

SEA Statement

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The Strategic Environmental Assessment of

Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021

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November 2015

Contents Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Revision	Description	Date	Prepared by	Checked by
01	00	SEA Statement FINAL	11-11-15	ST	TB

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1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction and Background

Kildare County Council adopted the Kildare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 on April 4th 2011 and the Plan took effect from May 2nd 2011. The purpose of the County Development Plan is to promote sustainable development by encouraging consolidation within existing urban footprints, supporting and strengthening the role of the county's town and villages, promoting economic development in defined clusters, supporting national investment in infrastructure, recognising the role of the rural countryside and the rural economy and most critically for SEA protecting local assets by preserving the quality of the landscape, open space, natural, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage and material assets of the county.

The previous Local Area Plan (LAP) for Kilcock dated from 2009 and Kildare County Council proposed to prepare a new LAP for Kilcock. The LAP boundary for the Kilcock Local Area Plan remains effectively as per the previous LAP, with minor alteration.

The LAP will shape the future development of Kilcock and will identify zones where different land uses are considered to be appropriate.

Kilcock is located in the Metropolitan area of the county and is designated as a 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Town' as set out in the core strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) 2011-2017. This reflects its designation in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy. Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns are defined as having levels of economic activity beyond that which is required to service the local community.

Kilcock is also part of an economic cluster along with Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge. The core strategy of the CDP defines Kilcock's role within the economic cluster, as that of a supporting centre to Maynooth and Leixlip. The Kilcock Local Area Plan therefore will support the knowledge based economy that exists in Maynooth and Leixlip by focusing on manufacturing and office based industry, logistics, tourism, natural and built heritage.

The settlement hierarchy within the county development plan defines and shapes the target population distribution, preferred growth locations and consequent land use zonings which will be implemented through Local Area Plans. The county settlement strategy has set the target for Kilcock at 3% from its 2006 census population figure. The population target for Kilcock by 2017 is 5,956. It will be the role of the forthcoming Kilcock Local Area Plan to plan for this level of growth in a self-sufficient manner, reducing commuting levels and ensuring sustainable levels of housing growth, providing a full range of local services adequate to meet local needs at district level and for surrounding rural areas. The provision of strong social infrastructure in tandem with growth in population, particularly in relation to schools and leisure facilities is also required.

The Local Area Plan is the guiding document for development within the Plan area over the next 6 years. Environmental aspects have been considered throughout the plan-making process and have been incorporated into the Plan with the aim of improving the environment of the plan area. The Environmental Report is the primary element in the SEA process and is published alongside the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021.

1.2 Purpose of the SEA Statement

This document is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021.

The main purpose of the SEA Statement is to provide information on the decision-making process and to document how environmental considerations, the views of statutory consultees and other submissions received during the consultation phases have been taken into account in the adopted LAP, together with the arrangements put in place for monitoring, thereby bringing more transparency to the decision-making process.

The SEA process thereby assists in and improves the quality of the plan making process by:

- Facilitating the identification and appraisal of alternative LAP strategies;
- Raising awareness of the environmental impacts of the LAP's implementation; and
- Encouraging the inclusion of measurable targets and indicators to aid monitoring.

1.3 Legislative Context

The EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA (Directive 2001/42/EC) came into force in July 2001. The SEA Directive was subsequently transposed into Irish law through S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) respectively.

Under this legislation member States of the EU are obliged to assess the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes prior to their adoption thus providing for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage of the decision making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states:

"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."

The Directive came into effect in an Irish context in July 2004. Since then SEA must be prepared for plans and programmes, including:

- Regional Planning Guidelines;
- City and County Development Plans;
- Development Plans made by Town Councils, where the population of the area is 10,000 or more; or
- Local Area Plans for towns with a population of 5,000 or more.

The Regulations state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. Where plans or programmes fall below or outside of the specified thresholds, a screening report is required to be carried out to determine whether the making and implementation of a particular plan will or will not, lead to significant environmental consequences for the plan area. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2014 full Strategic Environmental

Assessment is mandatory for the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021. Therefore no Screening was undertaken.

1.4 SEA Process

The Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 required Strategic Environmental Assessment, in accordance with the legislation as outlined above. An Environmental Report prepared to accompany the LAP is submitted for consideration together with the LAP. The Environmental Report provides an understanding of the consequences for the environment of carrying out the LAP as proposed.

Submissions on the LAP and Environmental Report were evaluated at each stage in the process of making the LAP. This enabled the proper assessment of the effect on the environment of proposed changes and amendments. The Elected Members of Kildare County Council are obliged to take the Environmental Report into account in making the LAP.

The legislation and guidelines governing the SEA process state that the processes of preparing the LAP, SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) should be integrated and prepared in an iterative manner. The Environmental Report (ER) outlines the how the SEA process was carried out in tandem with the preparation of the LAP and its accompanying AA. The SEA process, which included Strategic Review meetings and SEA/AA/Variation workshops, ensured that the LAP was informed by environmental considerations from the outset. The SEA Team were fully involved in the analysis of development options and were in a position to make suggestions throughout the process of the LAP preparation to ensure that environmental considerations and environmental effects were considered in the formulation of strategic goals and development objectives.

