

Kildare County Council (KCC)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Monitoring of Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 - Two Year Progress Report

SEA Monitoring of Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 - Two Year
Progress Report

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This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1. Introduction

Kildare County Council (KCC) adopted the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (hereafter referred to as ‘the Plan’) on the 9th December 2022 and came into legal effect on the 28th January 2023. The Plan is the key strategy document which structures the proper planning and sustainable development of land-use across County Kildare over the six-year statutory time period of the Plan. The Plan seeks to address the physical, economic, social, and environmental needs of the community, in terms of supporting structured new development, protecting the environment, enhancing valued assets and amenities.

The Plan was subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EEC (the ‘SEA Directive’), which introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes that are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use planning. An SEA Environmental Report, outlining the potential for the Plan to give rise to significant environmental effects, was prepared by Arup in 2022.

Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires that any significant environmental effects arising from the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. 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.

Arup has been commissioned by KCC to prepare a report outlining the environmental effects of implementing the Plan at its two-year progress point (2025), i.e. an SEA Monitoring Report.

Section 2 of this report provides greater context to the objectives and methods of the report, and the approach applied. Section 3 of this report sets out the baseline environment and monitoring results, with monitoring conclusions set out in Section 4.

2. Monitoring Objectives and Methods

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2015) defines monitoring as “*the periodic or continuous observation of environmental indicators and of other parameters that may affect the environment for any changes that may occur over time, in order to confirm/test predictions made with respect to likely effects and identify adverse changes that may require remedial action*”.

SEA monitoring is the responsibility of plan-making authorities to monitor potential significant effects arising from the implementation of plans and programmes. S.I. No 436 of 2004 (Article 13J) notes that:

1. *The planning authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the development plan in order, inter alia, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action and, for this purpose, existing monitoring arrangements may be used, if appropriate, with a view to avoiding duplication of monitoring.*
2. *The report required of the manager under section 15(2) of the Act shall include information in relation to progress on, and the results of, monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the development plan.*

As described in Section 9.2 of the SEA Environmental Report for the Plan (Arup, 2022), “*monitoring should be carried out in order to identify at an early stage any unforeseen adverse impacts associated with the implementation of the plan or programme.*”

A monitoring programme is developed based on the indicators selected to track progress towards achieving strategic environmental objectives and reaching targets, enabling positive and negative impacts on the environment to be measured. As previously described, the environmental indicators have been developed to show changes that would be attributable to implementation of the [County Development Plan] CDP.

The SEA carried out has ensured that any potential significant environmental impacts have been identified and given due consideration. KCC is responsible for collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of preliminary and final monitoring evaluation reports, the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action.”

Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report provides the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan. Thus, it is the indicators and targets set out in Table 9.1.2 which are considered in this report.

The EPA published the Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (the ‘EPA Guidance’)¹ following a review of the effectiveness of SEA in Ireland. The EPA Guidance notes that the foremost shortcoming of SEA monitoring in Ireland is that monitoring often focuses on the plan or programme implementation, rather than the environmental effects of the plan/programme implementation.

Thus, the progress made towards the targets and indicators set out in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report are set out in Section 3. The assessment of potential environmental effects on each of the relevant environmental topics identified in Section 3 are provided in Section 3.1.3, Section 3.2.3, Section 3.3.3, Section 3.4.3, Section 3.5.3, Section 3.6.3, Section 3.7.3 and Section 3.8.3. As previously discussed, monitoring conclusions are set out in Section 4.

This Report has also been prepared having regard to:

- Chapter 8 of the SEA Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) which refers to Monitoring and Implementation, and
- Chapter 10 of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) which refers to Plan Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting.

As previously discussed, this report relates to the monitoring results of Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP), however the progress of the County’s Local Area Plans (LAPs) has also been taken into consideration. The progress of LAPs and settlement plans has been reported upon in the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, as follows:

- The Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029 was adopted by the Elected Members of Kildare Newbridge Municipal District in October 2023;
- The Maynooth & Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 was adopted by the Elected Members of the Clane Maynooth Municipal District and the Elected Members of Meath County Council in February 2025;
- The Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 was extended by 3 years to 2026 and amended to include the Confey Masterplan in 2024 by the Elected Members of the Full Council;
- The Draft Kilcullen Settlement Plan was published as a Variation to Volume 2 of the KCDP in 2024 and is anticipated to be adopted by the Full Council in Q2 2025;
- The Draft Newbridge Local Area Plan 2025-2031 will be published in March 2025; and
- The pre-draft consultation is completed for review of Monasterevin Local Area Plan. The draft Settlement Plan is set to be published in 2025.

¹ EPA (2023) Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statements and Monitoring. Available at: [06695-EPA-SEA-Statements-and-Monitoring-Report.pdf](#)

In accordance with the *Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)*, the SEA monitoring programmes for the LAPs adopted since the publication of the Plan have been reviewed. All of the aforementioned LAPs have been/ are in the process of being subjected to SEA and AA. It must be noted that since the publication of the new Planning and Development Act 2024 (which will be enacted in 2025), LAPs will no longer be required or supported by legislation. Thus, towns that heretofore required a LAP will be integrated into Volume II of the KCDP as ‘Settlement Plans’. This has been recently conducted for the area of Kilcullen², which has since been subjected to SEA and AA. Similarly, a variation will be undertaken to integrate a new Settlement Plan for Monasterevin into Volume II of the KCDP, to replace the current LAP and will also be subject to SEA and AA. At the time of writing this report there is no data available on the monitoring progress of these LAPs (and variations). Thus, the effects of implementing these LAPs (and variations) cannot be expanded upon at this time.

3. Baseline Environment and Monitoring Results

3.1 Population and Human Health

3.1.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to population and human health are included in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Population and Human Health within the Plan

Targets	Indicators
To implement the CDP, which will contribute towards and facilitate economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth statistics of settlements identified in the Core Strategy. Number of new houses within settlement boundaries. Economic Growth Statistics. Health statistics of the County. Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures. Statistics on access to sustainable modes of transport. Number of compliances of waste-water infrastructure to legislation/regulations/conditions for relevant licences, permits etc. for discharges. Number of compliances of water supply schemes with relevant legislation/regulation/conditions for abstraction and consumption. Number of compliances of infrastructure projects to relevant legislation/regulation/conditions re-noise, odour and/or air quality. Number of compliances of waste management sites. Implementation of the Noise Action Plan and relevant limit values.
No significant deterioration in human health as a result of environmental factors.	
Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures.	
To improve access to sustainable modes of transport.	
Promote compact growth.	
Facilitate attractive environments within our urban settlements, utilise brownfield over greenfield sites and resist where possible urban generated rural housing unless genuine need exists.	
Avoid developing land which is not likely to be serviced within the lifetime of the Development Plan.	

² Variation No. 1 to Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 which includes Settlement Plan for Kilcullen in Volume II.

3.1.2 Monitoring Results

Since the publication of the Plan, the 2022 Census results have been published. According to the 2022 Census results, County Kildare had a total population of 246,977 persons in 2022, making it the fifth most populated local authority area in the State. Over the course of the six years to 2022, Kildare experienced population growth of 11%, an additional 24,472 persons (equivalent to the population of Newbridge). The County's population grew at a much higher rate than that of the State (+7.6%).

According to the Pobal Deprivation Index (PDI), a social gradient tool which measures the level of disadvantage in an area used by the government to target resources where necessary, Kildare is considered to be Marginally Above Average in terms of level of deprivation, which is unchanged since 2016³. In total, a population of 21,270 or just over eight percent of the population in County Kildare are classed as being disadvantaged. At the Municipal District (MD) level, the Athy MD is the only MD in the County that is classed as 'marginally below average'. Within the Athy MD, nearly a fifth of the population (19.5%) are residing in areas classed as being disadvantaged.

In 2022, 86% of the County Kildare population reported that they were in good or very good health. This represents a decrease from 2016 where approximately 90% of the population had reported being in good or very good health. This aligns with national trends which have reported an overall decrease of people reporting good or very good health from 87% in 2016 to 83% in 2022. No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors are evident as a result of implementing the Plan.

