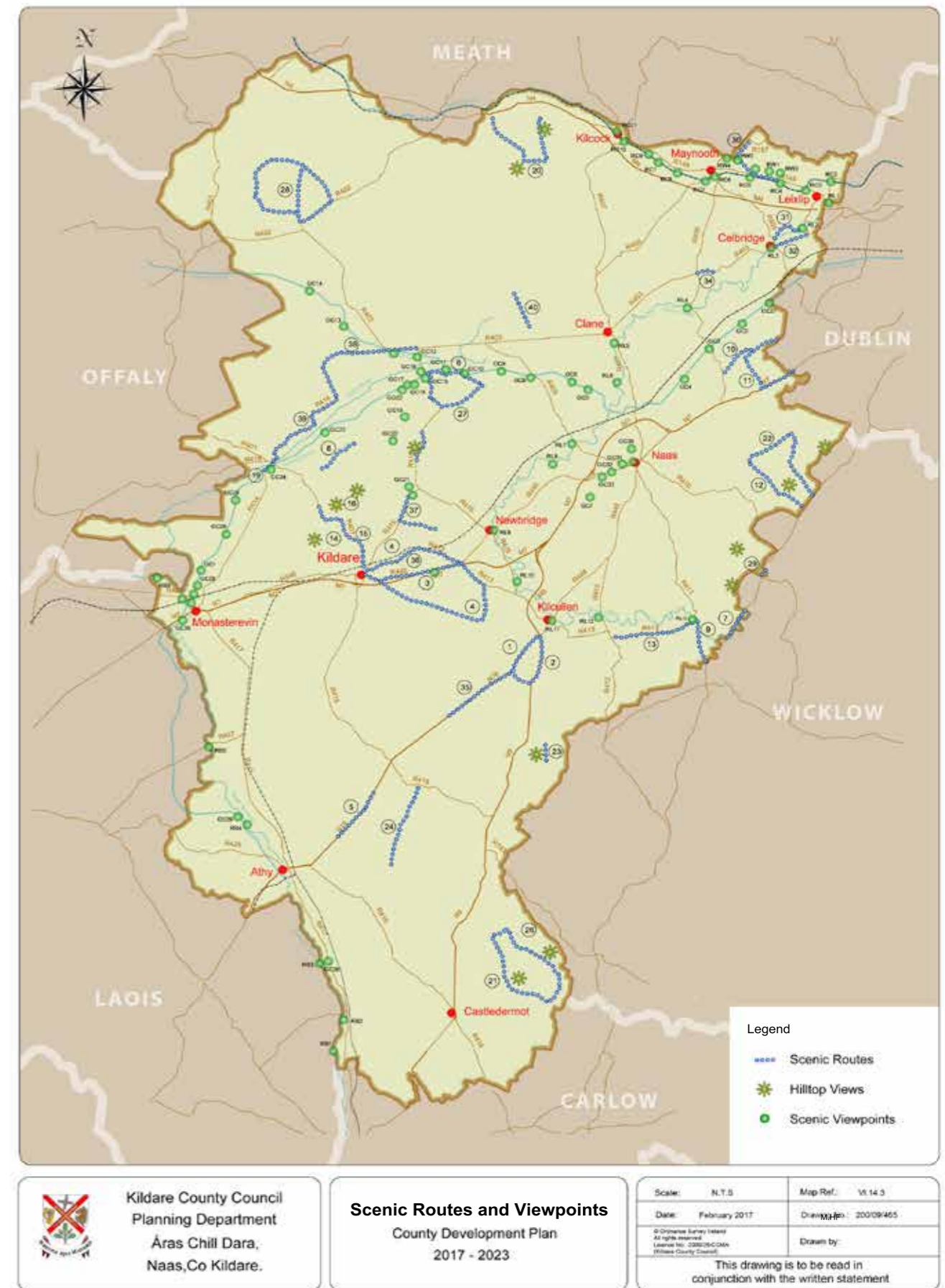
View Reference	Bridge Townland / Location
GC1	Old Grange Bridge Old Grange
GC2	Henry Bridge Clonaghريس
GC3	Ponsonby Bridge Barrowrath
GC4	Devonshire Bridge Sherlockstown Common
GC5	Digby Bridge Aghpaudeen
GC6	Landenstown Bridge Landenstown
GC7	Connaught Bridge Newtown
GC8	Cock Bridge Goatstown
GC9	Bonynge Bridge Mouds
GC10	Binn's Bridge Robertstown
GC11	Fenton Bridge Lowtown
GC12	Bond Bridge Derrymullen
GC13	Hamilton's Bridge Killinagh Lower
GC14	Ticknevin Bridge Ticknevin
GC15	Harberton Bridge Littletown
GC16	New Bridge Littletown
GC17	Skew Bridge Ballyteige North
GC18	Huband Bridge Grangeclare West
GC19	Pim Bridge Newpark