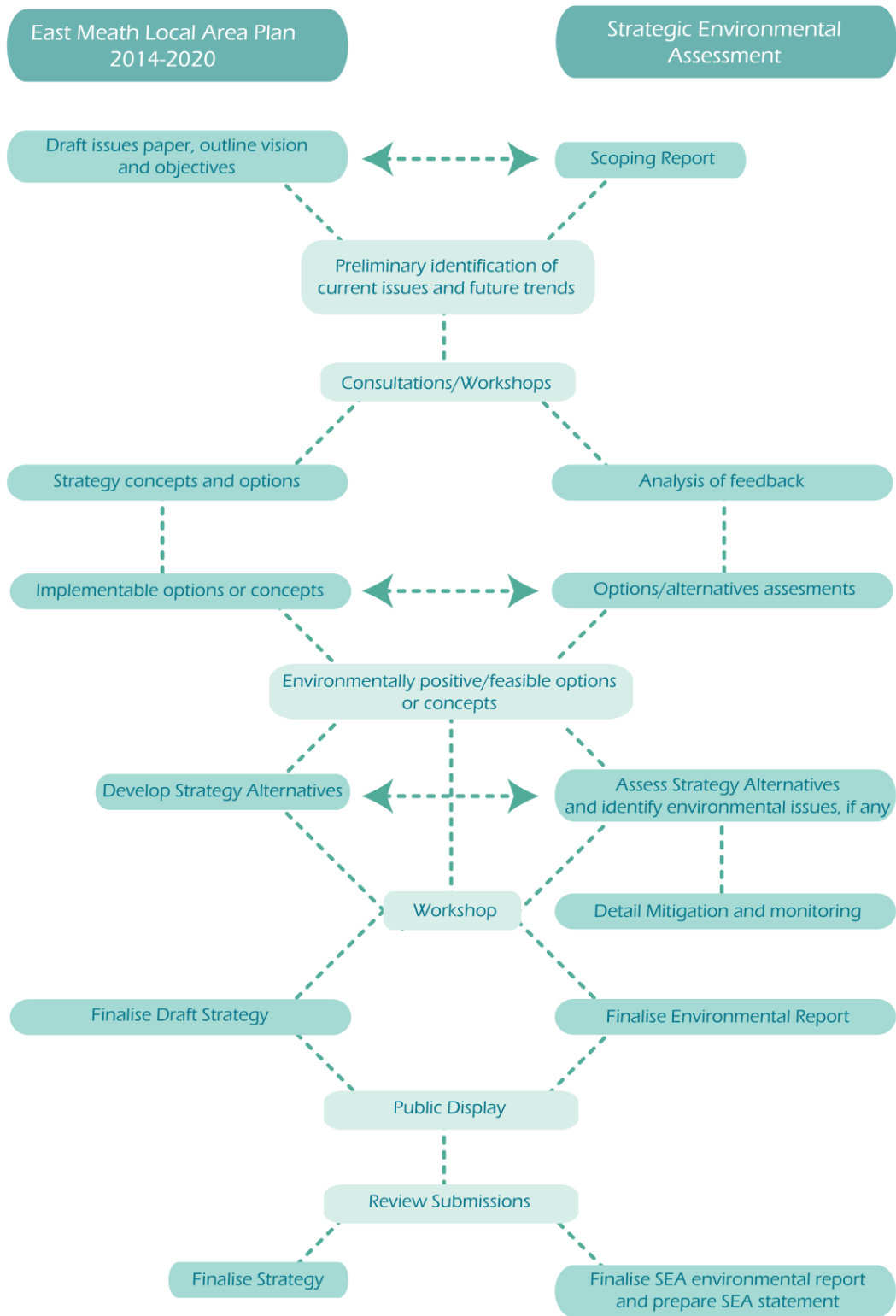
Section 13(l) (1) of S.I. 436 of 2004 sets out the requirements of the SEA Statement as follows:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan,
- how the following has been taken into account during the preparation of the plan:
 - the environmental report;
 - submissions and observations made on the Draft Plan and Environmental Report; and
 - consultations with other Member States (if any).
- the reasons for choosing the plan, as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and
- the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan.

The SEA has also been informed by guidance issued by statutory authorities, namely

- *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland – Synthesis Report* (Environmental Protection Agency, 2003),
- *Implementation of SEA Directive 92001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Local Authorities and Planning Authorities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2004), and
- *SEA Pack (2013)* (Environmental Protection Agency, 2013)

Figure 1 (below) provides a summary of the integrated nature of the LAP preparation and SEA process.



2.0 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan

2.1 Purpose of SEA Statement

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Local Area Plan making process at all stages.