KCC published their first Annual Monitoring Report⁴ since the publication of the Plan. As part of this monitoring, KCC reviewed the progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 4 of the Plan "Economy, Tourism, Education and Retail" and Chapter 2 "Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy" for the County. Chapter 2 of the Plan sets out a housing target of 9,144 additional units for the period between Q1 2023 to the end of Q4 2028. The Plan outlines a target to complete 1,524 homes per year over the eight full years from Q1 2021 to Q4 2028 before the Plan expires in Q1 2029.

As detailed in the Annual Monitoring Report⁴, the target to complete 1,524 homes per year was exceeded in 2023 as some 2,720 new dwellings were constructed in Kildare⁵.

Further to this, the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report has since been prepared by KCC (2025). This report states that a total of 4,132 housing units were constructed in Kildare in 2023 and 2024 according to the CSO New Dwelling Completion Database. A gross total of approximately 4,084 housing units were granted planning permission during the same period (this includes 3,743 units granted planning permission and 341 units approved through the Part 8 process).

It is also reported that 53% of new dwellings built in County Kildare have been constructed within the urban footprint of existing settlements during this period. This amount significantly exceeds the 30% target for all new homes to be delivered within the built-up footprint of existing settlements under National Policy Objective 3c of the National Planning Framework. In relation to Traveller Accommodation in Kildare, KCC has also exceeded the target of the 2019 - 2024 Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP), providing 96 units (89 target) over this period.

KCC has continued to adopt a robust evidence-based approach to settlement plan making involving the preparation of social infrastructure audits, settlement capacity audits, local transport plans and green and blue infrastructure mapping to inform and devise carefully considered development strategies for settlements.

³ Pobal (2022) HP Deprivation Indices 2022. Available at: pobal.ie

⁴ KCC (2024) Annual Monitoring Report. Available at: [Annual Monitoring Report 2023 High Res.pdf](#)

⁵ While it is noted that Kildare exceeds the annual delivery target in 2023, such trends would be consistent with the cyclical nature of housing construction and economic trends.

In May 2023, the County Kildare Serviced Sites Scheme was published and in 2024, a pilot project was launched for 7 no. serviced sites in Clogherinkoe.

In terms of granted Business/Employment Planning Permissions in Kildare, approximately 360,000 square metres (sqm) of commercial/employment floorspace was granted planning permission in 2023 and 2024. The granting of these permissions will aid the promotion of economic growth across Kildare. It is however, noted that net losses were seen in terms of commercial floorspace occurring in Kilcock, Sallins, Ballitore, and Kildangan in 2023.

It is notable that KCC approved the County Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 in April 2024 to continue the progress made from the first plan (2016-2021) and guide the sustainable development of the local economy. Inherent to the LECP are goals focused on economic development throughout the community in line with the Plan along with other local, regional and national policies. The roadmap provided in the LECP delivers a strong framework in which KCC can continue to effectively implement the targets and indicators outlined in Chapter 4 of the Plan.

According to the 2022 Census results, the number of people commuting to work, school or college in Kildare increased by a fifth since 2016 (+20.8% or +31,534). For those who commute to school, college or work in Kildare there has been an increase in the overall mode share, with 'Private Mode' still being the dominant mode. Private modes of transport represent over half of commuters in 2022 (61%), or an additional 12,545 private mode users since 2016. Those using 'Active Mode' (walking and cycling) has witnessed a slight increase between 2016 and 2022 and now represents 15% of all commuters to school, college or work. Overall, there has been an increase in the numbers commuting to work in Kildare since 2016 (+15% or +21,560 (including those 'not stated')). The biggest change in the modal share has been the increase in the number of workers who are classed as 'Working Mainly from Home'. This grouping has increased from 3,842 in 2016 to 13,816 in 2022 (+260% or +9,974).

Refer to Table 3.2, Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 below for an overall outline of transportation modal share improvements between 2016 and 2022 for the portion of the population in Kildare County aged 5 years and over travelling to work, school and college.

Table 3.2 Active Modes of Transport Comparison 2016 vs. 2022 in Kildare (Source: CSO, 2022)

Transportation Mode	2016	2022
On Foot	20,814	22,840
Bicycle	2,405	3,848
Total active travel	23,219	26,688
% change in active travellers	+14.94% ⁶	

In terms of percentage change as it relates to total population in Kildare, according to CSO data, 10.4% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of active travel in 2016. In comparison, a marginal increase was noted in 2022 where the CSO reported that 10.8% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of active travel.

Table 3.3 Public Modes of Transport Comparison 2016 vs. 2022 in Kildare (Source: CSO, 2022)

Transportation Mode	2016	2022
Bus, minibus, or coach	14,365	14,174
Train, DART or LUAS	6,076	7,024
Total public transportation	20,441	21,198

⁶ Note: This figure (%) represents the percentage increase in travel by means of active travel to work, school or college in Kildare from 2016 to 2022, aged 5 years and over.

Transportation Mode	2016	2022
% change in public transportation users	+3.70% ⁷	

In terms of percentage change as it relates to total population in Kildare, according to CSO data, 9.2% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of public transportation in 2016. In comparison, a marginal decrease was noted in 2022 where the CSO reported that 8.6% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of active travel.

Table 3.4 Private Modes of Transport Comparison 2016 vs. 2022 in Kildare (Source: CSO, 2022)

Transportation Mode	2016	2022
Motorcycle or Scooter	424	446
Car Driver	64,152	68,132
Car passenger	28,077	35,319
Van	6,007	7,306
Other	562	564
Total	99,222	111,767
% change in private vehicle user	+12.64% ⁸	

In terms of percentage change as it relates to total population in Kildare, according to CSO data, 44.6% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of private travel in 2016. In comparison, a marginal increase was noted in 2022 where the CSO reported that 45.3% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of private travel.

KCC is currently undertaking a number of incentives to promote active travel across the County. At a local level a number of Transport Strategies and assessments have been prepared, namely Kildare Town Transport Strategy, Naas Sallins Transport Strategy, the Maynooth and Environs Area Based Transport Assessment and the Newbridge Area Based Transport Assessment, all of which aim to promote active travel in local areas and benefit surrounding communities. In 2023 and 2024, approximately €20 million in funding was allocated to KCC in order to support active travel across the County. This funding is set to fund approximately 800 Active Travel projects and contribute to the development of almost 1,000 kilometres (km) of new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure across Ireland from the period of 2020 to 2025. In terms of funding allocation for Kildare, some 24 active travel projects have been selected by the National Transport Authority (NTA), for example, the Kilcullen Road Active Travel Scheme, Royal Canal Greenway (Maynooth - FCC Boundary) and Celbridge Road Active Travel Scheme. Active travel projects in Kildare will include the development of segregated cycle lanes, widened footpaths, new walking and cycling bridges, and new pedestrian crossings⁹. Together, these incentives will enable the attainment of the targets for population and human health surrounding active travel.

In relation to Kildare's Public Transport Network, a number of proposed public transport improvements have been prioritised in County Kildare. Since the publication of the Plan, the NTA announced that two Go-Ahead Ireland bus routes between Dublin and Rathangan in County Kildare were to be enhanced as of November 2023. The 120 and 126 bus timetables have since been revised in order to increase service frequency and expand capacity for commuters. Route 126 has received forty-six additional trips weekly, enhancing connectivity between these locations. The service improvement also included the addition of six new coaches along the 126 route. Further, a new bus stop has been introduced at Killeenlea near Celbridge and the Kill to Newbridge service will be extended to Kildare, to provide more options for commuters. These enhancements

⁷ Note: This figure (%) represents the percentage increase in travel by means of public transportation to work, school or college in Kildare from 2016 to 2022, aged 5 years and over.

⁸ Note: This figure (%) represents the percentage increase in travel by means of private modes of travel to work, school or college in Kildare from 2016 to 2022, aged 5 years and over.

⁹ NTA (2024) Active Travel Investment Grants: 2024 Allocations. Available at: [Active Travel Investment Grants: 2024 Allocations - National Transport](#)

have been facilitated as part of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, and spearheaded and funded by the NTA with aims to improve rural mobility and connectivity across Ireland¹⁰.

