

SEA STATEMENT

FOR THE

ATHY LOCAL AREA PLAN 2021-2027

for: Kildare County Council

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Legislative Context

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Athy Local Area Plan 2021-2027.

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

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

1.2 Content of the SEA Statement

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

This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement.

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

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

1.3 Implications of SEA for the Plan

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

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

Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Plan

2.1 Introduction

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

1. Consultations;
2. Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process;
3. Appropriate Assessment;
4. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
5. Consideration of alternatives; and
6. Integration of environmental considerations.

2.2 Consultations

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

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

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

2.3 Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process

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

- Special Areas of Conservation;
- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas;
- Status of Surface and Ground Waters;
- Various entries to the Water Framework Directive's Register of Protected Areas;
- Groundwater Vulnerability;
- Water Services Capacity, Performance and Demand;
- Archaeological Heritage;
- Architectural Heritage; and
- Landscape Sensitivities.

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

2.4 Appropriate Assessment

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

The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.¹

¹ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available,
- (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

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

2.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken to inform the development strategy set out in the Plan. The requirement for SFRA is provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014.

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

2.6 Consideration of Alternatives

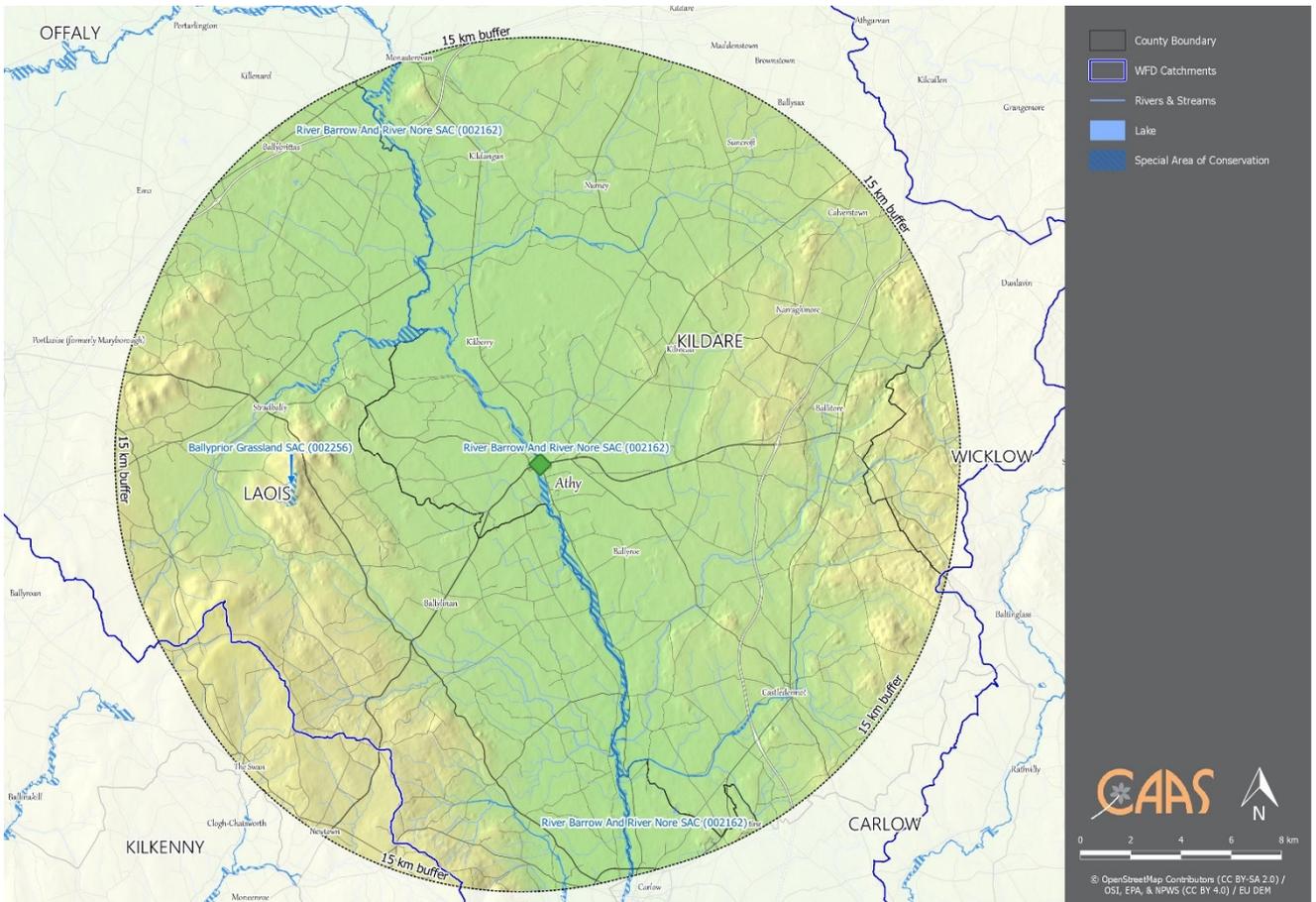
Consideration of the environmental effects arising from a variety of different alternatives for the Plan (see Section 4) has contributed towards the protection and management of the environment in the overall strategy for the Plan.