This initially comprised reviewing the baseline situation and mapping of environmental constraints and sensitivities so as to identify any new considerations or information available from the baseline situation as was most recently presented for the area in the Kildare County Development Plan.

As the LAP developed, environmental considerations were directly considered at a number of stages in the SEA process as set out in Table 2.1.

Stage	Description
Screening	The screening process is the first stage of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Screening assesses the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2013 full Strategic Environmental Assessment is mandatory for the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021. Therefore no Screening was undertaken.
Scoping	<p>The Scoping of the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 was carried out in accordance with Article 5 (4) of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).</p> <p>The principal purpose of the Scoping stage is to decide upon the range of issues and level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report. An overview of the relevant environmental issues requiring further analysis are given and consideration in the Environmental Report and ultimately in the Local Area Plan itself. By highlighting some of the significant issues at an early stage, it ensures that the issues are firmly to the forefront when considering each of the policies and objectives of the Plan and reduces the possibility of relevant issues not being addressed.</p>
Consultation with the Environmental Authorities	<p>Submissions were received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Agency • Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Scoping Report	Submissions received from Environmental Authorities were reviewed and incorporated into the process where warranted.
Preparation of ER & Local Area Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-disciplinary team was established to create policy consistent documents and to examine the effects on the environment of implementing the objectives and policies. • Objectives created in Local Area Plan assessed in ER and Development options examined. • Feedback from on-going Plan preparation process & ER

	<p>preparation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation measures discussed and chosen. • Monitoring incorporated into existing methods.
Monitoring the Local Area Plan	Monitoring significant environmental effects over the lifetime of the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021.

Table 1 Key Stages of SEA

2.2 Screening

Screening assesses the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2013 full Strategic Environmental Assessment is mandatory for the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021. Therefore no Screening was undertaken.

2.3 Scoping

The Scoping of the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 was carried out in accordance with Article 5 (4) of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).

The principal purpose of the Scoping stage is to decide upon the range of issues and level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report. An overview of the relevant environmental issues requiring further analysis are given and consideration in the Environmental Report and ultimately in the LAP itself. By highlighting some of the significant issues at an early stage, it ensures that the issues are firmly to the forefront when considering each of the policies and objectives of the Plan and reduces the possibility of relevant issues not being addressed.

The scoping aspect involved consultation with the statutory consultees, providing an opportunity to comment on the highlighted issues and the proposed methodology. Under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 the list of statutory consultees includes:

- The Environmental Protection Agency.
- The Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government.
- The Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- Any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a plan, – in this case counties includes South Dublin, Fingal, Meath, Offaly, Laois, Carlow and Wicklow.

In compliance with the SEA (Amendment) Regulations 2011 Kildare County Council gave notice to the aforementioned Environmental Authorities of its intention to prepare a new LAP for the area. A Scoping Report was prepared in order to facilitate consultation with statutory consultees and consultees were requested to review the content of the report and to comment on aspects they believe may require particular emphasis in the Local Area Plan and associated SEA Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessment documentation.

2.4 Statutory Consultation

Submissions were received from the following statutory consultees:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Table 6 below outlines the issues raised and the response or how the issue was addressed within the preparation of the draft Environmental Report:

Consultee and Comments	Response
Environmental Protection Agency	
Acknowledges Scoping for Local Area Plan and draws attention to EPA Checklist, Guidance on SEA and SEA Scoping Pack as well as updated SEA Regulations / Circulars. The Agency also lists the Environmental Authorities to be notified.	Noted.
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	
<p>Acknowledges Scoping for Local Area Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would recommend that it state as a key objective to protect the historic core of this town. The town of Kilcock developed around the site of the Early Christian monastery, Recorded Monument KD005-002----. After the coming of the Normans, a church mentioned in 1303 was on this site and given into the control of the Knight's Hospitallers, Recorded Monument KD005-002001-. At the west end of the 'Fair Green' to the south of Kilcock village, Rochfort (1999, 74) provides a photograph and brief details on what is regarded locally as being the Kilcock market cross, Recorded Monument KD005-030----. The photograph shows a small, rectangular, granite cross base with a broad mortice in its upper surface. Traditionally used as a coffin-resting stone. These Recorded Monuments are subject to subject to statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places, established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1930-2004. • The conservation of the archaeology of Kilcock should be considered in the broader context of the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta, 1992) ratified by Ireland in 1997. It relates to the protection of archaeological heritage and includes the setting and context of archaeological sites. • The Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999) published by the Department of Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands outlines guiding policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage of Ireland. The 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Agreed.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

National Heritage Plan and The County Kildare Heritage Plan also provide a clear and coherent strategy and framework for the protection of archaeological heritage.	Noted.
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Table 2: Summary of Scoping Comments**2.5 Public Consultation*****Pre-Draft Non Statutory Public Consultation***

The preparation of the LAP included a number of opportunities for members of the public's involvement and input by making written submissions on the LAP. Section 20 of the Planning Act states that:-

'a Planning Authority shall take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the Minister and the public before preparing"... "a local area plan, including consultations with any local residents, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups and commercial and business interests in the area'.