GC20	Pluckerstown Bridge Pluckerstown
GC21	Milltown Bridge Milltown
GC22	Ballyteige Bridge Ballyteige
GC23	Glenaree Bridge Glenaree
GC24	Rathangan Bridge Rathangan
GC25	Wilson's Bridge Kiltaghan North
GC26	Ummeras Bridge Ummeras More
GC27	Aylmer Bridge Kearneystown Upper
GC28	High Bridge Old Grange
GC29	Milltown Bridge Moatstown
GC30	Tandy Bridge Naas
GC31	Abbey Bridge Naas
GC32	Ploopluck Bridge Naas
GC33	Limerick Bridge Naas
GC34	Milltown Old Bridge
GC35	Clogheen Bridge
GC36	Bunberry Bridge

**Table 14.10**  
Views to and from all bridges on the Royal Canal

View Reference	Bridge Townland / Location
RC1	Bailey's Bridge Maws
RC2	Cope Bridge Newtown/Leixlip
RC3	Louisa Bridge Easton/Leixlip
RC4	Deey Bridge Collinstown
RC5	Pike Bridge Railpark/Donaghmore
RC6	Mullen Bridge Railpark/Maynooth
RC7	Bond Bridge Maynooth
RC8	Jackson's Bridge Laraghbryan East
RC9	Chambers Bridge Maws
RC10	Shaw Bridge Kilcock
RC11	Allen Bridge Boycetown





## 14.8 POLICIES: GENERAL LANDSCAPE

### 14.8.1 General Landscape

It is the policy of the Council to:

- LA 1** Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.
- LA 2** Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape.
- LA 3** Require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals that are likely to significantly affect:
- Landscape Sensitivity Factors;
  - A Class 4 or 5 Sensitivity Landscape (i.e. within 500m of the boundary);
  - A route or view identified in maps 14.2 and 14.3 (i.e. within 500m of the boundary).
- LA 4** Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development.
- LA 5** Prohibit advertising structures and hoardings in the open countryside. The Council will use its enforcement powers under the Planning Acts to secure the removal of unauthorised advertising signs and hoardings including those that are affixed to trailers, wheeled vehicles etc.
- LA 6** Preserve, where permissible, the open character of commonage.
- LA 7** Be informed by consideration of the County Landscape Character Appraisal.

### 14.8.2 Lowland Plains and Boglands Character Area

It is the policy of the Council to:

- LL 1** Recognise that the lowlands are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social well-being of the county.
- LL 2** Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation.
- LL 3** Recognise that this lowland landscape character area includes areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection.
- LL 4** Recognise that intact boglands are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons.
- LL 5** Recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially robust to absorb a variety of appropriate developments.

### 14.8.3 Upland Character Areas including East Kildare Uplands (Area of High Amenity)

It is the policy of the Council to:

- LU 1** Ensure that development will not have a disproportionate visual impact (due to excessive bulk, scale or inappropriate siting) and will not significantly interfere with or detract from scenic upland vistas, when viewed from areas nearby, scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements.
- LU 2** Ensure that developments on steep slopes (i.e. >10%) will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from relevant scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements.

- LU 3** Facilitate, where appropriate, developments that have a functional and locational requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoirs, telecommunication masts or wind energy structures) where residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated.

- LU 4** Maintain the visual integrity of areas which have retained a largely undisturbed upland character.

- LU 5** Have regard to the potential for screening vegetation when evaluating proposals for development within the uplands.

### 14.8.4 Eastern Transition

It is the policy of the Council to:

- TA 1** Maintain the visual integrity of areas which have retained an upland character.

- TA 2** Recognise that the lowlands in the transitional area are made up of a variety of working landscapes that are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social well-being of the county.