2.7 Integration of individual SEA and AA provisions into the Plan

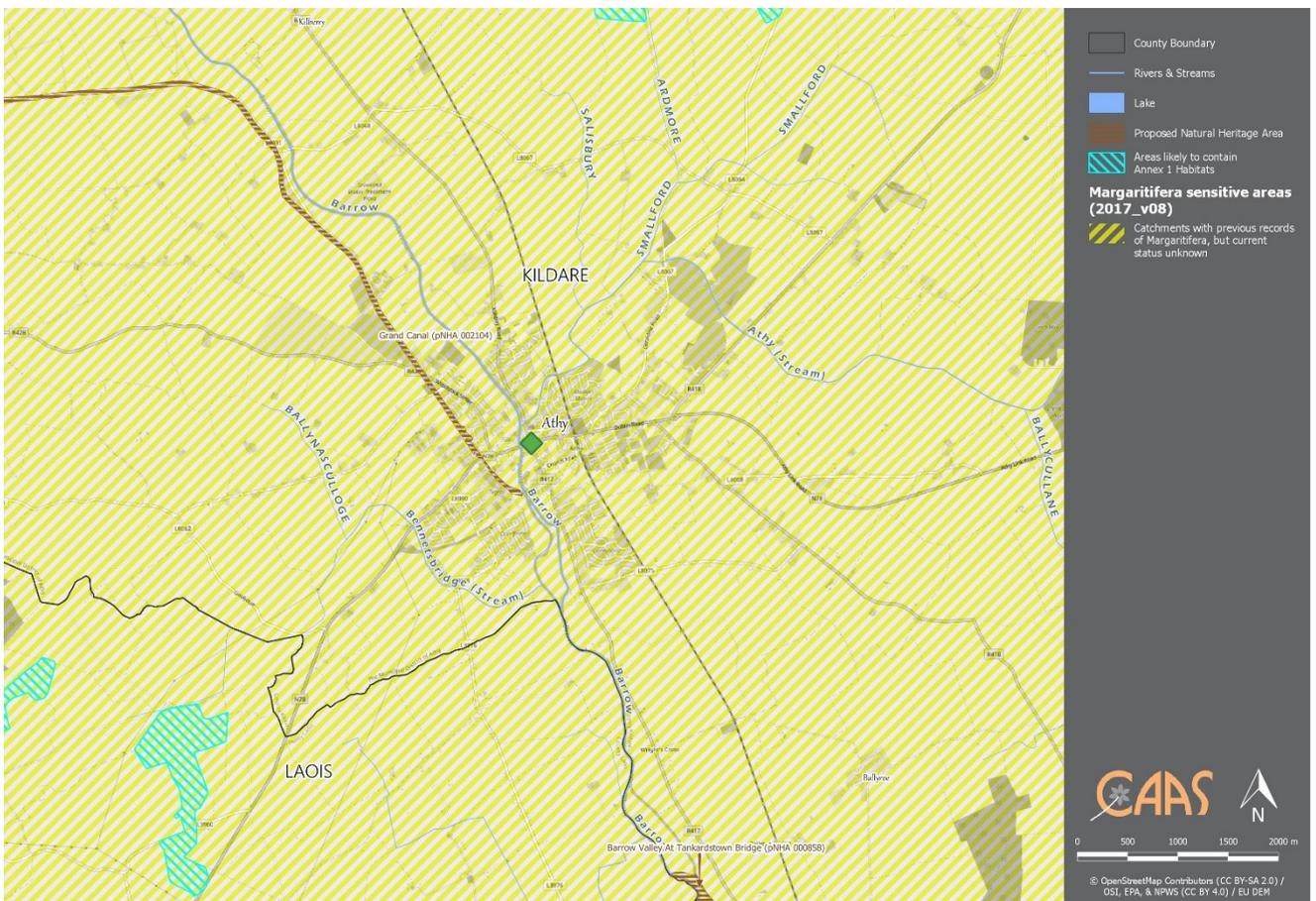
Environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Kildare County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA and AA processes facilitated zoning that avoids inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk and ecological sensitivity. Various provisions have been inserted into the Plan

which provide for flood risk management at project level. Other environmental sensitivities taking into account included those relating to cultural heritage, landscape and water

Furthermore, various written provisions have been integrated into the text of the LAP over multiple iterations through the Plan-preparation and SEA process. In addition to the mitigation measures that have been integrated into the LAP, new development is required to comply with Kildare County Development Plan provisions, including those relating to sustainable development and environmental protection. As identified in the LAP, in the full interpretation of all objectives for Athy, it is essential that both the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plan be read in tandem. Where conflicting objectives arise between the County Plan and the Local Area Plan, the objectives of the County Plan shall take precedence. It should be noted that the general development management standards applicable to the Plan area are included in the County Plan. Imperatively, Objective CDP1.1 commits to aligning the Local Area Plan with any changes to the existing County Plan or any future review of that Plan. Table 2.1 links key mitigation measure(s) - which have been integrated into the Plan - to the potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The integration of these measures into the Plan occurred over a number of iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