The following measures were taken to consult with the public at this stage of the plan making process.

- An Issues Paper was prepared to stimulate, guide and encourage debate and discussion on the issues in the community and wider environs, to flag important factors and to encourage and assist the public in making submissions and observations to the Planning Authority in respect of the preparation of the Draft LAP.
- A public notice was placed in the Kildare Chronicle stating that a non-statutory pre-draft consultation phase was taking place regarding the new LAP. The intention of this notice was to invite interested parties or individuals to make submissions, observations, suggestions or forward ideas in advance of the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan. Submissions/observations were to be made either by post or e-mail over a 4 week period.
- A public information event took place in Coláiste na hInse to further engage the general public and other stakeholders in the consultation process. Representatives of the Council were in attendance to answer queries with respect to the LAP process and the specific LAP area.
- The posters from the public information event were available to view on the County Council's website.
- A pro-forma form was prepared for people to make submissions, for convenience.
- In advance of the public information open day, an informal briefing session was held with the Slane Area Councillors.

These measures assisted in providing insights into the local issues and helped to shape the Draft LAP and Environmental Report.

Draft Stage & Alterations to Draft LAP

The Draft LAP was published and placed on display for a minimum 6 weeks during which time submissions and observations were invited from the public and the interested parties. A report summarising the issues raised and the Manager's recommendation was presented to the Elected Members not later than 12 weeks after publication of the notice. The Elected Members considered the report and amended the Draft LAP. Material Alterations to the Draft LAP then went on public display for a further period of not less than 4 weeks. A report summarising the issues raised and the Chief Executive recommendations (formerly referred to as 'manager's recommendations') was presented to the Elected Members and agreed by resolution at the council meeting on 15th October 2015. The LAP came into effect four weeks from that date on the 12th November 2015.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report accompanied the draft LAP and amendments to the Draft LAP during the public display periods. Submissions with regards to the SEA were received from the EPA and the Geological Society of Ireland and are summarised below:

No.5: EPA Submission

Issue Raised in Submission	Response
In relation to the section on baseline environment, it would be useful to include relevant suitably scaled maps showing the current environmental baseline described in the Plan. In particular, water quality within the Plan area / adjacent to the plan area would be useful to highlight on a map along with associated water related biodiversity aspects.	The submission from the EPA has been noted and considered. It is proposed that baseline mapping will be included in the Environmental Report.
<i>Chapter 10 Local Area Plan Monitoring</i> includes information on the indicators, targets, sources and responsibilities in relation to environmental monitoring. A summary of the frequency of monitoring on the various environmental criteria should also be added where possible.	The submission from the EPA has been noted and considered. The appropriate frequency of monitoring will be considered by Kildare County Council and reference made in the Environmental Report.
The EPA submission notes where amendments to the Plan are proposed, these should be screened for likely significant effects in accordance with the criteria as set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations and should be subject to the same method of assessment applied in the "environmental assessment" of the Draft Plan.	Noted
The EPA submission notes the requirements for SEA following adoption of the Plan and that a copy of the SEA Statement with the above information should be sent to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.	Noted

No.13: Geological Survey of Ireland

Issue Raised in Submission	Response
The Geological Survey of Ireland agrees that future development of Kilcock will be guided by the policies and objectives of the Kildare Development Plan and would like to reiterated previous scoping comments in relation to Soils & Geology and Surface Water & Groundwater	Noted

2.6 Environmental Report

The type of information to be provided in the Environmental Report is set out in Annex I of the SEA Directive - reproduced in Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as inserted by article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004).

The Environmental Report is prepared alongside the LAP process and investigates, describes and evaluates the effects on the receiving environment of implementing the LAP. The report also assesses and identifies development alternatives and identifies the environmentally preferred development strategy.

The preparation of the Environmental Report influenced the formulation of the Local Area Plan in a number of distinct ways:

- It encouraged the wide use of background environmental data and formally connects this data to the making of the plan
- It determined the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) against which the policies and objectives of the plan were assessed.
- The Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) will form the basis for the future on-going monitoring of the Local Area Plan.
- The Environmental Report determined the identified development strategy option provides the most sustainable and appropriate environmental approach to the future development of the area's settlements, when assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives.
- It provides greater transparency to the public as to how environmental issues are incorporated and assessed in the plan-making process.

Key issues were identified in the Environmental Report across each of the environmental areas. These were largely based on the environmental baseline and the issues raised during the Scoping stage, as set out in Table 2 above. The full review of key issues is set out in Chapter 4 of the Environmental Report.

The Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are measures against which the environmental effects of the varied Development Plan are tested in order to identify where significant adverse impacts are likely to occur. Following statutory consultations amendments have been incorporated into the SEOs.