In relation to recreation and amenity areas in Kildare, a community park and playground opened in Allenwood in May 2024, a natural play area opened in the Liffey Linear Park, Newbridge in December 2024 and consultants have been appointed to complete the installation of a hangout area at the Slip in Celbridge, which is set to be progressed into 2025. KCC are also currently investigating the potential for the future delivery of 2 no. community swimming facilities in North Kildare at Leixlip and Maynooth. A number of sites have also been identified for the future provision of playgrounds since the Plan has come into effect, including Kilmeague, Coill Dubh / Cooleragh, Ardclough and Johnstownbridge.

Finally, KCC has commenced preparation of the County Kildare Active Recreational Infrastructure Strategy, the County Kildare Outdoor Recreation Plan and the County Kildare Local Sports Plan. A survey was conducted in September/October 2024 to inform these plans, and it is anticipated that the Active Recreational Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Sports Plan will to be published in 2025.

Information regarding water schemes, services and compliances is included later in this report in Section 3.8.2. Information regarding funding for public and rural improvements is included later in this report, refer to Section 3.7.2.

3.1.3 Conclusions

Continued success of above housing targets will have a positive effect on population and human health.

KCC have successfully delivered an excess of the housing target set out in the Plan, including an excess of the target to deliver homes within existing settlements thus reducing urban sprawl and achieving compact growth. Additionally, reported increases in commercial/employment development permitted in the County indicate positive trends in economic growth and employment. Recent census information also illustrates that KCC have been successful in increasing active travel and public transport uptake.

It is noted however that there has been a 4% reduction in the portion of people reporting self-perceived health status of good or very good.

In relation to modal shifts, the continued increase, albeit marginal, of individuals travelling by means of active travel will have a positive effect on population and human health (10.4% in 2016 and 10.7% in 2022, as it relates to the total population of Kildare). However, it must be noted that there has also been a reduction in individuals travelling by means of public transportation, where 9.2% was reported in 2016 and 8.6% in 2022(as it relates to the total population of Kildare).

It has also been reported that there has been an increase in private vehicular usage in Kildare, where 44.6% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of private travel in 2016 and 45.1% of the total population travelled to work, school or college by means of private travel in 2022. Decreased public transport usage coupled with increased private vehicle usage has the potential to result in negative effects on population and human health. Although ease of movement and accessibility is facilitated through private vehicular usage, the emissions associated with these trends are likely to have negative effects on human health going forward.

Public realm and rural improvements, improved water services, supply and associated infrastructure, and increased recreational and amenity areas in Kildare are likely to result in a positive effect on population and human health.

¹⁰ Go Ahead Ireland (2023) DCOM Timetable Change. Available at: [DCOM Timetable Change - November 2023 - Go Ahead Ireland](#)

3.2 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

3.2.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to biodiversity, flora and fauna are included in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna within the Plan

Targets	Indicators
No loss of protected habitats and species during the lifetime of the Plan and seek to restore status where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number and condition of European sites, and the maintenance of conservation objectives.• The status of water quality in the County's water bodies.• The number of projects that have integrated ecosystem services considerations.• The number of EIAs and AAs as relevant for new projects.• The number of compliances of planning permissions with CDP, measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna.• The number of provisions of green/blue infrastructure.• The number of developments permitted in proximity/within European sites/sites of ecological importance.
That biodiversity, ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions are integrated into all decision making across the Plan and within lower-level plans, Council internal guidance documents, planning application considerations, and Council-led projects.	
Support features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.	
Identify invasive species in the County and develop appropriate management techniques for their control.	
Implement a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County including the protection of green and blue ecological corridors and linkages	
Screen for and undertake EIA and AA as relevant for new projects	

3.2.2 Monitoring Results

Since the publication of the Plan, a new 'State of the Environment Report' has been published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to the Report, the overall current assessment for nature in Ireland is 'very poor' (the same as in 2020). Deteriorating trends dominate, especially for protected habitats and bird populations, and Ireland is not on track to achieve policy objectives for nature. While the recent expansion of marine protected areas is welcome, additional far-reaching measures are needed to address the declines in nature and biodiversity.

Since the time of publication of the Plan, the 4th iteration of the Biodiversity Action Plan (Government of Ireland, 2024) has also been published. The Biodiversity Action Plan notes that, in 2024, some 85% of European protected habitats across Ireland are in unfavourable status, with almost half (46%) demonstrating ongoing declines. This has resulted in almost a third of European protected species in Ireland are in unfavourable status, with over half of native Irish plant species declining.

The review of the Kildare County Biodiversity Action Plan is currently underway, and the Plan is anticipated to be published in 2025. When available, the publication of the new Plan will facilitate the identification of potential ecosystem services and will support the provision of green and blue infrastructure in future plans to align with the targets presented in Table 3.5 above. Since the publication of the Plan, a number of Community Biodiversity Plans have been prepared for towns throughout Kildare (for example, Maynooth, Ballyshannon, Kilcullen and Narraghmore). It is also notable that a Biodiversity Officer was appointed in Kildare in 2023 (May).

Kildare Wildlife Rescue, in partnership with KCC, held the second Kildare Biodiversity Conference in October 2024. This conference marked a significant milestone in the efforts to promote biodiversity, conservation and collaboration in Co Kildare.

A review of KCC LAPs that have been prepared since the publication of the Plan has been undertaken to identify the progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the preservation of biodiversity and sustainable development of Kildare County. The Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029 was adopted in 2023, which was subject to SEA and AA. Chapter 9 of the LAP refers to Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure which concerns Biodiversity, Designated Sites, Green Infrastructure and Ecological Corridors.

The plan was informed by a separate Habitat Mapping Report. This Plan will aid and support the protection of biodiversity, and the facilitation of green infrastructure, ecological corridors and linkages at local level.

The Maynooth and Environs Joint LAP 2025 – 2031, adopted in February 2025, was also subject to SEA and AA. The Maynooth and Environs Joint LAP 2025 – 2031 includes a Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure Chapter (Chapter 9) which concerns Biodiversity, Designated Sites, Green Infrastructure and Ecological Corridors. This Plan will aid and support the protection of biodiversity, and the facilitation of green infrastructure, ecological corridors and linkages at local level. The Maynooth and Environs Joint LAP 2025 – 2031 contains a Habitat Mapping Report, which is appended to the LAP. This Report has surveyed, mapped and assessed habitats within Maynooth, to identify Green Infrastructure, and to raise awareness about the natural heritage in the town. The preparation of the Report represents a positive step towards biodiversity management.

The Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, as extended to 2026, was also subject to SEA and AA. The Leixlip LAP includes a Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure and Strategic Open Spaces Chapter (Chapter 11) which concerns Biodiversity, Designated Sites, Green Infrastructure and Ecological Corridors. This Plan will aid and support the protection of biodiversity, and the facilitation of green infrastructure, ecological corridors and linkages at local level. The Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, as extended also contains Habitat Mapping for Leixlip.

A Habitat Mapping Report has also been prepared for the Draft Newbridge LAP which is anticipated to be published in Q1 2025. Full SEA and AA are currently being undertaken for this the LAP.

The Draft Kilcullen Settlement Plan, published as Variation No. 1 to the KCDP, includes a map showing key green infrastructure with associated objectives for their protection. This variation was subject to SEA and AA.

A pre-draft consultation has been completed for Monasterevin LAP at this time, and the draft Settlement Plan is set to be published in 2025. A variation to integrate a new Settlement Plan for Monasterevin into Volume II of the KCDP, to replace the current LAP will be undertaken in accordance with the new Planning and Development Act 2024. This variation was subject to SEA and AA.

The LAPs discussed above, as well as any other council policies, plans, programmes published within the lifetime of the Plan will also have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European Sites as well as the provision of sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species.

Since the time of publication of the Plan, KCC has also adopted a ‘Green Kilometre scheme’ which is an initiative aimed at communities taking action to clean up rural areas in Kildare and planting native trees and shrubs in these areas, where permissible.

Finally, since the publication of the Plan, KCC have purchased 50 acres of land at Feighcullen for biodiversity and woodland projects, and in 2023, planted 475 semi-mature trees and 1800 sapling and hedgerows.

The status of water quality in Kildare is discussed in Section 3.4.