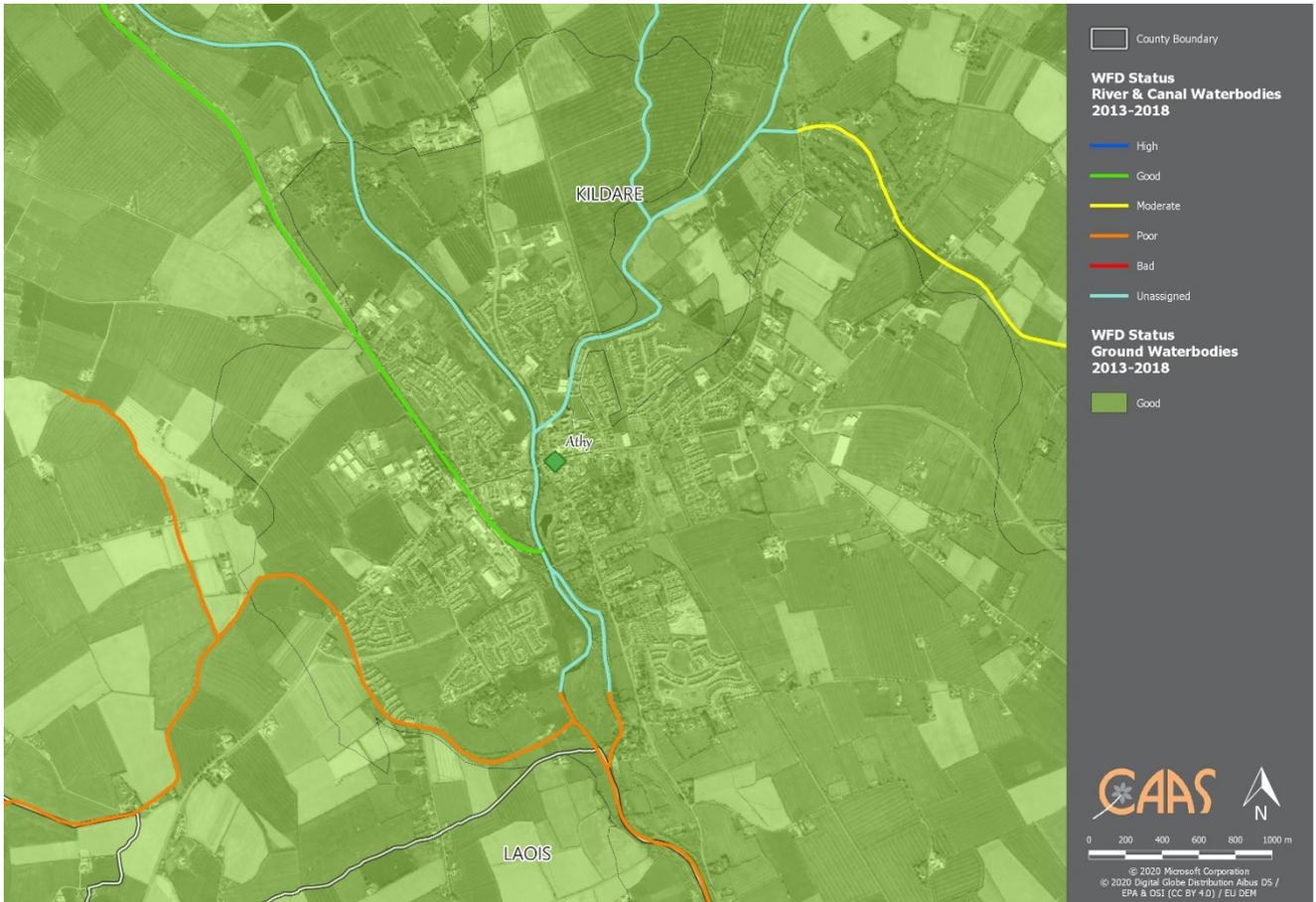


European Sites within 15 km buffer of Athy Plan area



Other Ecological Designations/Data

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



Surface Water Status (2013-2018)



Groundwater Vulnerability

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



Flood Risk



Archaeological Heritage

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

Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Mitigation integrated into the Plan ² , included in:
All	Various	<p>EDTO3.1 Support the development of the Barrow Blueway route along the Barrow Line of the Grand Canal and Barrow Navigation system as a multi-use tourism and amenity resource, subject to the required environmental assessments.</p> <p>EDTO3.2 Support and facilitate the development of Athy as a Blueway destination town and an <i>activity hub</i> for water-based sports and associated recreational activities including the development of a Blueway Sports Hub / Education Centre within the Dominican lands, subject to the required environmental assessments.</p> <p>EDTO3.3 Acknowledge the importance and potential of Athy's waterways and its water sports clubs by supporting the development of the necessary infrastructure to service the expansion of water-based activities in the town, including safe and convenient mooring facilities, subject to the required environmental assessments.</p> <p>EDTO3.4 Support and facilitate the development of angling activities and supporting infrastructure, including the provision of wheelchair friendly stands in Athy, subject to appropriate environmental assessments.</p> <p>MT01.4 To work with the National Transport Authority (NTA) to implement the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (2013) proposals for Athy, subject to detailed engineering design and any mitigation measures presented in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) accompanying the NTA Plan.</p>
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. 	<p>CSO1.8 Ensure that projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan³.</p> <p>Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage</p> <p>NH1 <i>It is the policy of the Council to support the protection of species and habitats that are designated under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992 as well as areas of high local biodiversity value and to ensure that developments with potential to impact the integrity of the Natura 2000 network will be subject to Appropriate Assessment.</i></p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>NH1.1 Protect, conserve and manage the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and contribute to the protection of the ecological, visual, recreational, environmental and amenity value of the Grand Canal pNHA.</p> <p>NH1.2 Ensure screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is carried out with respect to any plan or project, including masterplans.</p> <p>NH1.3 Ensure that any proposal for development within or adjacent to the Grand Canal pNHA is located and designed to minimise its impact on the biodiversity, geological, water and landscape value of the pNHA.</p> <p>NH1.4 Ensure all applications for planning permission within or adjacent to the Grand Canal pNHA are accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) prepared by a suitably qualified professional.</p> <p>NH1.5 Identify, protect, conserve and enhance wherever possible, wildlife habitats and species of local importance, not otherwise protected by legislation. Such habitats would include woodland, river, canal, wetlands and grassland areas along with field boundaries (hedgerows, stone walls and ditches). These features form part of a network of habitats and corridors, which allow wildlife to exist and flourish and contribute to compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>NH1.6 Protect and conserve the integrity of soils that supports the rich biodiversity and ecological networks in Athy.</p> <p>NH1.7 Ensure that any proposals for the lighting/flood lighting of waterways infrastructure, buildings or pedestrian/cycling routes along waterways within the Plan area incorporate bat friendly lighting schemes as set out in 'Bats and Lighting, Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects and developers' (Bat Conservation Ireland, December 2010).</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To survey existing bridge structures in Athy to identify whether any such structure currently supports bat roosts. <p>GI1.1 Reduce fragmentation of the existing Green Infrastructure network while protecting and enhancing its biodiversity by strengthen ecological links including stepping stone habitats (according to their value).</p> <p>GI1.5 Provide for wildlife bridges (eco links) as part of any new pedestrian and cycle links across the River Barrow, the Barrow Line Canal and railway, thereby facilitating the free movement of people and species throughout the Plan area.</p> <p>GI1.7 (a) Maintain a biodiversity protection zone of 60 metres from the top bank of the River Barrow (including all areas covered by the River Barrow and River Nore SAC), 20 metres from the canal and not less than 10 metres from the top bank of smaller watercourses, with the full extent of the protection zone to be determined on a case by case basis by the Planning Authority, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities. Strategic green routes and trails will be open for consideration within the biodiversity protection zone, subject to appropriate safeguards and assessments.⁴</p> <p>(b) Ensure that any development on the lands zoned 'H: Industrial and Warehousing' located adjacent to the River Barrow at Townparks incorporates an appropriately landscaped riparian zone to seamlessly integrate with the lands to the south and east, which are subject to the development of a masterplan under objective OS1.8</p> <p>GI1.9 Seek to protect trees with a particular local amenity or conservation value.</p>

² These measures are in addition to those measures already in force through the Kildare County Development Plan, as varied, which must be complied with by proposals for development.

³ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) no alternative solution available, (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

⁴ Any such green route or trail should be designed in accordance with the guidelines and principles outlined in '*Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment*' (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020)

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Mitigation integrated into the Plan ² , included in:
		<p>GI1.10 Promote appropriate tree planting and pollinator friendly planting, in accordance with the recommendations of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan throughout Athy and in open spaces within new developments in order to enhance local biodiversity, visual amenity and surface water management.</p>
<p>Population and human health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. • Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<p><u>See measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors</u></p>
<p>Soil</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. • Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<p><u>Also see measures under other environmental components including Water and Plan provisions relating to compact development</u></p> <p>NH1.6 Protect and conserve the integrity of soils that supports the rich biodiversity and ecological networks in Athy.</p>
<p>Water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<p><u>Also see measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</u></p> <p>Policy I2 – Surface Water and Groundwater</p> <p>I2 <i>It is the policy of the Council to maintain and enhance the existing surface water drainage systems in Athy and to protect surface and ground water quality in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.</i></p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>I02.1 Carry out an audit of the existing surface water infrastructure to identify improvement works as required.</p> <p>I02.2 Ensure that all new developments maintain surface water discharge at greenfield runoff rate, including an allowance for climate change.</p> <p>I02.3 Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other nature-based surface water drainage solutions as part of all plans and development proposals in Athy. Priority shall be given to SuDS that incorporate green infrastructure and promote biodiversity including green roofs, walls and rain gardens. Proposals for all new residential developments and for the development of 'H' and 'Q' zoned employment lands must consider the potential for SuDS to control surface water outfall and protect water quality, with underground retention solutions only being considered when all other options have been exhausted.</p> <p>I02.5 Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Athy in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland and in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency.</p> <p>I02.6 Require applicants, where necessary, to demonstrate that proposals will not negatively impact on any groundwater or surface water body and be compliant with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and measures to protect and improve our water bodies set down in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021 and future cycles of this Plan.</p> <p>I02.7 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments.</p> <p>I02.8 Ensure that development along urban watercourses must comply with the Inland Fisheries Ireland Guidance '<i>Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment</i>' (2020), including the maintenance of a minimum riparian zone of 35 metres for river channels greater than 10 metres in width, and 20 metres for rivers channels less than 10 metres in width. Development within this zone will only be considered for water compatible developments.⁵</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage 'daylighting'/deculverting⁶ and the restoration of culverted water bodies within the town as a natural method of flood management. <p>Policy I3 – Flood Risk Management</p> <p>I3 <i>It is the policy of the Council to manage flood risk in Athy in conjunction with the Office of Public Works and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).</i></p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>I03.1 Manage flood risk in Athy in accordance with the requirements of <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i>, DECLG and OPW (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).</p> <p>I03.2 Ensure development proposals within the areas where KCC have applied a Justification Test and where residual flood risk remains as outlined on Map 2: Strategic Flood Risk Map are the subject of a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, appropriate to the nature and scale of the development proposed.</p> <p>I03.3 Maintain all existing overland flow routes.</p> <p>I03.4 Support and co-operate with the OPW in delivering the Athy Flood Relief Scheme, subject to the statutory environmental considerations.</p> <p>I03.5 Ensure that all development proposals apply the sequential approach in terms of the site layout and design and, in satisfying the Justification Test (where required), the proposal shall demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and management measures are put in place. The development proposals should ensure that no encroachment onto, or loss of, the flood plain shall occur. Only water compatible development such as Open Space would be permitted for the lands which are identified as being at risk of flooding within that site.</p>

⁵ Water compatible developments as defined in the OPW Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)

⁶ 'Daylighting' is the action of returning a culverted river to open water. At its simplest it is taking the lid off the culvert, but most designs aim to create a more natural river shape and re-introduce ecological habitats.