SEA of the Draft Plan

The Draft Plan was considered for its possible impacts on the environment. The initial stage aims to ascertain the quality, if any, of the potential impact. Each of the Plan's policies and objectives were screened for their impact and where a neutral impact is noted no further discussion is provided within this report. This format allows for the Environmental Report to focus on the negative and positive impact. Thus it is a more robust, more focused approach to understanding the potential impact associated with

the Plan's implementation. Where it was determined that a policies/objective may potentially result in a negative impact on an environmental receptor appropriate level mitigation measures were identified or proposed.

The assessment informing the Draft Plan was arrived at following both the submissions received during Scoping Consultation in addition to the assessment of the draft Plan Policies and Objectives against the established SEO's.

SEA Screening of Alterations to Draft LAP

Following the display of the Draft Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 and the public consultation period, the Chief Executive prepared and distributed to the elected members of Kildare County Council, a report on the submissions and observations received, including an opinion on issues raised within submissions and any recommended amendments to the draft plan. The Chief Executive's recommended amendments were screened in terms of SEA and AA to identify any likely significant effects on the environment at this stage in the process. This was documented within the Chief Executive's Report.

The following represents the SEA and AA Screening of Proposed Amendments:

Chapter 3: Kilcock in Context

Amendment to Section 3. 1 (Page 9) Introduction Text

No likely SEA impact

Chapter 7: Shaping Kilcock

(a) Amendment to Section 7.4.2.2 (Page 38) Section 2. The Eastern Approach Text

No likely SEA impact

(b) Amendment to Objective SKO 19 (Page 39)

Proposed amendment provides for additional information regarding public realm works at the Fairgreen, particularly providing for the relocation of the Memorial Stone.

No likely SEA impact

(c) Amendment to Section 7.4.3.3 (Page 55) Zed Candy No.2

Proposed amendment provides for removal of live/work units as a tenure type.

No likely SEA impact

(d) Amendment to Section 7.4.3.3 (Page 56) Kelly's Bakery No.1,2 & 4

Proposed amendment provides for clarification of the principles for development of this site.

No likely SEA impact

Chapter 8: Connecting Infrastructure

- (a) Amendment to Section 8.1.1 (Page 65) Introduction Text

Proposed amendment provides for reference to the Greater Dublin Area Draft Transport Strategy 2011-2030 emphasis on hierarchy of transport users.

No likely SEA impact

- (b) Amendment to Objective MTO 1 (Page 66)

Proposed amendment provides for the preparation of a Traffic Management Plan which is a positive inclusion.

No likely SEA impact

- (c) Addition of Objective MTO 9 (Page 68)

Policy clarifying possible funding sources for proposed infrastructure.

No likely SEA impact

- (d) Amendment to Objective MTO 19 (Page 69)

Additional location for provision of footpaths and lighting.

No likely SEA impact

- (e) Amendment to Policy SI 46 (Page 84)

Addition of areas of high amenity, residential amenity and schools to locations that should not be adversely affected by telecommunication infrastructure, which is a positive addition.

No likely SEA impact

Chapter 9: Greening Kilcock

- (a) Amendment to Objective GKO7 (Page 94)

Proposed amendment provides for clarification of Objective GKO 7 and related opportunities.

No likely SEA impact

- (b) Amendment to Section 9.4.5 (Page 94) Additional Text

Proposed amendment provides reference to Inland Fisheries Ireland's publication.

No likely SEA impact

(c) Addition of Objective HCO 7 (Page 99)

Proposed additional objective to establish a historic walking/cycling trail in Kilcock.
In considering likely SEA / AA impact reference is made to existing protective policies and objectives.

No likely SEA impact

Chapter 11: Revitalising Kilcock's Economy

Amendment to Objective REO 10 (Page 117)

Proposed amendment provides for additional text.

No likely SEA impact

Part C: Zoning Objectives

Amendment of Zoning Objective R: Retail Commercial (Page 136)

Proposed amendment provides for office development in R Zoned Lands
In considering likely SEA / AA impact reference is made to existing protective policies and objectives.

No likely SEA impact

2.7 Consideration of Alternatives

The consideration of alternatives was restricted by the statutory requirement to comply with the Core Strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. On this basis, three alternative approaches were considered for the future development of Kilcock's and assessed against the SEOs established in the SEA. Following consideration and assessment of the three alternatives put forward it was concluded that Alternative C was the most appropriate and environmentally protective to the future development of Kilcock. This approach has formed the basis for the zoning, policies and objectives contained with the Draft Local Area Plan.

2.8 Mitigation

Section (g) of Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations require information on the mitigation measures that will be put in place to minimise/eliminate any significant adverse impacts due to the implementation of the Local Area Plan. Chapter 9 of the Environmental Report highlights the mitigation measures that will be put in place to counter identified significant adverse impacts due to the implementation of the Plan. As stated previously the formulation of the Plan and the development of the SEA is an iterative process and therefore many of the potential negative aspects of the Plan have been removed.