3.2.3 Conclusions

The Plan sets out an objective of KCC to prepare a new Biodiversity Action Plan within the Plan period, and preparatory work for this commenced in 2024 and still underway. It is anticipated that the Biodiversity Action Plan will be progressed and adopted in 2025. In the absence of the updated Biodiversity Action Plan there is potential for the degradation of biodiversity across the County, including to protected sites and

species. However, there are a suite of objectives contained in the plan to ensure protection of biodiversity through the development management process. It is further noted that various local Biodiversity Action Plans have been prepared since the preparation of the Plan demonstrating progress towards the biodiversity targets outlined in the Plan.

The facilitation and purchase of land for Council lead biodiversity and woodland projects, in addition to the facilitation of increased planting in Kildare is likely to result in positive effects on surrounding biodiversity.

Adoption of LAPs and settlement plans, which have been and will be subject to SEA and AA, and which contain provisions for biodiversity protection and green infrastructure, will further contribute to this progression.

3.3 Land and Soils

3.3.1 Targets and Indicators

The Targets and Indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to land and soils are included in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Land and Soils within the Plan

Targets	Indicators
To facilitate compliance with growth targets for delivery of housing within the existing built-up footprint of settlements and urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of. • Number of planning applications granted on brownfield and/or infill sites. • Volume of construction and demolition waste recycled. • Status/risk of groundwater waterbodies under the WFD. • Number of application granted for soil importation/inert waste facilities. • Number of planning permissions granted, and area of land permitted for excavation and extraction of non-renewable sand, gravel and rock deposits.
Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements.	
Minimise the use of greenfield land.	
Reduce the rate of land use change on greenfield lands arising from urban sprawl and urban generated rural housing.	
Ensure sustainable extraction of non-renewable sand, gravel and rock deposits and the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste.	

3.3.2 Monitoring Results

The level of built surface cover within the boundaries of KCC and levels of sustainable extraction of non-renewable sand, gravel and rock deposits in Kildare are not available at the time of writing this report.

There is limited data regarding the number of planning applications granted on brownfield and/or infill sites, as well as for soil importation/inert waste facilities and excavation and extraction of non-renewable sand, gravel and rock deposits. However, since the publication of the Plan, the following two applications have been granted permission relating to the aforementioned sectors:

- Kilsaran Concrete Unlimited Company (Planning Ref. 24/60265): relating to intake of soil and stone and broken rock at the existing licensed soil recovery facility at Haverstown, Kilcullen (Planning Ref: 18/453) and an extension to the life of the existing facility of 3 year to accommodate the additional soil and stone intake.
- Kilsaran Concrete Unlimited Company (Planning Ref. 23/60266): relating to the increase in overall extraction area and importation of processed fine aggregate for concrete production at the existing quarry development (Planning Ref. 99/2042 and ABP Ref. PL09.123207).

There is no available information on the quantity of contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill sites in Kildare and the disposal of same. The most recent data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on contaminated soil generation is from 2024¹¹ and is reported on a national level.

There have been no instances reported where contaminated material generated from brownfield or infill sites in Kildare have not been disposed of appropriately.

The status and risk of groundwater waterbodies in Kildare is discussed in Section 3.4.

3.3.3 Conclusions

Limited information is available on the targets set out in the Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Report pertaining to Land and Soils.

There have been no instances reported where contaminated material generated from brownfield or infill sites in Kildare have not been disposed of appropriately. Two applications have been granted permission relating to soil importation/inert waste facilities and excavation and extraction of non-renewable sand, gravel and rock deposits.

3.4 Water

3.4.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to water are included in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Water within the Plan.

Targets	Indicators
All waters within the plan area to achieve the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the relevant River Basin Management Plan by 2027.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD.• Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas.• The number of sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing, etc.) into new projects.
Achieve compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC (protection of groundwater).	
Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk.	
Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing, etc.) into new projects as relevant.	
Implementation of flooding projects.	

3.4.2 Monitoring Results

Since the publication of the Plan the quality of the water courses in Kildare remain generally unchanged.

A new ‘State of the Environment Report’ was published in 2024 by the EPA. According to the Report, the overall current assessment for water in Ireland is ‘poor’ (the same as in 2020). Trends remain mixed, with no net improvement in river or lake water quality in recent years, a sharp decline in the number of monitored estuaries in satisfactory ecological condition and continued direct discharges of raw or inadequately treated sewage to water from 19 agglomerations. Significant challenges remain for achieving full compliance with relevant EU obligations and national policy objectives.

Since the publication of the Plan, in 2024, KCC has published a set of Development Guidelines for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The guidelines are directed at those designing drainage systems, specifically SuDS, for new developments within the KCC region. These guidelines will be used in

¹¹ EPA (2024) State of the Environment Report. Available at: [Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024](#)

conjunction with policies and objectives outlined in the KCDP, SFRA and Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study to support the planning process where sustainable drainage systems are included in planning applications to be assessed by KCC.¹²

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) have been prepared for the LAPs prepared by KCC at this time (Kildare Town LAP, Draft Maynooth and Environs Joint LAP, Draft Newbridge LAP and Kilcullen Settlement Plan). As a result of bespoke Surface Water Management Studies prepared for some of these towns, a number of locations have been established as part of these LAPs for Nature-Based Management Areas (NBMA) and indicative surface water pathways/ natural drainage paths. The LAPs also make provisions for the incorporation of nature-based water drainage solutions as part of all proposed plans and projects in Kildare Town and Maynooth and its Environs.

KCC’s Flood Risk Management Department is responsible for the delivery of flood relief schemes identified in the Office of Public Works (OPW) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Plans¹³. Since the publication of the Plan (2023), the Flood Risk Management Department at KCC has delivered/is delivering flood schemes for Naas FRS, Athy FRS and the Morell FRS.

Finally, since the publication of the Plan, the Eastern and Midlands Regions Water Supply Project received Government approval (June 2024) and a planning application (SID) to An Bord Pleanála is anticipated in 2025. The Barrow Water Supply Scheme Area Extension Project has also seen substantial works carried out and commissioning works are underway.

3.4.3 Conclusions

Since the publication of the Plan the quality of the water courses in Kildare remain generally unchanged. Since publication of the Plan, the EPA published the 2024 State of the Environment Report, indicating that water quality in Ireland remains poor and is currently at risk.

SFRAs for the Kildare Town and Draft Maynooth LAPs have identified Nature-Based Management Areas and natural drainage paths, promoting nature-based solutions and demonstrating progress towards the biodiversity targets outlined in the Plan. In 2024, KCC released Development Guidelines for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to guide new developments, aligning with existing policies and studies.

Any improvements to water supply and its associated infrastructure in Kildare is likely to result in positive effects.

3.5 Air, Noise and Climatic Factors

3.5.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to air quality are included in Table 3.8 below.

Table 3.8 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Air Quality within the Plan

Table 3.9 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Air Quality within the Plan.

Targets	Indicators
Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous CSO figures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of compliances with EPA emission limits for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter.• Number of compliances with existing legislation/regulations/conditions for air quality e.g. IPPC/IE licences.
Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures.	
Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NOx and particulate matter.	

¹² KCC (2024) Sustainable Drainage System – Guidance Document. Available at: [KCC Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidance Spreads.pdf](#).

¹³ KCC (2024) Flooding. Available at: [Flood Risk Management & River Drainage - Kildare County Council](#)

Targets	Indicators
Increase number of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes in the plan area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel patterns and the number of modes of transport within the County. Number of new air monitoring stations in the County. Implementation of the CDP, which will contribute towards and facilitate climate action and the relevant targets for emission reductions. The quantity of GHG emission changes over the plan period. Energy consumption, the amount of uptake in renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating. Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels. Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures.
Implementation of Noise Action Plans.	
To implement the CDP, which will contribute towards and facilitate climate action.	
Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low- carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.	
Contribute towards the target of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure, in compliance with the provisions of the CDP.	
Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions in accordance with the Climate Action Plan.	
To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating.	

3.5.2 Monitoring Results

Air Quality Factors

The national ambient air quality monitoring network has almost quadrupled in size since 2017 from 29 to 115 stations. Presently, there are 4 monitoring stations in County Kildare: Celbridge, Newbridge, Leixlip and Naas.