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Mitigation integrated into the Plan ² , included in:
<p>Air and Climatic Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. • Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. • Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. • Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<p><u>Also refer to the overall approach to land use zoning, transport and sustainability provided by the Plan.</u></p> <p>Policy CAM 1 – Climate Adaptation and Mitigation <i>It is the policy of the Council to future proof Athy to ensure that it becomes a climate resilient town by promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development, creating an integrated green infrastructure network, prioritising sustainable mobility within the town and building at sustainable densities in appropriate locations.</i></p> <p>Objective CAMO1.1 Support the full implementation of the Kildare County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, or any succeeding document, with regards to its goals, objectives and actions relating to the planning and development of Athy.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure all plans and projects carried out in Athy encourage and provide for climate resilient measures. <p>HCO2.3 Require that residential schemes in close proximity to heavily trafficked roads within the Plan area are designed and constructed to minimise noise disturbance, follow a good acoustic design process and clearly demonstrate that significant adverse noise impacts will be avoided.</p> <p>Policy UCR1 – Urban Regeneration and Development</p> <p>UCR1 <i>It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of the Athy Urban Regeneration Framework to maximise the potential of Athy's unique built and natural assets in order to instigate transformative place-based change in the town, where a revitalised town centre becomes a major visitor destination and contributes to a model of low carbon development and the creation of a climate resilient, healthy, connected and more inclusive settlement.</i></p> <p>MT04.9 Reduce the harmful effects of traffic noise by ensuring noise mitigation measures are implemented into new developments in proximity to national routes, regional routes and significant urban streets. Developers shall engage a suitably qualified acoustic specialist to prepare an Acoustic Design Statement for all new developments with the potential to impact sensitive noise receptors from traffic noise. The Statement shall have regard to the thresholds set out in the Kildare Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (or any subsequent plan).</p> <p>IO5.3 Avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole through promoting the preservation of best ambient air quality with sustainable development.</p> <p>IO5.4 Support the take-up and use of ultra-low emissions vehicles and encourage, through the development management process the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, where appropriate.</p>
<p>Material Assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Increases in waste levels. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. 	<p><u>Also see measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health and various Land Use and Phasing provisions from the Plan.</u></p> <p>EDTO1.3 Ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate water, wastewater treatment and waste management facilities to accommodate future economic growth of the town.</p> <p>MT04.6 Ensure that development proposals within Athy Town Centre are subject to a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA), to be carried out in accordance with the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014). Transport Impact Assessments will also be required in the following cases: (a) Development on all lands zoned C: New Residential and; (b) All other lands for which significant development is proposed within the Local Area Plan boundary..</p> <p>MT04.8 Provide for traffic calming and speed reduction measures throughout the town, where necessary as funding allows, and ensure that all new developments are designed to incorporate appropriate traffic calming measures as set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.</p> <p>MT04.10 To carry out a Strategic Transport Assessment (STA) and to produce an Access Strategy for lands zoned 'H: Industrial and Warehousing' situated to the east of Athy in consultation with relevant stakeholders including TII and the NTA, as well as landowners. This will identify the quantum of development that can be facilitated at the location complementary to safeguarding the strategic function and safety of the national road network, in accordance with the provisions of official policy outlined in the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012). The STA will also identify any improvements required to the local transport network to accommodate the extent of development proposed.</p> <p>Policy I1 – Water Supply and Wastewater</p> <p>I1 <i>It is the policy of the Council to work in conjunction with Irish Water to protect existing water and wastewater infrastructure in Athy, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure to facilitate future growth.</i></p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>IO1.1 Work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the ongoing upgrade and expansion of water supply and wastewater services to meet the future needs of Athy.</p> <p>IO1.2 Maximise the sustainable and efficient use of existing capacity in water services in the planning of new development.</p> <p>IO1.3 Seek to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service development prior to the granting of planning permission for development.</p> <p>IO1.4 Seek to ensure that development proposals comply with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure.</p> <p>IO5.1 Adequately maintain recycling facilities and to secure the provision of additional facilities, as required, including in conjunction with development.</p> <p>IO5.2 Support the development of a local bring bank recycling facility at an appropriate location, proximate to either the Stradbally Road or Kilkenny Road, within the boundaries of the Local Area Plan.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<p>UCRO1.9 Prioritise the enhancement of the streetscape and heritage assets of the town centre, to continue environmental improvements, to sustain and improve its attraction for living, working, visiting and investment.</p> <p>Policy BH1 – Protected Structures</p> <p>BH1 <i>It is the policy of the Council to preserve and enhance the buildings identified on the Record of Protected Structures and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of such structures, including their historic curtilage, both directly and indirectly.</i></p> <p>BH1.1 Ensure the protection and preservation of all protected structures (or parts of structures), including the curtilage and attendant grounds of structures contained in the Record of Protected Structures (refer to Table 8.1, Map 3: Built Heritage and Archaeology and Map 3a: Built Heritage and Archaeology – Town Centre).</p> <p>BH1.4 Proactively address dereliction, endangerment, neglect and vacancy in the town centre through the use of the Council's legal process and through the promotion</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Mitigation integrated into the Plan ² , included in:
		<p>of appropriate uses and the sensitive conservation of historic buildings, in conjunction with other relevant initiatives.</p> <p>BH1.5 Encourage the protection, retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular and industrial heritage of Athy.</p> <p>Policy BH2 – Architectural Conservation Area</p> <p>BH2 <i>It is the policy of the Council to protect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of the ACA, while providing guidance through the publication of a Statement of Character to support property owners located within the ACA.</i></p> <p>Policy BH3 – Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>BH3 <i>It is the policy of the Council to safeguard the archaeological heritage located within the boundary of the Local Area Plan and avoid negative impacts on sites, monuments, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest.</i></p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>BH3.1 Prioritise the protection/preservation in situ (or upon agreement preservation by record) of items of archaeological interest as listed in Table 8.3 and shown on Map 3: Built Heritage and Archaeology and Map 3a: Built Heritage and Archaeology – Town Centre from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.</p> <p>BH3.2 Protect the historic core of Athy and retain, except in exceptional circumstances, the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.</p> <p>BH3.3 Ensure the remains of the historic walls/defences of the town are retained where these still exist (including subterranean remains) and to promote public awareness and understanding of the existence of these historic elements and their route within the public realm.</p> <p>BH3.4 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access to sites identified on the Sites and Monuments Record under the direct ownership or control of the Local Authority and the State.</p> <p>BH3.5 Provide for the protection of historic burial grounds within Athy, in co-operation with agencies such as the Office of Public Works and the National Monuments Section of the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p> <p>BH3.6 Ensure that development proposals contribute towards the protection and preservation of the archaeological value of underwater or archaeological sites associated with the River Barrow, the Grand Canal and associated features.</p>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<p>EDTO2.1 To support the continued operation and reasonable expansion of existing non-conforming uses, provided they do not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in loss of amenity to adjoining properties; • Cause adverse impact on the environment; • Cause adverse impact on the visual amenity or character of the area; or • Inhibit the development of adjoining land in conformance with its land use zoning objective. <p>GI1.11 Protect and enhance the existing character and setting along the route of the Barrow Blueway.</p>

Section 3 Environmental Report and Submissions/ Observations

3.1 Introduction

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

3.2 SEA Scoping Notices and Submissions

As part of the scoping process for preparation of the Plan, environmental authorities⁷ were notified that a submission or observation in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report could be made to the Council.