- TA 3** Continue to permit development that can utilise existing infrastructure, whilst taking account of local absorption opportunities provided by the landscape, landform and prevailing vegetation.

- TA 4** Continue to facilitate appropriate development, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognising the need for sustainable settlement patterns and economic activity within the county.

### 14.8.5 Water Corridors (Rivers and Canals) (Areas of High Amenity)

It is the policy of the Council to:

- WC 1:** Seek to locate new development in the water corridor landscape character areas towards existing structures and mature vegetation.

- WC 2** Facilitate appropriate development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation.

- WC 3** Control development that will adversely affect the visual integrity of distinctive linear sections of water corridors and river valleys and open floodplains.

- WC 4** Co-operate with the DHPCLG/DAHRRGA in the protection and conservation of both the Royal and Grand Canals and the River Barrow, designated as a pNHA and cSAC respectively and in the sections of the River Liffey designated as a pNHA.

- WC 5** Promote the amenity, ecological and educational value of the canals and rivers within the county while at the same time ensuring the conservation of their fauna and flora, and protection of the quantity and quality of the water supply.

- WC 6** Support and promote an extension of the proposed Special Amenity Area Order for the Liffey Valley from Lucan to Leixlip (which is envisaged by the Dublin Local Authorities) to other parts of the Valley within County Kildare.

- WC 7** Explore the establishment of the Barrow Valley and the Royal and Grand Canals as Areas of Special Amenity, as per section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

- WC 8** Contribute towards the protection of waterbodies and watercourses, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains, from inappropriate development. This will include buffers free of development in riverine and wetland areas, as appropriate.

- WC 9** Have regard to the relevant aspects of the Inland Fisheries Ireland's publication 'Planning for Watercourses in an Urban Environment'.



### 14.8.6 The Curragh and Environs (Area of High Amenity)

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CU 1** Restrict development, particularly on the Curragh edge, or where it obtrudes on the skyline as viewed from the Curragh Plains and to avoid the over development of the edge of the Curragh.
- CU 2** Ensure that fencing, earth works or planting do not conflict with the intrinsic quality of the landscape.
- CU 3** Co-operate with all relevant stakeholders including the Department of Defence, the DHPCLG, the racehorse industry, the owners of sheep grazing rights and the various interests currently with rights to the Curragh in the review of the protection and conservation of the Curragh, designated as a pNHA.
- CU 4** Restrict the development of vertical structures within the Curragh Plains including advertising signs, hoardings, fencing etc. which create visual clutter and disrupt the open nature of the Plains.

### 14.8.7 Pollardstown Fen (Area of High Amenity)

It is the policy of the Council to:

- PF 1** Restrict development within the immediate environs of the Fen which may have a negative impact on the water quality and water quantity of the Fen.
- PF 2** Co-operate with the DHPCLG / DAHRRGA and other statutory bodies in the protection and conservation of the Fen, a designated pSAC, and the immediate environs of the Fen.
- PF 3** Promote the amenity, ecological and educational value of the Pollardstown Fen Area.

### 14.9 SCENIC ROUTES AND PROTECTED VIEWS

#### 14.9.1 Scenic Routes

It is the policy of the Council to:

- SR 1** Protect views from designated scenic routes by avoiding any development that could disrupt the vistas or disproportionately impact on the landscape character of the area, thereby affecting the scenic and amenity value of the views.
- SR 2** Review and update all Scenic Routes and Views in the county during the lifetime of the Plan (Tables 14.5 – 14.10 refer).

#### 14.9.2 Water Course and Canal Corridor Views

It is the policy of the Council to:

- WV 1** Curtail any further development along the canal and river banks that could cumulatively affect the quality of a designated view.
- WV 2** Preserve and enhance the scenic amenity of the river valleys and canal corridors and the quality of the vistas available from designated views.
- WV 3** Prevent inappropriate development along canal and river banks and to preserve these areas in the interests of biodiversity, built and natural heritage and amenity by creating or maintaining buffer zones, where development should be avoided.