Since the publication of the Plan, the Air Quality in Ireland 2023 Report¹⁴ has been published. According to the 2023 report:

- There was 1 no. instance of exceeded according to the Air Quality Bulletin 2023 at Naas monitoring station 8/9/2023 of PM₁₀ Days > 50 ug/m³
- Air quality in Ireland is generally good, however, there are concerning localised issues
- Fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) from solid fuel combustion in homes and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from vehicle emissions are the main pollutants threatening good air quality in Ireland
- It is estimated that there are approximately 1,600 premature deaths annually in Ireland due to poor air quality from fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}); and
- Ireland met all of its EU legal requirements in 2023, but it did not meet the more stringent health-based World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality or the Clean Air Strategy guidelines.

These findings reflect those of the State of the Environment Report, also published since the preparation of the Plan. According to the Report, the overall current assessment for air is ‘moderate’ (the same as in 2020). Ireland is compliant with current air quality standards for many air pollutants. However, Ireland is not meeting the guidelines set by WHO for multiple pollutants, including fine particulate matter, and Ireland is non-compliant with the EU reduction target for ammonia and will remain so in the short term. Achieving the ambitions of the Clean Air Strategy and complying with the limit values of the proposed EU Air Quality Directive from 2030 onwards will be challenging but will have a significant and positive impact on health

The increase in active means of travel, as seen in Section 0, and the current air quality reported in Kildare County demonstrates an ongoing achievement of the indicators and targets identified in Table 3.9. However,

¹⁴ EPA (2024) Air Quality in Ireland Report 2023. Available at: [Air Quality in Ireland 2023](#)

the over reliance on private vehicle use is still present in Kildare with over half of commuters (61%) travelling to work, college or school by private modes of transport in 2022.

According to the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, additional road infrastructure has opened/ been granted planning permission since the publication of the Plan. For example, the Athy Southern Distributor Road opened in October 2023, a new bridge across the River Liffey in Newbridge was granted planning permission and an Inner Relief Road was delivered in Newbridge from Naas Road to Great Connell Road. Furthermore, Part 8 planning permission was secured for the Maynooth Eastern Ring Road and the Compulsory Purchase Order has been granted by An Bord Pleanála with negotiations currently ongoing. All of which will facilitate ease of movement and accessibility around Kildare, however, it is notable that this infrastructure may promote a further reliance on private vehicular usage.

It must also be noted that there is potential for positive effects associated with air quality and climate as increased and improved public transport and active travel infrastructure have also been approved / facilitated since the publication of the Plan. This is reflected in the Census data, which shows an increase in active travel uptake in Kildare from 2016 to 2022. Examples of improved public transport and active travel infrastructure approved / facilitated since the publication of the Plan are listed as follows:

- Railway Orders were granted by An Bord Pleanála in relation to the delivery of Dart+West (serving Dublin-Leixlip-Maynooth) and Dart+South-West (Dublin to Hazelhatch/Celbridge) in July and November 2024 respectively
- Canal Greenways have progressed significantly:
 - The Naas to Sallins Greenway Project was delivered in 2024, including new active travel bridge in Sallins.
 - The Royal Canal Greenway Project is currently under construction
 - The Grand Canal Greenway Project is under construction.
- The Barrow Blueway is under construction
- Permission was granted for a pedestrian overpass across the M4 linking The Wonderful Barn to the Kildare Innovation Campus
- Local permeability measures within settlements have been identified through the preparation of Area Based Transport Assessments / Local Transport Plans or Strategies and subject to the Local Area Plan process; and
- Revised bus networks serving the County under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Programme, introduced since the coming into effect of the KCDP, include the 129, 139, 880, 800/885, 880, 888 and 892. These routes are in addition to existing, revised and additional routes operating under the TFI Local Link Kildare South Dublin, as one of the Transport Co-Ordination Units within the remit of the NTA, funded by the Rural Transport Programme.

Climate Factors

Since the publication of the Plan, a new ‘State of the Environment Report’ has been published by the EPA. According to the Report, while there has been progress in terms of beginning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in strengthening adaptation governance structures and support services, overall current assessment for climate is ‘poor’ (a slight improvement from ‘very poor’ in 2020). Full implementation of actions set out in the Climate Action Plan and additional actions are needed if Ireland is to meet its 2030 and 2050 climate targets.

KCC published the Kildare County Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2024-2029, in 2024. The CAP aims to align with the Government’s National Climate Objective and achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. It sets out actions to be delivered by the Council, business and citizens of the County to respond to climate change and provides a roadmap to achieve the reduction of the Council’s emissions by 51% by 2030. The Council is committed to reducing its own emissions by 50% by 2030 compared to the baseline year.¹⁵

The CAP sets out details of the Baseline Emission Inventory for County Kildare which was developed in accordance with the Climate Mitigation Assessment: Baseline Energy Inventory of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines 2023. The Guidelines require that all local authorities develop an emissions inventory for the 2018 baseline year as standard in line with the baseline year for the national emissions reduction objective. The County Kildare Baseline Emission Inventory is reproduced in Figure 1 below.

Sector	Kildare County Baseline Emissions Inventory 2018 (tCO ₂ e)	Share of Baseline (%)
Transport	640,922	38.2%
Residential	391,323	23.3%
Commercial	322,199	19.2%
Agriculture	232,230	13.8%
Municipal	55,240	3.3%
Social Housing	18,482	1.1%
Wastewater	13,661	0.8%
Waste	4,525	0.3%
Total	1,678,583	100%

Table 3-4: 2018 Sectoral Emissions Profile for County Kildare

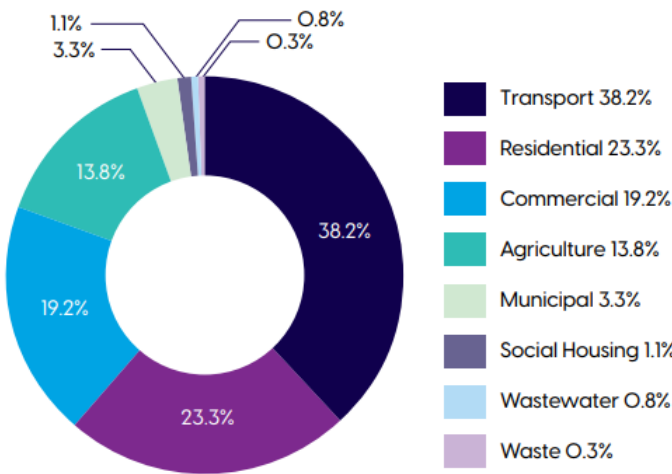


Figure 3-5: 2018 Emissions Profile for County Kildare

Figure 1 Baseline Emission Inventory for County Kildare (2018). Source: Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

As evident from the Emission Baseline, transport represents the largest emissions profile in Kildare (38%), followed by residential (23%).

¹⁵ Kildare Climate Action Office (2024) Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. Available at: [Kildare Climate Action Office, Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 to 2029](#)

KCC has, as set out in the CAP, designated Maynooth as a Decarbonising Zone. Decarbonising Zones are test bed areas that have been identified by a local authority where new ways of delivering climate actions will be developed in partnership with large employers and the public in the area.

In 2023, KCC began working in partnership with Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI) as part of their energy decarbonisation partnership programme to help achieve Ireland's national climate action ambitions. As part of this collaboration, KCC committed to striving to achieve their 2030 and 2050 energy decarbonisation targets as set out in the Local Authority Climate Action Plan.

According to the 2022 Census Results which have been published since the preparation of the Plan, Kildare had the seventh-lowest per capita level of heat demand of all counties. Total energy demand, across all sectors in Kildare, amounted to 1,211 gigawatt hours (in 2022) – the fourteenth highest level in the State. County Kildare has no wind farms but has (Feb 2023) thirteen planned solar farms with a projected maximum export capacity (MEC) of 114MW - 5.9% of that planned for the State. Sales of electric and hybrid vehicles have been increasing over recent years, and in 2023, they accounted for almost fifty percent of all new car sales in County Kildare – up from seven percent in 2018.

KCC have been successful in increasing active travel and public transport uptake and have achieved significant funding for active travel projects into the future, however heavy reliance on private vehicle usage is still prominent in Kildare. Further information is set out in 'Air Quality Factors' above.