One scoping submission was made by the Environmental Protection Agency during the SEA scoping process. This submission was taken into account during preparation of the SEA. An acknowledgement was also received from the Laois County Council.

The submission from the EPA provided specific comments and advice, including under the following headings:

- Available Guidance & Resources
- Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool
- EPA SEA WebGIS Tool
- EPA WFD Application
- EPA AA GeoTool
- State of the Environment Report - Ireland's Environment 2016
- Transition to a low carbon climate resilient economy and society
- Environmental Authorities

⁷ The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Communications; Climate Action and Environment; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; and all adjoining planning authorities.

3.3 Submissions on the Environmental Report for the Draft Plan

Various submissions were made on the Draft Plan and/or associated environmental assessment documents while these documents were on public display.

Certain submissions resulted in Material Alterations being proposed to the original Draft Plan that was placed on public display. The Material Alterations proposed a number of text and map-based changes to the Draft Athy LAP 2021-2027, including those relating to transport, environmental and land use zoning provisions. The Proposed Material Alterations were screened for the need to undertake SEA and certain Alterations were determined as requiring full SEA. A number of relatively minor modifications, which would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects and which would not affect the integrity of any European site, were made to a number of Material Alterations that were adopted. SEA related advice on the Proposed Material Alterations was taken into account by the Members. **Proposed Material Alterations advised against by the SEA, as they would present probable environmental conflicts that would be unlikely to be fully mitigated, were not adopted as part of the Plan.**

A number of points related to the environmental assessment documents were made in submissions received. Some of these did not warrant any updates to the environmental assessment documents, while a submission from the Office of the Planning Regulator resulted in the following updates being made to the SEA Environmental Report:

Add text as follows (new text in *italics*):

The most recent figures available indicate that the loading capacity of the treatment plant is approximately 12,898 PE (spring 2020) leaving a treatment capacity of 2,102 PE. It is noted that there are no major infrastructural constraints on the sewerage network within the town. *However, it is*

anticipated that it will be necessary to extend the plant to beyond 15,000PE before 2027 to meet the envisaged additional domestic and non-domestic demand within the town. Various Objectives have been integrated into the Plan to ensure that new developments are accompanied by adequate and appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure:

- *Objective IO1.1 Work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the ongoing upgrade and expansion of water supply and wastewater services to meet the future needs of Athy.*
- *Objective IO1.2 Maximise the sustainable and efficient use of existing capacity in water services in the planning of new development.*
- *Objective IO1.3 Seek to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service development prior to the granting of planning permission for development.*
- *Objective IO1.4 Seek to ensure that development proposals comply with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure.*

Add text as follows (new text in *italics*):

Athy's waste water treatment plant has spare capacity and it is anticipated that it will be necessary to upgrade the plant before 2027 to meet the envisaged additional domestic and non-domestic demand within the town. A number of surface waters in the area do currently not meet the objectives under the Water Framework Directive, have a number of pressures including those relating to agriculture and/or have unassigned status. Groundwater underlying the Plan area is currently identified as being of good status. The River Barrow is also designated as a European site. Taking these issues into account, the various measures have been integrated into the Plan in order to ensure: that new developments are accompanied by adequate and appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure⁸; compliance with the Water Framework Directive⁹; compliance with the Habitats Directive¹⁰.

⁸ Measures integrated into the Plan including: Objective IO1.1 Work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the ongoing upgrade and expansion of water supply and wastewater services to meet the future needs of Athy. Objective IO1.2 Maximise the sustainable and efficient use of existing capacity in water services in the planning of new development. Objective IO1.3 Seek to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service development prior to the granting of planning permission for development. Objective IO1.4 Seek to ensure that development proposals comply with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure. Also refer to various provisions from the wider policy framework including the overarching County Development Plan.

⁹ Measures integrated into the Plan including: Policy I2 It is the policy of the Council to maintain and enhance the existing surface water drainage systems in Athy and to protect surface and ground water quality in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. Objective IO2.5 Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Athy in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland and in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency. Objective IO2.6 Require applicants, where necessary, to demonstrate that proposals will not negatively impact on any groundwater or surface water body and be compliant with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and measures to

Add the following footnote text to clarify alternatives considered (new text in *italics*):

This is based on identified town centre infill sites being developed at 45 units per hectare; however, given that there has been very little development in the town centre over the past decade, envisioning all these sites and vacant buildings being developed over the time period of this Plan is unlikely.

A submission from the Environmental Protection Agency resulted in a summary of the reasons for choosing the alternatives for the Plan in the light of the other reasonable alternatives being inserted into Section 7 of the SEA Environmental Report.

A submission from the OPW resulted in the amendment of original Draft Plan Objective IO3.2 and the addition of Objective IO3.5 – these Objectives will further contribute towards flood risk management in Athy.

3.4 SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report

The Draft Plan and accompanying documents (including SEA Environmental Report and AA and SFRA documents) were placed on public display, having integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Responses to submissions made during the period of public

protect and improve our water bodies set down in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021 and future Cycles of this Plan. Objective IO2.7 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments. Objective IO2.8 Ensure that development along urban watercourses must comply with the Inland Fisheries Ireland Guidance 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (2020), including the maintenance of a minimum riparian zone of 35 metres for river channels greater than 10 metres in width, and 20 metres for rivers channels less than 10 metres in width. Development within this zone will only be considered for water compatible developments. Also refer to various provisions from the wider policy framework including the overarching County Development Plan.