Thus the objectives and policies contained within the Plan are considered robust and environmentally sustainable. However some unavoidable residual issues may remain and therefore mitigation measures are required. Chapter 9 details the mitigation measures necessary to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Plan.

2.9 Monitoring

Article 10 of the SEA Directive sets out the requirement that monitoring is to be carried out of the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 in order to identify at an early stage any unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.

Chapter 10 outlines the monitoring requirements for the Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021. Methods of monitoring and indicators of change in the environment have been proposed with set targets to be reviewed over the duration of the LAP.

3.0 Consideration of Alternatives

3.1 Introduction

The issue of alternatives is a critical function of the SEA process and is necessary to evaluate the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative development strategies for the county within the constraints imposed by environmental conditions. The alternatives were considered at an early stage of the process and through an iterative process with the Local Area Plan, SEA and AA teams the most appropriate scenario was selected.

3.2 Legislative context

Article 5 of the SEA Directive requires the consideration of reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives proposed. It states under Article 5(1) that;

Where an environmental assessment is required under Article 3(1), an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given for this purpose is referred to in Annex I.

In accordance with SEA guidelines the alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the Plan will be implemented within the national and county planning hierarchy. The Draft Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 will be framed within a policy context set by a hierarchy of National, Regional and County level strategic plans as well as the Irish and European legislative framework. Therefore the options for alternatives are limited, and a scenario such as the 'do-nothing' situation has not been included as it is neither reasonable nor realistic.

The alternatives proposed have been assessed against the relevant Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the key aspects of the environment likely to be affected by the Plan's implementation. The evaluation process resulted in the identification of potential impacts and informed the selection of the preferred development scenario for the Kilcock 2015-2021. This determination sought to understand whether each alternative was likely to improve, conflict with, or have a neutral interaction with the environment of the plan area.

3.3 Methodology for the Selection of Alternatives

The plan is based on the principles of sustainable development which means that development will be promoted in accordance with the appropriate international, national, regional and county guidelines.

Particular reference is drawn to the Core Strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan which must be complied with. The following factors have been used to determine the suitability of specific lands for residential development which constitute the proper planning and sustainable development of the town:

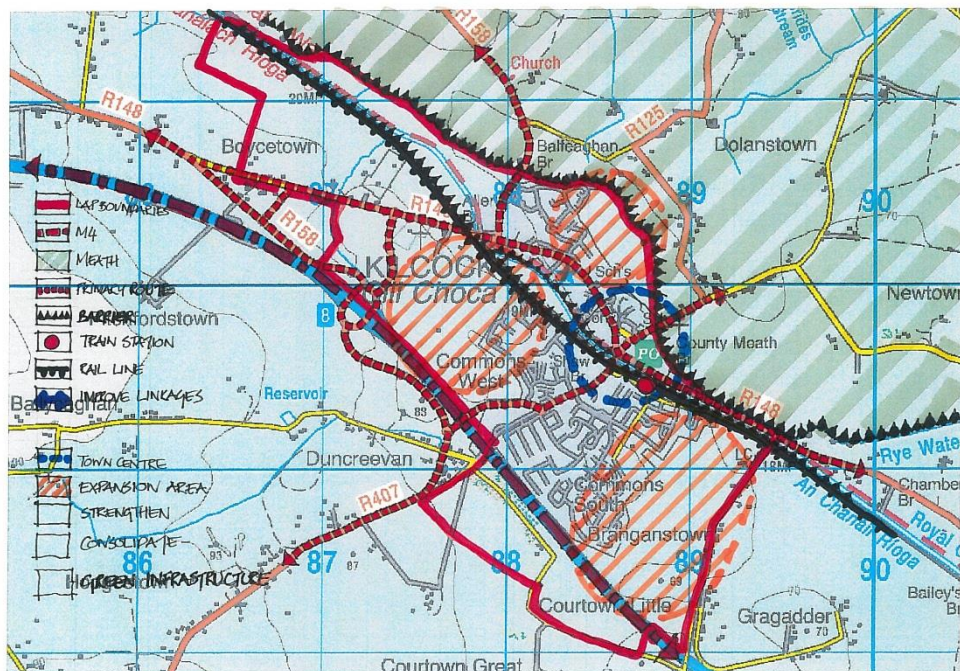
- Proximity to the Kilcock town centre;
- Proximity to the schools;
- Availability of Public Transport - to maximise public transport investment, it is important that land use planning underpins its efficiency by sustainable transport patterns. This includes promoting higher densities within 400m metres walking distance of a bus stop and proximity to the rail station (800m);
- Regeneration/Renewal of residential areas or other brownfield sites;
- Environmental Constraints – proximity to and potential impact on the qualifying interests of the adjoining designated sites;
- The need to provide new roads infrastructure to facilitate development
- Consideration as to whether a site could be considered an infill opportunity as opposed to extending the urban footprint further from the town centre.
- Leapfrogging beyond other available sites will not be considered favourably.

Three alternatives were considered in the drafting of the SEA and the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan.

- Alternative A: To provide high density residential, retail and employment development on Greenfield sites and limited consolidation of the town centre.
- Alternative B: To provide development at the Motorway Junction around a high capacity motorway network and limited expansion of the town centre.
- Alternative C: To consolidate and strengthen the town centre and provide for the limited expansion of Kilcock to the east and west.

Alternative A:

This approach to the future development of Kilcock would provide high density residential, retail and employment development on Greenfield sites and limited consolidation of the town centre.



Critical Evaluation	Effects on Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development pattern is likely to detract from the town centre with increased vacancies on the existing town core and lack of critical mass resulting in a less vibrant town centre. • Underutilises the potential to consolidate the existing town centre by not prioritising the more efficient use of brownfield sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the lands may be more productively used for recreational uses. • Requires significant upgrading of infrastructural links to town centre and surrounding residential areas. • There are other more suitable brownfield sites adjacent within and adjacent to the town centre. • Would place pressure on environmental habitats. • High density development would detract from the town centre which is already in decline.

Alternative B:

This approach to the future development of Kilcock would provide development at the Motorway Junction around a high capacity motorway network and limited expansion of the town centre.

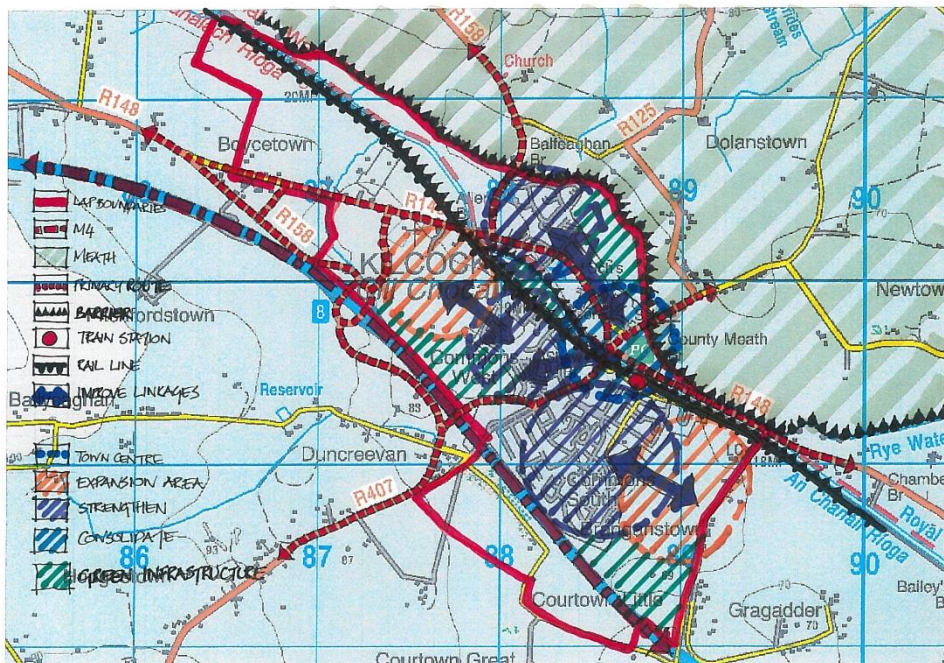


Critical Evaluation	Effects on Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These lands are far removed from the town centre, existing residential communities and social and physical infrastructure. • Impact on the M4 interchange with increased residential and employment development creating traffic congestion at key junctions. • Underutilises the potential to consolidate the existing town centre by not prioritising the more efficient use of land on identified strategic sites closer to the centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant upgrading of infrastructural links to town centre and surrounding residential areas. • Has potential to lead to an uncoordinated use of lands with disconnected neighbourhoods. • High density development would detract from the town centre which is already in decline. • There are other more suitable brownfield sites adjacent within and adjacent to the town centre.

Alternative C:

This approach to the future development of Kilcock would consolidate and strengthen the town centre and provide for the limited expansion of Kilcock to the east and west.

This approach would involve reducing the extent of town centre zoned land and facilitating the redevelopment of strategic brownfield sites in order to consolidate the town core. The town will be strengthened by providing improved linkages between the town centre and existing residential neighbourhoods.



Critical Evaluation	Effects on Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This alternative allows for a consolidation strengthening and limited expansion of Kilcock in an orderly and sustainable manner through the development of an urban design strategy and framework plan. • Consolidating the town core by reducing the amount of town centre zoned land in order to create a compact core. • Strengthening the town centre by increasing connectivity and permeability between the town centre and the existing and proposed residentially zoned lands and by providing guidance to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre. • Concentration of development in town centre by providing development briefs for strategic redevelopment brownfield sites within and adjacent to the town centre. • Limited expansion to the east and west of Kilcock has been identified in order to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy with clear guidance for the future development of these lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant upgrading of infrastructural links to town centre and surrounding residential areas. • Requires specific local planning and urban design guidance for the development of key sites in the town centres and clear guidance on the density and quality of new residential development in areas identified for expansion. • Responds to the relevant national/regional planning strategies including the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. • Seeks to provide a vibrant town centre and an improved quality of life for the residents of the town. • Accords with national guidance e.g. Urban Design Guidelines, Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets,

Consideration against the SEOs of the Draft Local Area Plan

This assessment is undertaken to identify any potential issues in relation to the alternative development scenarios proposed and to identify which is most suitable. This essentially is a thorough review of the approaches from an environmental perspective. This assessment was used to inform the overall approach towards the future development of Kilcock as would be pursued and facilitated by the Local Area Plan zonings, policies and objectives.

	Human Beings	Soil and Geology	Biodiversity	Surface Water	Groundwater	Flooding	Air Quality	Climate Change	Noise	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Energy	Wastewater	Water	Transport	Waste Management
Alternative A	Green	White	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	White	Green	White	Yellow	Yellow	Green	White	White	White	White
Alternative B	Blue	White	White	White	White	Blue	White	White	White	Yellow	Yellow	White	White	White	Yellow	White
Alternative C	Green	White	Green	White	White	Blue	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	White	White	Green	White

Potential Positive Impact

Potential Neutral Impact

Potential Negative Impact

Uncertain Impact

Table 12: Assessment of Alternatives against SEOs

The potential uncertainties or negative impacts identified in the assessment relate to localised impacts which may occur as a result of the development of these alternatives. However these potential uncertainties will be dealt with at planning application stage and are mitigated against by protective policies contained in the draft Plan with regards to transport, biodiversity and landscape etc.

Conclusions

The alternatives reviewed represent choices that are available to the planning authority in delivering the same balance of residential growth across the county.

The density and location of future residential development requires a balance between the desire to increase the number of people close to local services, the desire to regenerate and consolidate development in town centres and the need to protect the architectural, archaeological and natural environments of settlements in the county. The option chosen in the proposed variation represents an appropriate balance between the competing environmental objectives.

4.0 Local Area Plan Monitoring

4.1 Introduction

Under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2013, the Local Authority is required to prepare a progress report on the implementation of the Plan. Given the environment is a significant consideration, then the progress report will include the key findings of the environmental monitoring programme as outlined in this chapter of the Environmental Report.

Monitoring of the Kilcock Local Area Plan and its implications on the environment is paramount to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. Under Article 10 of the SEA Directive monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”* The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Guidelines on SEA recommends that monitoring does not require new research activity; existing sources of information can be used and the task of data collection can be shared.

While considerable environmental data is directly available to the Council such as water quality, recycling rates *etc.*, other sources of information will be accessed to provide a comprehensive view of the impact of the Plan. In this regard the Local Authority will work with other agencies with environmental mandates to gather data for the purposes of monitoring the implementation of the Plan. Therefore, while monitoring specific elements of the environment is not strictly the preserve of the Council, the Council will continue to liaise and work with the Environmental Protection Agency, The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries, as well as others in the pursuit of environmental conservation and protection through existing environmental monitoring procedures.

4.2 Monitoring Indicators

It is proposed to base monitoring on a series of indicators which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality, for example water or air pollution levels. The indicators aim to simplify complex interrelationships and provide information about environmental issues which is easy to understand. A list of environmental indicators is provided in Chapter 10 of the Environmental Report. The indicators are based on the Strategic Environmental Objectives presented in Chapter 6 and have been derived from knowledge of the existing environmental issues within the Plan area and also from legislation, guidelines and higher level Plans.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive/neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive/neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the policies and objectives of the Plan are well defined with regard to the environment. Conversely where the objectives of the Plan have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the objectives of the Plan or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective or policy is having a significant adverse impact, a variation may be considered during the lifetime of the Plan.

5.0 Conclusion

The Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 its policies and supporting objectives are key to the future sustainable development of the County. The Plan aims to balance the needs of the future population with the preservation and conservation of environment as prescribed in the County Development Plan. The Plan has a strong focus towards sustainability.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment process has been carried out in conjunction with the Appropriate Assessment of the Plan and the preparation of the Plan itself. This allows for an early indication of the potential environmental effects likely to occur as a result of the implementation of the Plan. As a result changes or alterations to the Plan are made throughout the course of its preparation. Through this process of assessment and re-assessment, it was identified that particular objectives or policies could potentially have a negative environmental impact on particular environmental receptors or indeed on a number of them simultaneously.

In summary, the assessment of the Plan has concluded that its policies and objectives are acceptable and represent a balanced and fair approach to the sustainable development of Kilcock. Monitoring of the Plan throughout its lifetime will ensure that any potential adverse environmental impacts, unforeseen at this stage will be identified early, so as to prevent any deterioration of the environment. This Plan, as currently presented, balances growth with environmental protection and can deliver a sustainable future for the inhabitants of the area.