### 14.10 OBJECTIVES: LANDSCAPE

It is an objective of the Council to:

- LO 1** Have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Factors in the vicinity of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals.
- LO 2** Ensure landscape assessment will be an important factor in all land-use proposals.
- LO 3** Investigate the feasibility of preparing a Landscape Conservation Area Assessment within the county to identify any area(s) or place(s) within the county as a Landscape Conservation Area, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- LO 4** Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Kildare's built and natural environment.
- LO 5** Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly upland, river, canal views, views across the Curragh, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty.
- LO 6** Preserve and protect the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes identified in this Plan, listed in Table 14.5 and identified on Map 14.3.
- LO 7** Encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes. Where scenic routes run through settlements, street trees and ornamental landscaping may also be required.
- LO 8** Prepare further detailed guidance in relation to views and prospects available along scenic routes occurring within the boundaries of Local Area Plans.
- LO 9** Plant gateway roundabouts within the county with innovative design themes, having regard to traffic safety.
- LO 10** Review and update the County Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and to ensure consistency with the forthcoming National Landscape Character Assessment.
- LO 11** Prepare a Historic Landscape Characterisation of the county.



## 14.11 RECREATION AND AMENITIES

### Aim

To develop recreation areas and the amenities of County Kildare in an equitable, environmental and sustainable way.

#### 14.11.1 Background

Recreation and amenity areas within the county include natural, recreational and sporting amenities as well as social and community infrastructure. These facilities provide many cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits and provide a positive contribution towards quality of life. The provision of a range of amenities which can cater for the demands of an increasing population and which will be accessible for all sectors and age groups of the population is a central element in the delivery of sustainable communities.

#### 14.11.2 Strategy

The strategies for the provision of recreation and amenity resources in the county seeks;

- To provide an opportunity for all sectors of Kildare's population, and visitors to the county, to avail of good quality recreational, sports and open space facilities, suitable to their needs;
- To ensure that the natural resources which form the basis for countryside recreation are protected and effectively managed; and
- To provide and maintain facilities in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.

#### 14.11.3 Countryside Recreation

Countryside recreation includes a wide range of activities including horse riding, cycling, walking, picnicking, country drives, off-road biking, nature trails, bird watching, painting, photography, field studies, orienteering, para- and hang-gliding, rock climbing, adventure sports, camping, archaeological guided walks and water related activities which include swimming, boating, canoeing and kayaking.

It is recognised that the countryside of Kildare provides an important resource in outdoor recreational facilities not only for the population of Kildare but also for those visiting the county. The Council recognises the significance of natural amenities as a major resource for visitors and local people.

The "National Countryside Recreation Strategy" was finalised in 2006. It defines the scope, vision and a suggested framework for the implementation of countryside recreation as agreed by Comhairle na Tuaithe. This strategy informed Kildare Sports Partnership in the preparation of the sports and recreation Strategic Plan 2012-2016 for physical recreation in County Kildare.

#### (i) Forest Parks, Woodlands & Boglands

Approximately 9,200 ha of land in Kildare is under forest cover. Forests and woodlands provide benefits over and above the revenue yielded from timber and other wood based products. These include recreational and tourism amenities for local communities. Table 14.11 outlines recreational woodlands in the county.

Table 14.11

Recreational Woodlands in County Kildare

Name	Location	Owner
Donadea Forest Park	Donadea	Coillte
Moore Abbey	Monasterevin	Coillte
Mullaghreelan Wood	Kilkea	Coillte
Rahin	Edenderry	Coillte
Kilinthomas	Rathangan	Coillte

24,300 ha of peatland cover 14.4% of the county. Of the total bog cover, 10% remains intact, 39% is under industrial peat extraction, 25% consists of cutover and cutaway bog and 24% is modified fen area. Some of these boglands are used for recreation/ education purposes such as the Bog of Allen Nature Centre in Lullymore, operated by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council and Lullymore Heritage Park.

#### (ii) Cycling

Cycling as a means of recreational activity has increased in popularity over the past number of years. The Council acknowledges that provision for cyclists should be provided as resources permit and where appropriate.

#### (iii) Walking

Two long distance walking routes are located along the Grand Canal and Royal Canal. Both are scheduled for improvement in the coming years. Arthur's Way walking route has also been developed between Leixlip and Oughterard. A development by the Council under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) has been approved to provide a long distance walking route along the Royal Canal between Maynooth and Moyvalley. It is proposed to develop a section of the Grand Canal between Lowtown and Athy and the River Barrow between Athy and the county boundary as part of the Barrow Blueway. Other shorter routes are located mainly in urban settings, comprising heritage trails and Slí na Sláinte routes<sup>1</sup>.

There are a number of demesne lands within the county which are open to the public for passive recreation, for example Castletown in Celbridge.