Noise Factors

With regard to noise, a Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 was prepared in 2023 and published by KCC in 2024¹⁶. The Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 is founded upon results of strategic noise informing assessments of population exposure and harmful effects of noise and aims to provide strategic long-term management strategies for environmental noise from transport systems. The results of the noise assessments were used to identify regions within Kildare County in which noise management actions will be implemented should resources become available, referred to as Priority Important Areas.¹⁷

KCC has adopted a three-pronged approach to managing environmental noise levels from transport systems which aims to: prevent, protect and mitigate. Additionally, KCC commits to the following responsible aims: Policy and Guidance Development, Working Groups, Noise Mitigation, Protection, Prevention, Community Engagement, Manage Noise Complaints and Regulatory Engagement.¹⁸

3.5.3 Conclusions

Air quality in Kildare and Ireland in general remains good. KCC are making positive strides towards climate action in the County. Notably, KCC published the Kildare County CAP in 2024 which contains significant targets for emission reductions. The successful implementation of these targets will have a positive effect on air quality and climate.

In relation to modal shifts, the continued increase of individuals travelling by means of active travel will have a positive effect on air quality, climate and noise. However, it must be noted that there has also been a reduction in individuals travelling by means of public transportation and an increase in private vehicular usage in Kildare. As previously discussed, decreased public transport usage coupled with increased private vehicle usage has the potential to result in negative effects on both air quality and climate. Although ease of movement and accessibility is facilitated through private vehicular usage, the emissions associated with these trends are likely to have negative effects on air quality and climate going forward.

¹⁶ KCC (2024) Noise Action Plan 2024-20238 – Kildare County Council. Available at: [Kildare Noise Action Plan 2024 -2028 - Kildare County Council](#)

¹⁷ KCC (2024) Noise Action Plan 2024-20238 – Kildare County Council. Available at: [Kildare Noise Action Plan 2024 -2028 - Kildare County Council](#)

¹⁸ KCC (2024) Noise Action Plan 2024-20238 – Kildare County Council. Available at: [Kildare Noise Action Plan 2024 -2028 - Kildare County Council](#)

It must also be noted that there are positive effects associated with air quality and climate where increased and improved public transport and active travel infrastructure is also being facilitated.

3.6 Cultural Heritage

3.6.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to cultural heritage are included in Table 3.10 below.

Table 3.10 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Cultural Heritage within the Plan

Targets	Indicators
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 CDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the CDP.
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 CDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the CDP.
No permitted development which involves loss of cultural heritage, including protected structures, archaeological sites, Architectural Conservations Areas and landscape features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archaeological Impact Assessments, and/or the number and types of archaeological investigations undertaken Recorded numbers of non-designated built heritage e.g., vernacular buildings.
To increase the number of uninhabited and derelict structures that are restored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of design statements/public realm plans/Masterplans undertaken for settlements/opportunity sites. Visitor numbers for iconic cultural heritage sites. Number of literary, musical, artistic and other cultural initiatives undertaken in the County.

3.6.2 Monitoring Results

Since the publication of the KCDP 2023-2029, Part 8 projects pertaining to the Strategic Projects and Public Realm (SPPR) have been undertaken across Kildare. In line with the KCDP 2023-2029, these projects will improve upon public amenities, promote the heritage of the County and promote community engagement. Projects include but are not limited to: Barrow Blueway Trail Head; Sallins Grand Canal Greenway Link, Public Realm Improvement Works to Market Square in Kildare Town; Redevelopment of the Wonderful Barn in Leixlip; and the completion of Phase 2 of Grand Canal Greenway.¹⁹ According to the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, a Part 8 Proposal for the redevelopment of the Wonderful Barn was also approved by the members of the Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District in October 2024. This development seeks to protect and enhance the architectural heritage and amenity value of the site through the provision of an integrated public amenity park and tourism destination, whilst incorporating a conservation led design approach.

With regard to places of cultural heritage and monuments, the Kildare County Record of Protected Structures (RPS) was last updated on 9 October 2023 and a review of the RPS has yet to be undertaken.

In relation to world heritage sites, Dun Ailinne was included in the 2022 UNESCO tentative list which is the first step in the nomination process, however, the process and subsequent of nomination dossiers can take between 4-6 years.

KCC's Planning Department continues to administer funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) via the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS). During 2023 and 2024, the total amount administered by KCC under these funds were €377,000 and €282,500 respectively.

¹⁹ KCC (2024) Strategic Projects and Public Realm. Available at: [Strategic Projects and Public Realm - Kildare County Council](#)

At the time of writing this report, no new Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) have been designated in Kildare. Statements of Characters have been produced for ACAs in Athy, Kildare, Naas and Maynooth. Statements of Characters for the remainder of the ACAs will be prepared through the development/updating of Local Area Plans and depending on available resources. At the time of writing this report, KCC has yet to prepare “*Guidelines for the Management and Development of ACAs*” outlined as an action in the KCDP 2023-2029.

There is no further information available regarding entries to the Record of Monuments and Places from the information initially provided in the Environmental Reports of the Plan. One addition to the RPS was made since the CDP was adopted. However, since the publication of the KCDP 2023-2029 Conservation Management Plans (CMP) for the and Cassidy’s Mills Complex in Monasterevin and for the Clane Abbey Community Centre have been published. The CMP aims to address immediate concerns while aligning interventions with a long-term perspective.²⁰

Concerning artistic, musical and other cultural initiatives undertaken in the County, two strategies have been published along with the KCDP 2023-2029:

- In Perpetual Motion (An Arts Strategy for Kildare County Council 2023-2027)²¹ aims to encourage, support and inspire individuals, communities and artists, to improve the experience of the arts and creativity for all people living in the County. The strategy upholds six key values: quality, transparency/fairness, respect/integrity, learning/growth, innovation/inspiration and ethics
- Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027²² is committed to enhancing access to, engagement with, and enjoyment of Ireland’s culture and creativity. The strategy was developed as part of the Creative Ireland Programme created by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

3.6.3 Conclusions

Limited information is available on the targets set out in the Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Report pertaining to Cultural Heritage.

Since publication of the Plan, KCC have implemented various projects to improve the public realm and promote heritage in the County. KCC have also successfully delivered cultural initiatives across the County.

3.7 Landscape and Visual

3.7.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to landscape and visual are included in Table 3.11 below.

Table 3.11 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Landscape and Visual within the Plan

Targets	Indicators
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 CDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the CDP. • Number of planning permissions granted in areas of high value landscape. • Number of permissions granted within 500m of a scenic route.

²⁰ KCC (2024) Conservation Plans. Available at: [Conservation Plans - Kildare County Council](#)

²¹ KCC (2023) In Perpetual Motion. Available at: [In Perpetual MotionAn Arts Strategy for Kildare County Council 20232027KCC.pdf](#)

²² KCC (2023) Kildare Culture Creativity Strategy 2023-2027. Available at: [Kildare Culture Creativity Strategy 2023 - 2027](#)

3.7.2 Monitoring Results

Given the number and extent of developments which have been permitted over the two-year period since the established of the Plan, the designation of any developments resulting in adverse visual impacts is not provided in this report.

In relation to Landscape Character Assessments (LCA), the current LCA for the area was conducted in 2004 and so, no monitoring results have been included in relation to LCAs. KCC has however appointed consultants to review the County LCA, and it is anticipated that a Draft LCA will form a Variation to the KCDP (subject to AA, SEA and public consultation) in Q3/Q4 2025.

According to the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, a total of €12,055,915 has been awarded to KCC under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) to fund key projects throughout County Kildare going forward.

Finally, the Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan and the Curragh Plains Interpretation, Branding and Wayfinding Strategy was published in December 2024. KCC will seek to support the recommended policies and actions of the recently published Plan and Strategy in conjunction with other stakeholders, subject to the availability of resources going forward.

Information regarding recreation and amenity areas in Kildare has been detailed in Section 0.

3.7.3 Conclusions

Limited information is available on the targets set out in the Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Report pertaining to Landscape. However, the funding allocated under the URDF and the RRDF will have a positive effect on surrounding landscape and visuals in Kildare, alongside the provision of conservation management plans across Kildare and the increased and improved recreation and amenity areas across the County.

3.8 Material Assets

3.8.1 Targets and Indicators

The targets and indicators presented in Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report of relevance to material assets are included in Table 3.12 below.