¹⁰ Measures integrated into the Plan including: Policy NH1 It is the policy of the Council to support the protection of species and habitats that are designated under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992 as well as areas of high local biodiversity value and to ensure that developments with potential to impact the integrity of the Natura 2000 network will be subject to Appropriate Assessment. Objective NH1.1 Protect, conserve and manage the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and contribute to the protection of the ecological, visual, recreational, environmental and amenity value of the Grand Canal pNHA. Objective NH1.2 Ensure screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is carried out with respect to any plan or project, including masterplans. Also refer to various provisions from the wider policy framework including the overarching County Development Plan.

display of a Draft Plan were integrated into a Chief Executive's Report and considered by Kildare County Council.

Following public display of the Plan, certain submissions resulted in Material Alterations being proposed to the original Draft Plan that was placed on public display. The Material Alterations proposed a number of text and map-based changes to the Draft Athy LAP 2021-2027, including those relating to transport, environmental and land use zoning provisions. The Proposed Material Alterations were screened for the need to undertake SEA and certain Alterations were determined as requiring full SEA. A number of relatively minor modifications, which would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects and which would not affect the integrity of any European site, were made to a number of Material Alterations that were adopted. SEA related advice on the Proposed Material Alterations was taken into account by the Members. **Proposed Material Alterations advised against by the SEA, as they would present probable environmental conflicts that would be unlikely to be fully mitigated, were not adopted as part of the Plan.**

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

Section 4 Summary of Alternatives considered

4.1 Introduction

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

4.2 Development of Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan.

The alternatives available for the Plan are limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the land use policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Kildare County Development Plan, as varied, and other land use plans). These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan.

Four alternative plan scenarios have been developed by the Council. The development of scenarios has been informed by the National Planning Framework (2040) and the provisions in regard to compact growth and the requirement for 30% of an areas growth to be located within to the existing built-up area (National Policy Objective 3c).

The scenarios considered provide for alternative methods of meeting this requirement ranging from an extreme of exceeding a 30% compact growth within or in close proximity (c.400m or 5-minutes walking distance) to the town centre of Athy to more broader alternatives where the minimum 30% compact growth requirement is met with remaining growth allocated to lands either within or adjoining the 'defined built up area'.

The now expired Athy Town Development Plan (2012-2018) previously zoned 75.5 hectares of 'C: New Residential' lands. It is noted the no residential units have been developed on these lands since 2012. The 2021 Local Area Plan intends to reduce the amount of zoned new residential land outside the town centre to circa 25 hectares. This is in order to promote sequential development, strengthen the urban core of Athy and align the LAP with the transitional population projections set out in the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework and Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied).

The scenarios outlined have been fully informed by the findings of a Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure Assessment which has been carried out for the Plan area and which has informed the development strategy proposed for the town of Athy.

The importance of Athy at a county level is emphasised in Variation No. 1 of the Kildare County Council Development Plan 2017 - 2023, which has designated Athy as a '*Self-Sustaining Growth Town*'. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy describes these towns as having '*a moderate level of jobs and services. Such settlements include sub-county market towns and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.*'

Under the Core Strategy of the County Kildare Development Plan 2017 – 2023 (CDP) Athy has been allocated 4.8% of the county's overall housing growth. Applying this figure to the Athy LAP translates into a requirement for **771 additional units** to be developed over the life of the Plan to 2027. Using a unit occupancy rate of 2.8 persons per household, as provided for in the CDP, would result of an

increase of 2,160 persons in Athy by the end of the LAP period. **This would result in a population of 11,837 and a dwelling forecast of 5,052 units by 2027.**¹¹

Government policy outlined in *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DECHG, 2009) and *Urban Development and Building Heights: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DHP&LG, 2018) state that land is a scarce resource and should be managed efficiently. The guidelines provide, inter alia, indicative appropriate residential density standards to apply to settlements depending on population size. For towns in excess of 5,000 persons, i.e. Athy no upper limit should, in principle, apply to town centres subject to specified requirements. Similarly, on brownfield sites higher densities would also apply. On public transport corridors in proximity to bus stops or rail stations minimum net densities of 50 units per hectare (uph) are advised. Whereas outer suburban/greenfield sites should be encouraged at net densities around 35-50 uph and net densities below 30uph being discouraged.

It is therefore considered sites outside the town centre should be developed at an average density of 35 uph, while infill sites in the town centre should be developed at 40 uph. These are adjudged acceptable densities for Athy, considering its population, location and history of development.

4.3 Summary of Description and Assessment of Available Reasonable Alternatives

4.3.1 Alternative 1: Developing Greenfield Sites to the North of the Town Centre

Alternative 1 focuses on the development of greenfield sites to the north of the Town Centre. Many of the sites selected would undermine the principles of compact growth and would not provide for development on centrally located sites in the town.

This Alternative would adversely affect the ability water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be adequately integrated into the Plan and deficits would be more likely. Lands identified for development would be premature and would not wholly align with objectives relating to sequential development.

Much of the greenfield development would be unnecessary given other lands closer to the centre within the existing built-up footprint of the town and so would result in unnecessary and avoidable potential impacts upon various environmental components. Development under this Alternative would: reduce benefits from infrastructural investment; decrease the likelihood of brownfield development; harm efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health); and would adversely affect the protection of multiple environmental components. Conflicts with the protection of the Special Area of Conservation as a result of developing Site No. 4 would have to be mitigated.

New developments would be distant from the primary amenity areas for the town, public services, and shopping, and would therefore adversely affect the long-term vibrancy of the town centre.

By providing for development within the Plan area, Alternative No. 1 reduces the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served, less well-connected greenfield sites beyond the Plan area; however, as described above, none of the sites are centrally located.

¹¹ These figures only include projected population growth on lands zoned for town centre and new residential uses. It does not include any increases in population on existing residential/infill lands.

4.3.2 Assessment of Alternative 2: Compact Growth/Consolidation and densification of existing Town Centre

By providing for development in centrally located sites within the Plan area, Alternative No. 2 reduces the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced, less well-connected greenfield sites beyond the Plan area. Although potentially adverse effects associated with brownfield development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree.