The eastern uplands, the boglands, the water corridors and disused railway lines coupled with a rich natural, architectural and built heritage provide excellent opportunities to develop further long distance routes (cycling/walking). *County Kildare Walking Routes Project* conducted an audit of walking routes in the county in 2005. It evaluated existing walking routes and made recommendations for their future management and promotion.

#### (iv) Public Rights of Way

Existing public rights of way constitute an important amenity and the Council recognises the importance of maintaining established rights of way and supporting initiatives for establishing walking routes and general accessibility.

<sup>1</sup> Developed in co-operation with the Irish Heart Foundation, the HSE, Kildare Sports Partnership and local communities.

#### 14.11.4 Recreation and Amenity

Access to opportunities for recreation and amenity is an important consideration in improving quality of life. This is likely to become more significant as the population increases and land becomes more valuable and pressure from competing land uses becomes more intense.

Local networks of high quality, well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help to enhance the urban environment and should be planned to be easily accessible to all.

#### (i) Open Space

New development of housing and / or commercial development influences the need for new sports and outdoor community facilities. The zoning of land for "open space" is an important element of land-use planning and should be provided within development plans and Local Area Plans as appropriate.

*The Kildare Open Space Strategy* was prepared in July 2011. It identified a hierarchy of open space within the county, including three categories of open space types, which will influence future open space provision in Kildare (Table 14.12 Refers)

This strategy includes an audit of facilities currently available and an assessment of current and future needs within the county. Recommendations are outlined for the current and future open space requirements for villages and towns in the county and will form an important input into the preparation of future Local Area Plans.

The provision of accessible open space is an integral part of the provision of high-quality green infrastructure for communities. Overall, the Council will seek the provision of open space at a standard of 2.0 ha per 1000 population in accordance with the *Kildare Open Space Strategy 2011*.



**Table 14.12**  
Hierarchy of Open Space in County Kildare.

County hierarchy of open space provision	Typology	Purpose
Areas of open space within settlements	Amenity green space	Small areas of open space associated with housing developments.
	Local Park	Small Park (>2ha) located within settlements for local use for passive recreation.
	Neighbourhood Park	Large Park (> 16ha) located within settlements for local use to contain facilities for active recreation.
Areas of open space that serve a number of settlements	Regional Park	Large areas, corridors, or networks of open space, the majority of which will be publicly accessible and will provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits.
Strategic Areas of open space within the county	Country Park	Large facility of high scenic quality accessible to the public to which users may travel some distance by car usually seeking a family day out.
	Green corridors	Linear green spaces such as canal and river corridors which are accessible to the public.
	Natural/semi natural green spaces	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with habitats such as woodland or wetland areas which are accessible to the public.

Source: Open Space Strategy for County Kildare, 2011

### (ii) Allotments

An emerging new form of open space is the use of land for allotments. Allotment gardens allow a number of people to cultivate their own vegetables in individual plots/land parcels on lands owned by another private individual or body. These facilities can have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper local and sustainable source of food. There are 77 no. allotments at the Wonderful Barn in Leixlip.

### (iii) Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure refers to the network of linked high quality green spaces and other environmental features within an urban setting. This strategically planned and delivered network should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource, capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. This includes climate change adaptation, waste and water

management, food production, recreation and health benefits, biodiversity enhancement linkages and economic benefits.

In developing green infrastructure, opportunities should be taken to develop and enhance networks for cycling, walking and other non- motorised transport. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.

### (iv) Liffey Valley Park

As most of the River Liffey flows through County Kildare, it has played a critical role in the social, economic and cultural life of the county and in particular the development of the towns and villages along its length. In 2006 the strategy document *Towards a Liffey Valley Park* was published. It represents the first comprehensive strategy for that section of the river between Chapelizod in Dublin and Celbridge in Co. Kildare.

### (v) Sports and Recreational Facilities

The development of sport and recreation is important in encouraging a sense of wellbeing and social contact. Kildare County Council acknowledges the very important roles that open space and sporting and social clubs play in enhancing the social and recreational life of Kildare's communities. Facilities for both formal and informal recreation, and catering for the entire community of all abilities, are required.

The Council has prepared an audit of sports facilities in the county. The audit of arts and community facilities within the county has to be completed. This audit will influence the future provision of sports and recreational facilities in the county.

The Council will endeavour, through this Plan and the Development Management process, to provide appropriate land for recreational and amenity open space. This land shall be available to the public, and generally in or adjacent to areas of existing or zoned residential use, or close to centres of rural communities. Kildare County Council will continue to liaise with sporting organisations to ensure that where possible the needs of sports clubs and the communities are met in the provision of quality facilities.

The Council will generally favour developments which seek to cluster sporting activities and integrate them with community facilities, including schools, to ensure a more sustainable and efficient use of shared arrangements such as parking, playgrounds, changing rooms etc.

Public swimming pools have been provided in Athy and Naas to service the south and mid county areas. It is envisaged that another pool would be developed in North East Kildare.

### 14.11.5 Children's Play Facilities

Children's play is important to their development. It is through play that they learn to socialise and interact with the world. In supporting play, residential areas, parks and open spaces should be available and be safe and enjoyable for children of different ages. The Council acknowledges the overarching role of the National Play Policy *Ready, Steady, Play*, as published by the Department of Health and Children, 2004. The objectives of *Ready, Steady, Play* are:

- To improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas;

- To ensure that children's play needs are met through the development of a child-friendly environment;
- To give children a voice in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities; and
- To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to all children, particularly children who are marginalised, disadvantaged or who have a disability.

Playgrounds have been provided in Rathangan, Suncroft, Nurney, Ellistown and assistance has been given for the provision of a playground in Castlemitchell. Playgrounds are planned for Kill and Sallins. The Council will seek to develop a Play Policy for the county which will guide the provision and development of play opportunities within the county over the lifetime of this Plan. The Council also acknowledges *Teenspace - The National Recreation Policy for Young People* (2007). The policy seeks to address the recreational needs of young people between the ages of 12 and 18.

The policy's core objectives are:

- To give young people a voice in the design, implementation and monitoring of recreation policies and facilities;
- Promote organised activities for young people and examine ways to motivate them to be involved;
- Ensure that recreational needs of young people are met through the development of youth friendly and safe environments;
- Maximise the range of recreational opportunities available for young people who are marginalised, disadvantaged or have a disability;
- Promote relevant qualifications /standards in the provision of recreational activities;
- Develop a partnership approach in developing and funding recreational opportunities across statutory community and voluntary sectors; and
- Improve information on recreational provision for young people in Ireland, including evaluation and monitoring.

The Strategic Plan 2012-2016 for sports and recreation for the county acknowledges the needs of young people.



## 14.12 POLICIES: RECREATION AND AMENITY

### 14.12.1 Countryside Recreation

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CR 1** Support the diversification of the rural economy through the development of the recreational potential of the countryside in accordance with the National Countryside Recreation Strategy.
- CR 2** Support the development of woodland areas in conjunction with proposed development and on Council-owned lands.
- CR 3** Develop and implement a County Walking Strategy, within the lifetime of the Plan, in consultation with statutory bodies and landowners, and in accordance with the recommendations of the County Kildare Walking Routes Project, 2005. This strategy will seek to identify established walking routes in the county, evaluate these routes and make recommendations for their promotion.
- CR 4** Develop, in conjunction with the Irish Sports Council and adjoining Local Authorities, long distance walking and cycling routes.
- CR 5** Investigate the possibility of developing long distance walking routes, within the lifetime of the Plan, along disused sections of railway lines (e.g. Tullow line) and canals in the county (Corbally Line, Blackwood Feeder, and Mountmellick Line).
- CR 6** Develop, in conjunction with local communities, short walking routes, such as looped walks, heritage trails and Slí Na Sláinte routes.
- CR 7** Facilitate, where appropriate, the provision of cycle-ways or walkways along the extent of the canals and watercourses in the county in co-operation with landowners, Waterways Ireland, Government Departments and other Local Authorities.

- CR 8** Explore the feasibility of developing the route of the Slí Mór and Slí Dála as long distance walking routes in co-operation with the Irish Sports Council, Fáilte Ireland and other Local Authorities.
- CR 9** Promote the expansion of cycle facilities throughout the county and to liaise with Fáilte Ireland, the Sports Council, the National Transport Authority and other bodies in the development of cycling touring routes throughout the county and adjoining counties, in particular in areas of high amenity.
- CR 10** Investigate the possibility of providing appropriately designed quality signage for walking and cycling routes throughout the county.
- CR 11** Support and promote public access to upland areas, rivers, lakes and other natural amenities which do not endanger the conservation of such natural amenities.
- CR 12** Facilitate the development of a walking route between Ballymore Eustace, Golden Falls, Poulaphouca, Russborough and Barrettstown, in cooperation with landowners and government agencies.
- CR 13** Encourage and support the development of water safety awareness initiatives in association with Kildare Water Safety and related statutory bodies.
- CR 14** Seek to provide car parks for walkers at appropriate access points to amenities, where feasible, and subject to compliance with the requirements arising from the Habitats Directive.
- CR 15** Ensure that any increase in visitor numbers is managed to avoid significant negative effects including loss of habitat and disturbance; and that projects are a suitable distance from the edge of sensitive habitats such as rivers and streams.



### 14.12.2 Public Rights of way

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RW 1** Preserve, protect, promote and improve, for the common good, existing rights of way which contribute to general amenity, particularly those which provide access to archaeological sites and National Monuments and amenities, including upland areas and water corridors, and to create new ones or extend existing ones where appropriate either by agreement with landowners or through the use of compulsory powers, without adversely affecting landscape conservation interests.
- RW 2** Seek to ensure that new development will not have a negative impact on established walking routes/public rights of way, in particular in areas of high amenity and along the inland waterways of the county.
- RW 3** Identify existing rights of way and walking routes prior to any new planting, new infrastructural development and any new energy / telecommunications or golf course developments.
- RW 4** Seek to improve the condition and appearance of existing rights of way as part of a proposed development where the applicant has confirmed the legal status of existing rights of way.

### 14.12.3 Open Space

It is the policy of the Council to:

- OS 1** Implement the recommendations of the Kildare Open Space Strategy 2012 and make provision for a hierarchy of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within towns and villages so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work.
- OS 2** Require the provision of good quality, well located and functional open space in new residential developments to cater for all age groups.
- OS 3** Preserve, manage and maintain to a high standard the existing public parks and open spaces in the county.
- OS 4** Develop and improve physical linkages and connections between the network of open spaces.
- OS 5** Retain, where appropriate, areas adjacent to waterways as a linear park which may link into the wider open space network.

### 14.12.4 Recreation and Amenity

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RA 1** Zone lands for sports and recreational amenities within Local Area Plans in accordance with established local demands and needs.
- RA 2** Prohibit the development of areas zoned open space/amenity or areas which have been indicated in a previous planning application as being open space.
- RA 3** Avoid the loss of an existing amenity or recreational facility through any development proposal, unless:
  - (i) The facility or amenity was established as an interim use pending the completion of an improved or satisfactory replacement facility.  
*or*
  - (ii) The applicant can demonstrate that there is an insufficient local demand for the existing facility.  
*or*



- (iii) Satisfactory alternative provision can be made by the applicant prior to the commencement of development.

**RA 4** Require the provision of recreational facilities concurrent with new residential developments as deemed necessary by the Council. Types of facilities to be provided will be dependent upon factors such as the size of a given development proposal and the availability of facilities (if any) in the area.

**RA 5** Seek improvement in the range, quality and capacity of sporting and recreational facilities through initiatives in partnership with community groups and sporting organisations, and to cater for all age-groups and abilities.

**RA 6** Encourage the clustering of sport and community facilities and to encourage them to be multi-functional and not used exclusively by any one group.

**RA 7** Consider the future needs of sporting facilities i.e. capacity, access and community facilities, in the provision of new or in the expansion of existing sporting facilities.

**RA 8** Promote town and village centre sites for sports and recreational facilities and to facilitate out of town/village sites, where appropriate, (following a sequential test), in servicing large hinterland communities, where the site includes comprehensive off road parking, conforms to all safety guidelines and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**RA 9** Complete the swimming pool programme which will meet the needs of the whole county through the provision of a north Kildare swimming pool within the Leixlip Amenities Campus.

**RA 10** Seek to promote additional non-mainstream facilities for children and teenagers through the provision of suitable recreation and amenity facilities in all major towns and villages.

**RA 11** Commence the process of identifying the location, procurement and development of three regional type parks, as outlined in the Council's Kildare Open Space Strategy, 2011.

#### 14.12.5 Allotments

It is the policy of the Council to:

- AL 1** Facilitate the development of allotments of an appropriate scale and in accordance with current guidelines, which meet the following criteria:
- (i) The lands are situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/villages or are easily accessible to the residents of a particular town or village; and
  - (ii) Adequate water supply and adequate parking facilities can be provided.

#### 14.12.6 Green Infrastructure

It is the policy of the Council to:

- GI 1** Facilitate and promote the development of green infrastructure which allows for the development of active and passive recreation and the protection and enhancement of heritage and landscape features.
- GI 2** Make provision for habitat creation/maintenance and facilitate biodiversity by encouraging the development of linear parks, nature trails, wildlife corridors and urban woodlands.
- GI 3** Provide a hierarchy of high quality and multi-functional public parks and open spaces.
- GI 4** Support and facilitate the provision of a network of high quality, well located and multifunctional public parks and open spaces throughout the county and to protect and enhance the environmental capacity and ecological function of these spaces.
- GI 5** Connect parks and areas of open space with ecological and recreational corridors to aid the movement of biodiversity and people and to strengthen the overall Green Infrastructure network.
- GI 6** Enhance and diversify the outdoor recreational potential of public open spaces and parks, subject to the protection of the natural environment.

**GI 7** Minimise the environmental impact of external lighting at sensitive locations within the Green Infrastructure network to achieve a sustainable balance between the recreational needs of an area, the safety of walking and cycling routes and the protection of light sensitive species such as bats.

**GI 8** Promote the planting of woodlands, forestry, community gardens, allotments and parkland meadows within the county's open spaces and parks to promote the development of multifunctional amenity areas with enhanced biodiversity value.

#### 14.12.7 Liffey Valley Park

It is the policy of the Council to:

- LV 1** Progress the implementation of the flagship projects identified in the report *Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy*.
- LV 2** Pursue the creation of a *Liffey Valley Regional Park* together with Fingal and South Dublin County Councils within the lifetime of the Plan.

#### 14.12.8 Children's Play Areas

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CP 1** Develop and implement a Play Policy for County Kildare which will set out a strategy for the provision, resourcing and implementation of improved opportunities for children to play.
- CP 2** Provide play facilities adjacent to other community and childcare facilities, in so far as is possible, and to ensure their proper management and maintenance.
- CP 3** Seek the provision and suitable management of children's play areas in new housing developments and to implement measures to find suitable sites for their provision to serve existing residential areas.





### 14.13 OBJECTIVES: RECREATION AND AMENITY

It is an objective of the Council to:

- RAO 1** Facilitate the provision of a variety of amenities within the county, including natural amenities, walking routes, cycling routes, and sports facilities.
- RAO 2** Develop and implement a county walking strategy in consultation with statutory bodies and landowners and in accordance with the recommendations of the County Kildare Walking Routes Project, 2005.
- RAO 3** Support the Sports and Recreation Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 (or as it may be amended) for the county, in co-operation with Kildare Sports Partnership, during the lifetime of this Plan
- RAO 4** Develop a Play Policy for County Kildare.
- RAO 5** Complete the arts and community facility audit for the county to inform future requirements over the period of this Plan.
- RAO 6** Designate or zone, through the Local Area Plan process, suitable active and passive open space in all settlements, commensurate with their existing and future needs.
- RAO 7** Require passive and active open space to be provided in tandem with new residential development.
- RAO 8** Protect and develop substantial connected networks of green spaces in urban areas and urban fringe areas adjacent to the countryside to serve the growing communities in urban centres.
- RAO 9** Identify flagship projects for the River Liffey Valley from Celbridge to Ballymore Eustace as recommended in the report *Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy*.
- RAO 10** Investigate the feasibility of creating a pedestrian link between the Liffey Valley, the Wicklow Mountains and the Wicklow Way, in consultation with Wicklow County Council, as recommended in the report *Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy*.



- RAO 11** Preserve the pedestrian link between the River Liffey and the Grand Canal at the Leinster Aqueduct and to explore making the existing underpass fully accessible as recommended in the report *Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy*.
- RAO 12** Seek to identify, list and map public rights of way in County Kildare that give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility over the lifetime of the plan and to provide for the preservation of such public rights of way.
- RAO 13** Develop long distance walking routes throughout the county including along:
  - The Royal Canal
  - The Grand Canal
  - The River Barrow
- RAO 14** Identify the sites for three regional type parks in the Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood, Cellbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip and Athy areas, and to commence the process of delivery of same.