Table 3.12 Targets and Indicators of Relevance to Material Assets within the Plan

Targets	Indicators
Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of completed infrastructure projects identified in the KCDP.• Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures.• The number and extent of Water Treatment Plans on EPAs Remedial Action List.• The amount of access to sustainable modes of transport.• Roll out of National Broadband Plan - Number of households serviced and % of households with the minimum broadband speed of 30Mbps and % of households with the target broadband speed of 100Mbps.• The number of renewable energy projects permitted, and enabling/supporting infrastructure provided.
To improve access to sustainable modes of transport.	
Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes.	
Reduce waste sent to landfill and increase waste sent for recycling and energy generation.	
Not to permit development where it would result in a WWTP exceeding the terms of its discharge license.	
Promote population growth in areas served by urban wastewater treatment plants and public water supplies in accordance with the National Planning Framework.	
Support septic tank inspections in accordance with the Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems National Inspection Plan.	
Increase in community assets, facilities and services in an area.	

3.8.2 Monitoring Results

Refer to Section 3.1.2 for information on the proportion of people using active travel in their commutes, improvements in sustainable modes of transport, and progress made thus far during the lifecycle of the Plan.

The latest EPA Remedial Action List was published in 2024, and one Kildare based water supply system is included on it: Barrow supply (Srowland WTP)²³. The Barrow supply serves a population of 81,613 and the proposed action on the Remedial Action List is to upgrade the Srowland WTP by December 2026²⁴.

Since publishing of the Plan, Uisce Éireann began progressing a major upgrade to Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant in Kildare. The upgrade will ensure the continued delivery of a clean, safe drinking water supply in Dublin and the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The upgrade will provide improved water quality, ensuring compliance with current drinking water quality regulations and will safeguard the water supply for current and future generations. Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant is the largest water treatment plant in Ireland, supplying over 50% of the GDA's drinking water supply, serving homes and businesses across Dublin and North Kildare²⁵.

Further concerning water supply in the County, since the publication of the Plan, The Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region has been established. The project aims to provide Kildare, Dublin, Meath and Wicklow with a resilient, safe and secure water supply as well as created a treated water supply 'spine' across the country. This cross-regional project will deliver secure, climate-proof water supply for up to 50% of the Irish State's population. In doing so, the project will support competitiveness, sustainable economic growth, and increased demand for housing across the region.²⁶

The number of developments at the time of writing which are appropriately served by wastewater treatment is not included within this report, nor is information pertaining to developments with septic tanks.

According to the EPA Urban Wastewater Treatment Report for 2023, none of the Kildare County wastewater treatment plants failed stringent EU treatment standards and/or secondary treatment standards.²⁷ Additionally, no treatment plants in the County were found to be discharging raw sewage nor were any treatment plants placed in the priority areas lists to prevent wastewater discharges from harming rivers, estuaries, lakes and coastal waters, freshwater peal mussel habitats or designated shellfish waters.²⁸ As a result, no treatment plants within Kildare County were found to have significant negative environmental impacts.

According to the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, an Bord Pleanála granted permission (2024) to extend and amend the Drehid Waste Management Facility to accept up to 400,000 tonnes of waste since the publication of the Plan.

A review of the Local Authority Waste Facilities Register found that 16 new permits were granted permission between the start of 2023 and the time of writing of this report.²⁹

With regard to renewable energy development, a Wind Energy Strategy³⁰ was published as an Appendix to the Plan, outlining the Council's objectives concerning the development of wind energy in the County and a methodology to identify suitable locations throughout the County. A review of the Wind Energy Ireland

²³ Note: Srowland WTP fully feeds the Barrow supply and partially feeds the Barrow Poulaphouca PWS (1400PUB1070), Monasterevin PWS (1400PUB1020) and Rathangan PWS (1400PUB1041).

²⁴ EPA (2024) EPA Remedial Action List. Available at: [Q2-2024-RAL-for-public-drinking-water-supplies-FINAL.pdf](#)

²⁵ Uisce Éireann (2023) Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant. Available at: [Upgrade of Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant to benefit almost 1 million customers | News | Uisce Éireann](#)

²⁶ DHLGH (2024) Water Supply Project [Press Release]. Available at: [gov.ie - Water Supply Project, critical to securing economic growth and housing needs for the future, gets government green light.](#)

²⁷ EPA (2024) Urban Wastewater Treatment in 2023. Available at: [Urban-Wastewater-Treatment-in-2023-report.pdf](#)

²⁸ EPA (2024) Urban Wastewater Treatment in 2023. Available at: [Urban-Wastewater-Treatment-in-2023-report.pdf](#)

²⁹ NWCPO (2024) Local Authority Waste Facility Register. Available at: [National Waste Collection Permit Office Home.](#)

³⁰ KCC (2023) Appendix 2 – Wind Energy Strategy. Available at: [FINAL Appendix 2 Wind Energy Strategy.pdf](#)

Wind Farm Map³¹ indicates that there are currently no windfarms in County Kildare. Similarly, a review of the KCC and ABP planning portal indicate that no planning applications have been received or granted relating to the development of windfarms in the County since the adoption of the Plan. However, 1 no. Pre-Application Consultation occurred in March 2024³² for the development of a 12-no. wind turbine farm in North Kildare by the Statkraft Group, the decision was decided in April 2024 to be *'Is a Strategic Infrastructure Development'*³³. Additionally, Bord Na Mona has expressed their interest in developing a 47-turbine windfarm on the Ballydermot Bog Group located in Counties Kildare and Offaly. It should be noted the planning application for the Ballydermot Windfarm has not yet been lodged but is set to be lodged in 2025³⁴.

A review of the Solar Atlas produced by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland³⁵ last updated in Q2 of 2024 indicates that there is currently 1 no. solar generator connected to the grid in County Kildare: Hortland PV (25MW³⁶). Additionally, the map outlines that 10 no. solar farms had been contracted in County Kildare.

According to the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, planning permission has been granted for 566 Megawatts of renewable solar energy during 2023 and 2024. This figure includes 561 Megawatts at 7 no. permitted solar farms across the County and 5.1 Megawatts at 7 no. existing large scale commercial or infrastructural premises. Further details on these permissions are included in Table 3.13 below.

Table 3.13 Planning applications relating to solar farm developments in Kildare County.

Ref.	Applicant	Decision Date	Status	Description
22111	Strategic Power Projects Limited	02/02/2024	Grant	a 10 year planning permission for development at Swordlestown North and Swordlestown South, County Kildare. The development will consist of the construction of solar PV development on a c.129 ha site consisting of: 1. The installation of solar panels on ground-mounted frames, 51 no. single storey electrical inverter/ transformer units, security fencing, a CCTV system with pole mounted cameras and landscaping; 2. The upgrading of an existing farm entrance off the L2023 and the creation of a second, new entrance, directly opposite to the north of the existing; 3. The provision of a new internal access road of a distance of c.170 m to provide access to a temporary construction compound; and 4. All associated ancillary development works...
23567	Delamain Solar Farm Ltd.,	20/08/2024	Grant	10 Year Planning Permission for a solar farm with a total area of circa 246 hectares in the townlands of Brannockstown, Brownstown, Carnalway, Coghlanstown West, Corbally, Delamain, Dunnstown, Gaganstown, Greenhills, Harristown, Hillsborough, Moorhill and Rochestown in County Kildare...
23683	BNRG Kerdiffstown Ltd.,	13/10/2023	Grant	to amend the design of the approved development (Planning Reference 17/463) which comprises consent for a Solar PV Energy Development. Proposed amendments include; (1) Number of Transformer/Inverters to be reduced, (2) Change in length of deer fencing, (3) Slight alteration to the access tracks, (4) Temporary Construction Compound to decrease in size, (5) 2no. Storage Areas to be added to the layout, (6) Customer Substation to be removed from the layout, (7) Change in

³¹ Wind Energy Ireland (2024) Wind Farm Map. Available at: [Wind Farm Map](#)

³² An Bord Pleanála (2024) Case Reference 214463. Available at: [314463 | An Bord Pleanála](#)

³³ Statkraft (2023) Drehid Wind Farm. Available at: [Project Being Considered - Drehid Wind Farm](#)

³⁴ Kildare Now (2024) Plans for Kildare Bord Na Mona wind farm not due to be lodged until next year. Available at: [Plans for Kildare Bord Na Mona wind farm not due to be lodged until next year - Kildare Now](#)

³⁵ SEAI (2024) Solar Map. Available at: [Solar Map | SEAI GIS Maps | SEAI](#)

³⁶ Power Technology (n.d.) Hortland Solar PV Park. Available at: [Power plant profile: Hortland Solar PV Park, Ireland](#)

Ref.	Applicant	Decision Date	Status	Description
				lifetime of the permission from 5 to 10 years within the townlands of...
23837	Carbury Compost Unlimited at Monaghan Mushrooms	03/01/2024	Grant	the construction of a photovoltaic solar farm comprising of 54 no. table solar panel arrays erected on ground mounted galvanised steel frames/support structures located in the southeast corner of the existing mushroom, compost and farm facility...
23/60073	Coolcarrigan Farm Limited Coolcarrigan Farm Limited	07/11/2023	Grant	for an amendment to the granted planning (Planning Reference: 221203) which comprised consent for a solar PV energy development and battery storage compound at Coolcarrigan, Timahoe West, Co. Kildare. Proposed amendments include; (1) An increase in the quantum of energy export that the solar park can produce from 80MW to up to 120MW (2) an amendment to the wording of the battery energy storage from 80MWh to up to 80MW, which amends the power output from the energy capacity to the rated power, to provide battery energy storage to greater flexibility in how it imports and exports the electricity to the grid (3) clarification of adjacent permitted development 15/1172 (extension of duration under 20/1052) increasing the energy export from 15MW to up to 19.4MW)...
24291	EEPVS Limited and Elgin Energy Services Limited	12/12/2024 (Grant Date currently unavailable)	Grant	for a solar farm development with an operational lifespan of 40 years comprising the installation of photovoltaic panels on ground mounted frames in rows on a site of circa 47.44 hectares...
2461046	AGB Landfill Holdings Limited	28/01/2025	Grant	for a solar farm to be installed over restored landfill with an export capacity of approximately 4.5MW comprising photovoltaic panels on concrete ballast supported frames...

Concerning access to National Broadband, according to the 2016 census, some 57,086 households out of a total of 73,348 households (nearly 77.8%) in Kildare County had access to broadband.³⁷ Furthermore, in December 2022 during the inception of the KCDP 2023-2029, only 2,260 Kildare homes, businesses and farms had been connected to the NBI network.³⁸ As of November 2024, under the National Broadband Plan, connections were made available for Kildare homes near Maynooth allowing nearly 12,300 premises in Kildare to avail of high-speed broadband connection with over 3,920 connections made so far.³⁹ Furthermore, County Kildare is set to receive 53 million euro from the government under the NBP as the biggest investment in rural Ireland since rural electrification.⁴⁰ The telecommunications company Eir announced that as of November 2024, 65,206 homes and business across Kildare have access to gigabit fibre broadband allowing for the fibre build project in Kildare to be 80% completed.⁴¹ KCC has also adopted a Digital Strategy ‘Kildare Konnected’ since the publication of the Plan (June 2023).

According to the draft KCDP 2 Year Progress Report, a Strategic Infrastructure Development planning application has been submitted by Eirgrid to An Bord Pleanála for approval, Ref ABP 316372, for the Kildare Meath Grid Upgrade. At the time of writing this report, the decision is still ‘due to be decided’.

³⁷ CSO (2016) SAPMAP Motor Car Availability, PC Ownership, and Internet Access. Available at: [Interactive Data Visualisations | CSO Ireland](#).

³⁸ NBI (2022) National Broadband Plan. Available at: [Over 2,200 premises in Kildare towns and villages can avail of National Broadband Ireland high-speed fibre connection - NBI](#).

³⁹ NBI (2024) National Broadband Plan. Available at: [National Broadband Plan connection now available for Kildare homes near Maynooth - NBI](#).

⁴⁰ NBI (2024) National Broadband Plan. Available at: [National Broadband Plan connection now available for Kildare homes near Maynooth - NBI](#).

⁴¹ Kildare Now (2024) Eir report shows large scale investment in Kildare since 2016 employing 200 within the county. Available at: [eir report shows large scale investment in Kildare since 2016 employing 200 within the county - Kildare Now](#)

In addition to the energy improvements and infrastructure listed above, the Mid-East Energy Unit has been established (2023), permission has been granted to Bord Na Mona (March 2023) for new headquarters in Newbridge (Ref 22/802) and a new biogas and biofertiliser facility has been granted planning permission (2023) at Lackaghmore, Monastervin (Ref 22/1035) since the publication of the Plan.

Finally, Maynooth was identified as County Kildare's inaugural Decarbonisation Zone which was outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme is an ongoing operational matter forming part of the Housing Department's work programme. KCC has reported that targets for 2023 and 2024 are on track for completion by Q2 2025.

Further information on new and improved transport infrastructure in Kildare has been outlined in Section 3.5.2.

3.8.3 Conclusions

Continued success of above targets will have a positive effect on material assets across the County.

As described in Section 3.1.2 KCC has been successful in delivering active travel and public transport improvements.

Water supply and wastewater treatment across the County remain good with no record of any exceedances of EU standards. Some 16 no. new waste facility permits were granted in Kildare since 2023.

The Wind Energy Strategy published alongside the Plan outlined objectives for wind energy development. However, no permissions have been granted by KCC for renewable wind energy in County Kildare since the adoption of the Plan.

The Solar Atlas shows one solar generator connected to the grid and planning permission has been granted for 566 Megawatts of renewable solar energy across the County. This figure includes 561 Megawatts at 7 no. permitted solar farms across the County and 5.1 Megawatts at 7 no. existing large scale commercial or infrastructural premises. Broadband access has also improved, with significant investments under the National Broadband Plan and 80% of the fibre build project completed in Kildare.

New and improved energy, broadband, grid and transport infrastructure in Kildare will have a positive effect on material assets across the County.

4. Summary and Conclusions

County Kildare has made significant strides in various sectors including compact growth, decarbonisation, active travel, public transport, waste management, renewable energy, and broadband infrastructure to date.

With regards to population and human health, positive effects have been identified in Kildare overall, whereby active travel, public transport, housing and public realm infrastructure has been improved. One area highlighted for improvement is that of Kildare's heavy reliance on private vehicular usage.

Overall, positive effects have been identified for biodiversity. It is noted that Kildare's Biodiversity Action Plan will be progressed and adopted in 2025, and it is anticipated that this Plan will aid further progress on biodiversity targets once published.

With regards to land and soils, it is noted that limited information is available on the targets set out in the Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Report pertaining to land and soils. However, positives have been noted, in that there have been no instances reported where contaminated material generated from brownfield or infill sites in Kildare have not been disposed of appropriately.

Predominantly positive effects have been assessed for water in that, water quality has remained relatively unchanged in Kildare and improvements to water supply and associated infrastructure has been facilitated.

Overall, positive effects have been identified for air quality, climate and noise, whereby KCC have been successful in increasing active travel and continue to make progress in decarbonisation. However, similar to the conclusions outlined in population and human health, one area highlighted for improvement is that of Kildare's heavy reliance on private vehicular usage.

With regards to cultural heritage, it is noted that limited information is available on the targets set out in the Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Report pertaining to cultural heritage. However, positives have been noted, in that KCC have implemented various projects and initiatives to improve the public realm and promote heritage in Kildare.

Similarly, it is also noted that limited information is available on the targets set out in the Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Report pertaining to landscape and visual. However, positives have been noted, in that the Landscape Character Assessment for the county is underway, and the provision of funding, conservation management plans and improved recreation and amenity will have a positive effect on surrounding landscape and visual in Kildare.

Finally with regards to material assets, largely positive effects have been identified, whereby the continuation of new and improved energy, broadband, grid, water and transport infrastructure in Kildare will have a positive effect on material assets across the County.

In conclusion, it is notable that substantial progress has been made across all environment components (population and human health, biodiversity, land and soils, water, air quality, climate and noise, cultural heritage, landscape and visuals and material assets) with regards to the targets set out in the SEA monitoring programme (Table 9.1.2 of the SEA Environmental Report).