However, this Alternative would not facilitate a sufficient amount of development to allow the town to meet population targets. As a result, development may be pushed outside of the Plan area - increasing the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced, less well-connected greenfield sites in other areas. Water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations could be integrated into the Plan; however, deficits would occur where development is pushed out of the Plan area.

Within the Plan area, this Alternative may present the least amount of potential environmental conflicts to be mitigated in the short term; however, this Alternative would not ensure the continued sustainable development of the town into the future.

4.3.3 Assessment of Alternative 3: Developing Greenfield sites to the South of the Town Centre

Alternative No. 3 focuses on the development of greenfield sites to the south of the Town Centre. Many of the sites selected would undermine the principles of compact growth and would not provide for development on centrally located sites in the town.

This Alternative would adversely affect the ability water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be adequately integrated into the Plan and deficits would be more likely. Lands identified for development would be premature and would not wholly align with objectives relating to sequential development.

Much of the greenfield development would be unnecessary given other lands closer to the centre within the existing built-up footprint of the town and so would result in unnecessary and avoidable potential impacts upon various environmental components. Development under this Alternative would: reduce benefits from infrastructural investment; decrease the likelihood of brownfield development; harm efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health); and would adversely affect the protection of multiple environmental components. Conflicts with the protection of the Special Area of Conservation as a result of developing Site No. 8 would have to be mitigated.

New developments would be distant from the primary amenity areas for the town, public services, and shopping, and would therefore adversely affect the long-term vibrancy of the town centre.

By providing for development within the Plan area, Alternative No. 3 reduces the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced, less well-connected greenfield sites beyond the Plan area; however, as described above, none of the sites are centrally located.

4.3.4 Assessment of Alternative 4: 30% Compact Growth and Hybrid of Northern and Southern Sites

This alternative combines the sites considered most suited for residential development within Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 with the proposed reuse of existing building stock within the town centre. It would facilitate compact growth, including on centrally located sites, without extending the built-up footprint of the town.

This alternative is the most sustainable of the four alternatives and would be likely to contribute towards environmental protection and management the most. By providing for compact development in centrally located sites within the Plan area, Alternative 4 reduces the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced, less well-connected greenfield sites beyond the Plan area.

By consolidating the zoning and helping to curtailing further sprawl of the town, this alternative would: help to maximise benefits from infrastructural investment; increase the likelihood of brownfield development; contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health); and would benefit the protection of multiple environmental components.

This approach would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. This approach would benefit the protection of various environmental components.

Although potentially adverse effects associated with brownfield and infill greenfield development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree.

4.4 Reasons for choosing the alternatives for the Plan in the light of the other reasonable alternatives

The Selected Alternative is Alternative 4. Alternative 4 provides the best balance for achieving a high level of compact growth while infilling vacant greenfield sites which lie in between existing residential housing estates. It does not extend the built-up footprint of Athy and aims to curtail any further sprawl of the town.

This alternative been selected and developed by the Planning Team, placed on public display and adopted by the Council having regard to both:

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

Section 5 Monitoring Measures

5.1 Introduction

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

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

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

5.2 Indicators and Targets

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

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

Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

5.3 Sources

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

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

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

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*¹² basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

¹² The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

5.4 Reporting and Responsibility

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 5.1.

Interim reporting specific to the Local Area Plan will be prepared as part of the reporting under the emerging SEA monitoring programme for the Kildare County Development Plan, in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

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

Table 5.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. Status of water quality in water bodies Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 9: Natural Heritage, Green infrastructure and Strategic Open Space as well as relevant measures from the County Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity Action Plans For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 9: Natural Heritage, Green infrastructure and Strategic Open Space as well as relevant measures from the County Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years). Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). Consultations with the NPWS (at monitoring evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the Regional Assembly, the EPA Catchment Unit and, as relevant, Irish Water to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
Population and Human Health	PHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 6 "Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism" Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 6 "Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism" No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures. Implementation of Green Infrastructure provisions from the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the waste water treatment plant or failure of the waste water treatment plant to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will contribute towards a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Irish Water to achieve the necessary capacity. Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield Volume of contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill Number of AA determinations and environmental assessments undertaken to support applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. NPF National Policy Objective 3c: Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Water	W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD • Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' • Implementation of the objectives of the second cycle of the River Basin Management Plan by 2021 (and subsequent objectives as relevant) • Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Irish Water to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. • Where planning applications in are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the Waste water treatment Plant or failure of the plant to meet Emission Limit Values, the Regional Assembly will coordinate a response between the Council, EPA and Irish Water to achieve the necessary capacity. • The Council will engage, as relevant, with the Regional Assembly and the OPW with respect to planning applications for development in areas of elevated flood risk.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed delivery of Irish Water infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Irish Water Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated • Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan • Proportion of population within who report regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To map brownfield and infill land parcels across the Plan area. • All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan • Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in- combination with other septic tanks– contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive • Increased budget spends on water and waste water infrastructure • By 2020 all citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) • CSO data • Consultations with the Irish Water (at monitoring evaluation) • Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in conjunction with Local Authorities • Department of Environment, Climate and Communications • Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the waste water treatment plant or failure of the waste water treatment plant to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will coordinate a response between the Regional Assembly, EPA and Irish Water to achieve the necessary capacity. • Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHPLG and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Air	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74% • NO_x, SO_x, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels. • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NO_x and particulate matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO data • Data from the National Travel Survey • EPA Air Quality Monitoring • Consultations with Department of Transport and Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (at monitoring evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Climatic Factors	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets as provided for by Plan provisions including Policy CAM 1 – Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures climate reduction targets as provided for by Plan provisions including Policy CAM 1 – Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Increase in the proportion of people resident in the Plan area reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the Plan area using private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels 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 2020 Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting Climate Action Regional Office Consultations with Department of Environment, Climate and Communication (at monitoring evaluation) CSO data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and develop solutions Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH and NTA to develop a tailored response
Cultural Heritage	CH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) Consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (at monitoring evaluation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor pressure is causing negative effects on key tourist features, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation
Landscape	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation