

SEA STATEMENT

FOR THE

PORTLAOISE LOCAL AREA PLAN 2024-2030

for: Laois County Council



by: CAAS Ltd.



DECEMBER 2024

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Legislative Context

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Portlaoise Local Area Plan (LAP) 2024-2030.

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

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

1.2 Content of the SEA Statement

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

This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement.

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

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

1.3 Implications of SEA for the Plan

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

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

Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Plan

2.1 Overview

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

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

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

2.2 Consultations

As environmental authorities identified under the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, the following authorities were sent SEA scoping notices indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to Laois County Council; Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Offaly County Council; Tipperary County Council; Kilkenny County Council; Carlow County Council; and Kildare County Council. More detail on SEA scoping is provided under Section 3.2.

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

2.3 Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process

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

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

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

2.4 Appropriate Assessment

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

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

2.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Land use zoning provisions, flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the County Development Plan.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the County Development Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The SFRA informed both the land use zoning and the written provisions of the County Development Plan.

Furthermore, additional written provisions relating to flood risk management and drainage have been integrated into the LAP.

2.6 Consideration of Alternatives

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

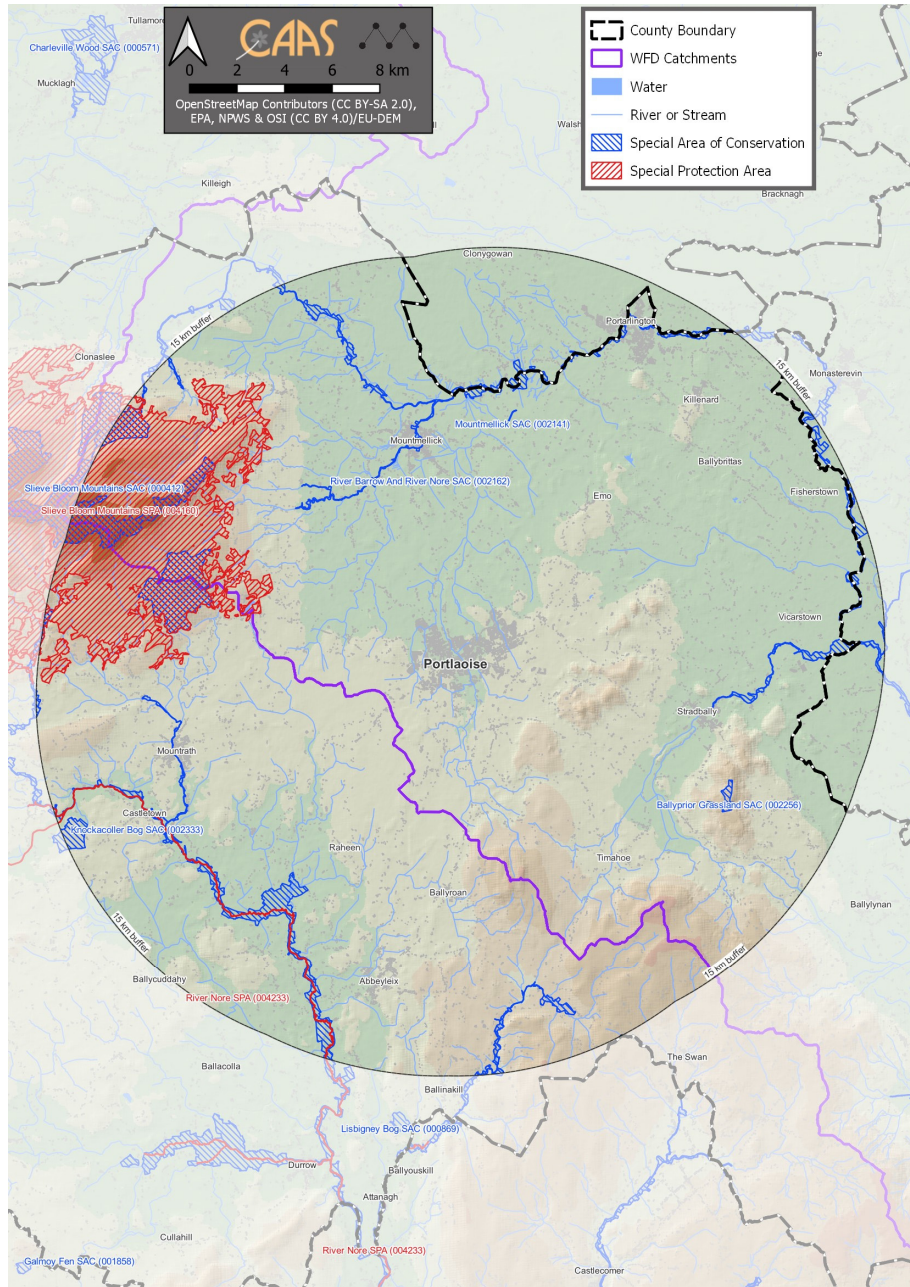
2.7 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Plan

Various provisions have been integrated into the text of the Plan through the Plan-preparation and SEA, SFRA and AA processes. Both the Planning and the assessment teams contributed towards the mitigation which was developed over multiple iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Table 2.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure

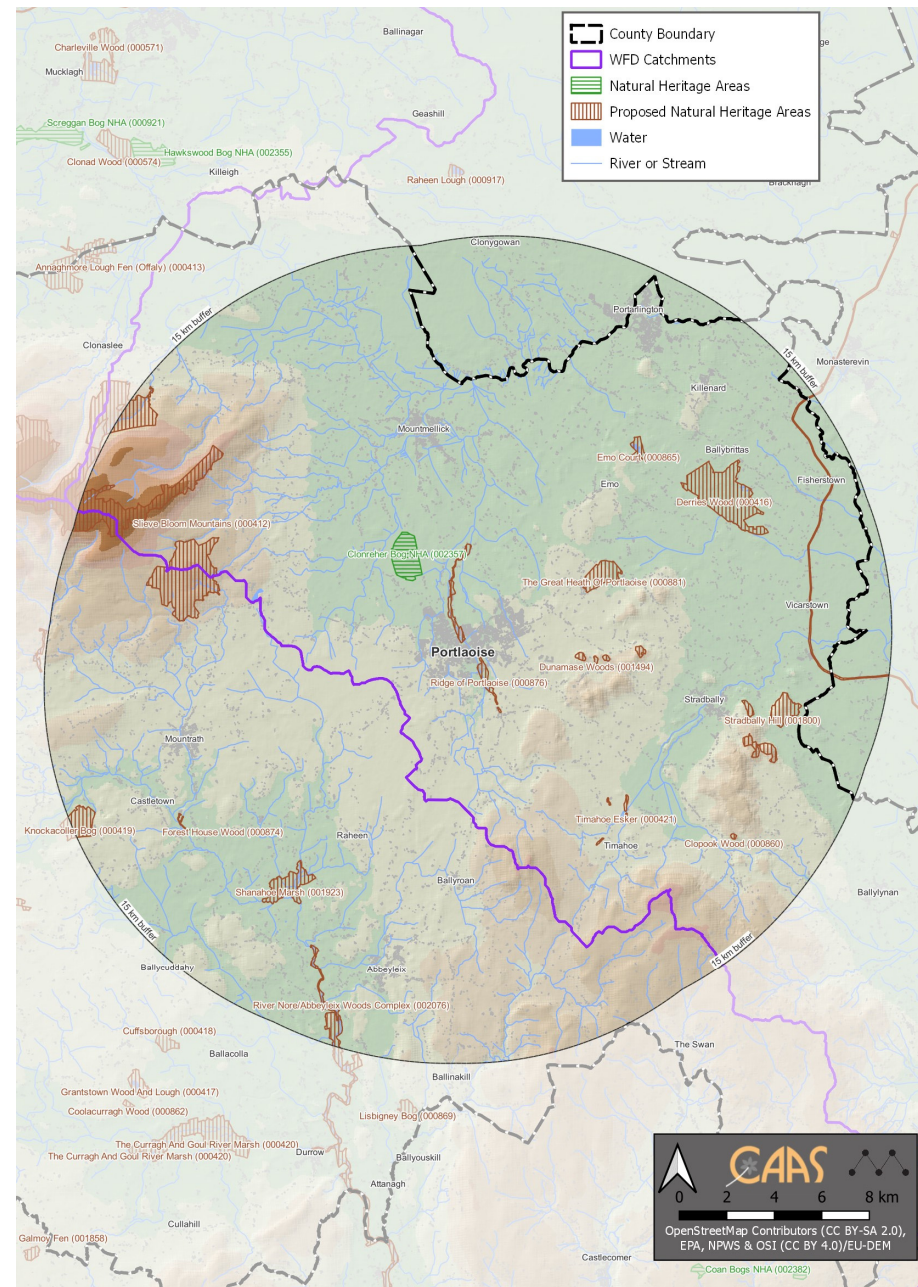
providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

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

In addition to the individual provisions integrated into the text of the Local Area Plan, individual provisions relating to environmental protection and management have been integrated into the existing, already in force, Laois County Development Plan. These measures, which must be complied with by development under the Local Area Plan, are identified alongside the Local Area Plan measures on Table 2.1.

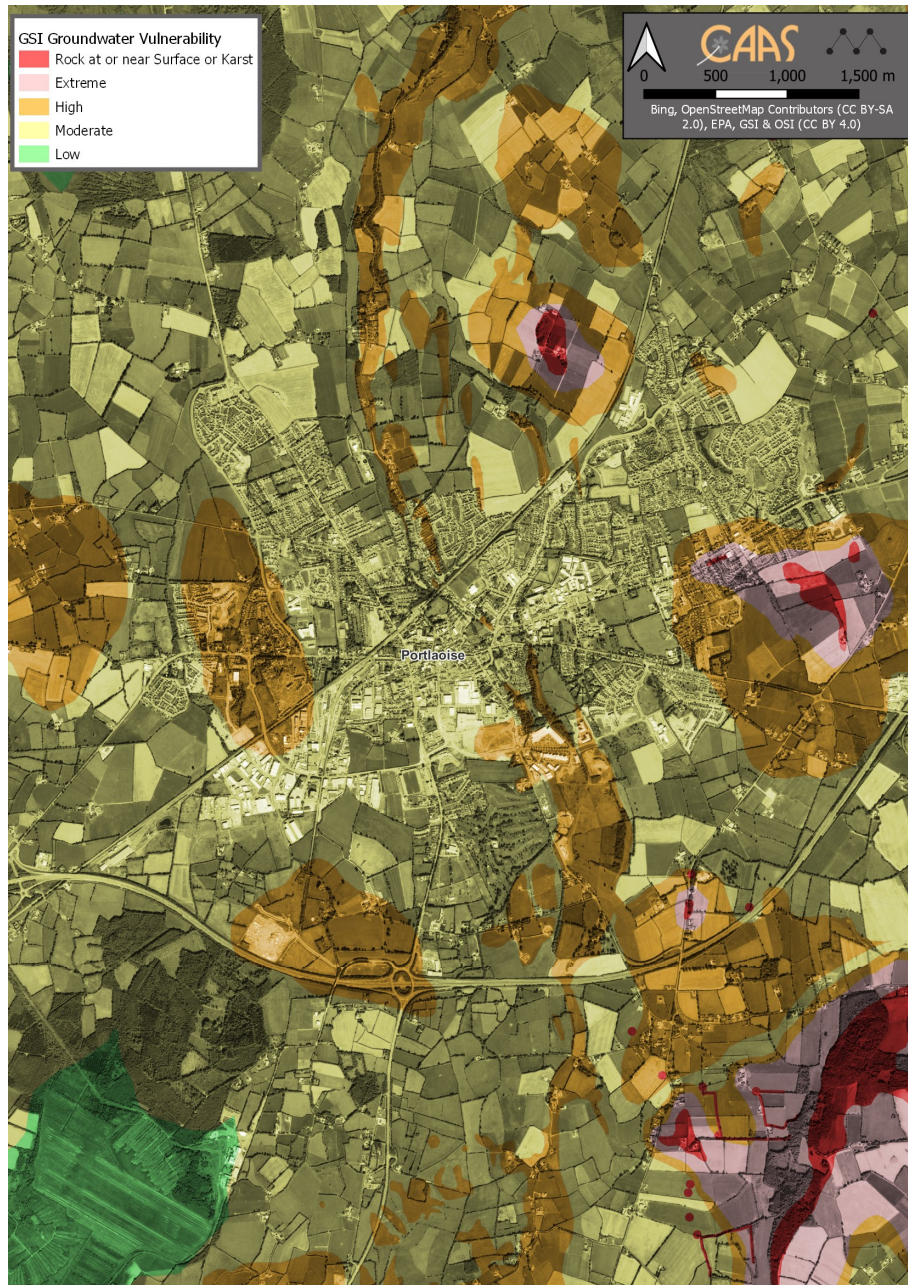


European Sites within and within 15 km buffer of Plan area



NHAs and pNHAs within and within 15 km buffer of Plan area

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

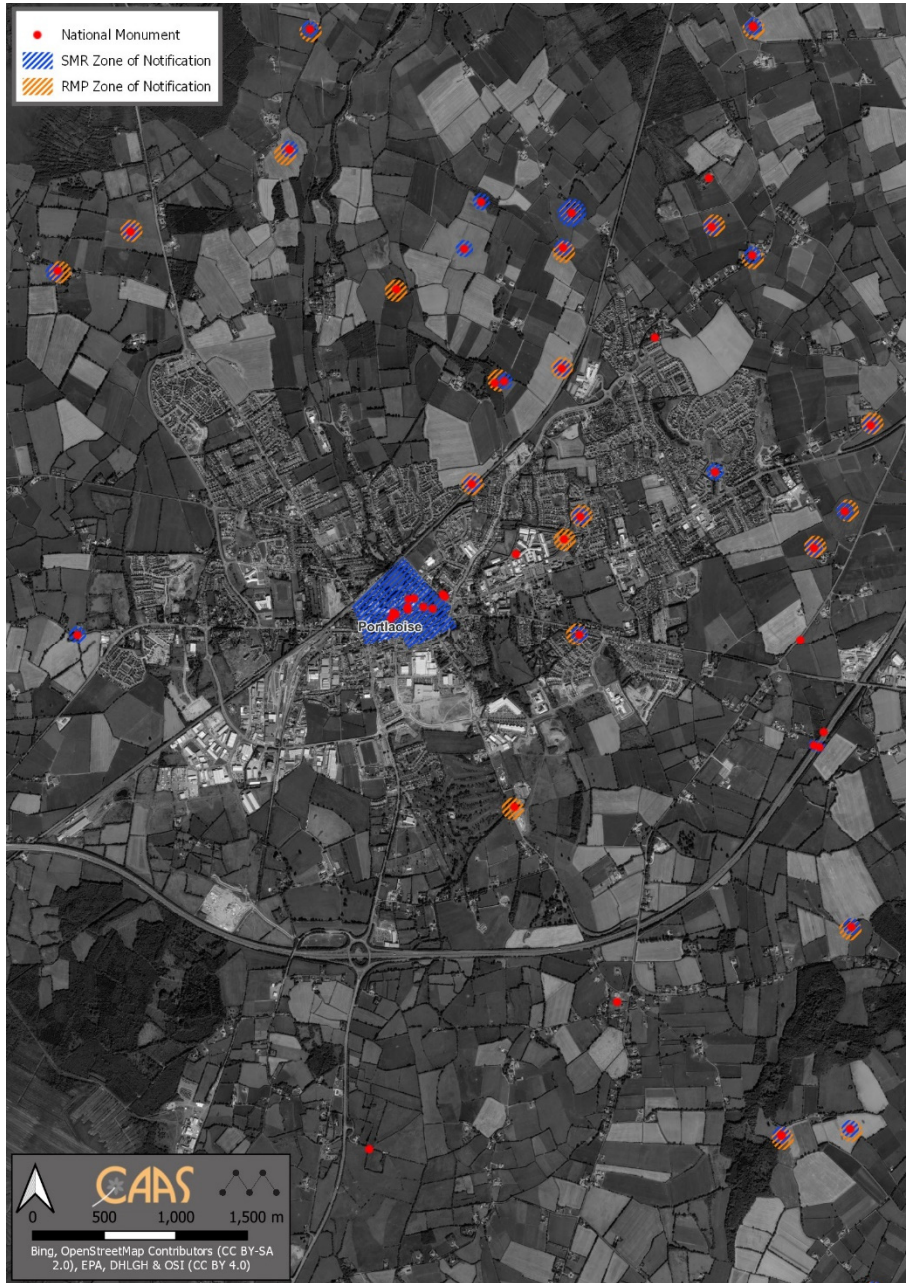


Groundwater Vulnerability

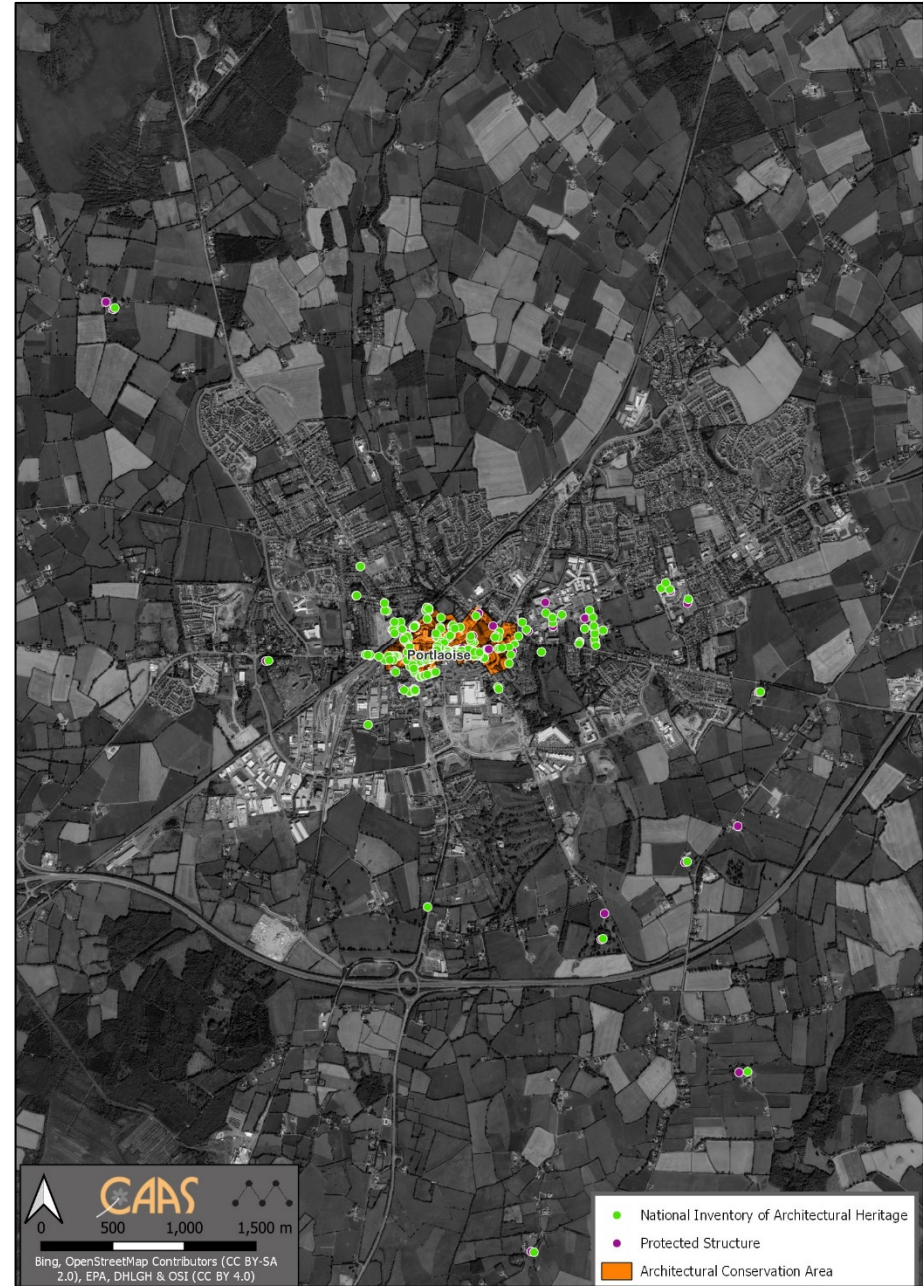


WFD Surface Waterbodies and WFD Ground Waterbodies Status (2016-2021)

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



Archaeological Heritage



Architectural Heritage

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

Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan²

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
Various – see below	Various – see below	<p>Subsection 1.1 Background: It is a specific provision of this Plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 identified in the SEA Environmental Report and AA Natura Impact Report that accompany this Plan shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Plan.</p> <p>Chapter 11 Transport and Movement The identification of transport infrastructure proposals in this Plan and associated Local Transport Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that is not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative.</p> <p>New transport infrastructure will be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This will include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.</p> <p>Proposals would need to be subject to a Corridor and Route Selection Process, as relevant and as per Objective TRANS 15 of the Laois County Development Plan.</p> <p>Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.</p> <p>IM. P1: Implement in conjunction with key stakeholders, the policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan and to review the success or otherwise of the implementation of policies and objectives with reference to Section 10.3 of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022), Section 6.5 of Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013) and Chapter 14 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p>	<p>Overarching Core Strategy Policy Objectives CS 03 In the assessment of development proposals, to take account of transport corridors, environmental carrying capacity, availability and/or capacity to provide waste water and water supply services, potential to conflict with Water Framework Directive objectives, potential to impact on the integrity of European sites and Annexed Habitats and species, features of biodiversity value including ecological networks, impact on landscape and visual characteristics, education and other socioeconomic objectives</p> <p>Ecosystems Approach Policy Objectives CS 35 Promote an Ecosystem Services Approach in the preparation of lower-level plans, strategies and Development Management</p> <p>CS 36 Contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which came into force in 2016</p> <p>NRE 3 Ensure the provision, where feasible, of electricity cables been located underground, especially in the urban environment, and generally within areas of public open space. Where undergrounding of cables is being pursued, proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties); • Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered; • Impacts on underground archaeology; • Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and • Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation. <p>Volume 2 Environmental considerations and imitations in the types of uses There are a wide range of land use types identified under each of the Land Use Zoning Objectives. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate compliance with the various written provisions of the Plan, as relevant, including those relating to environmental protection and management. Environmental considerations, such as those related to elevated levels of flood risk or European site ecological designations, may limit the types of uses that may be possible at certain sites. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the planning authority at the earliest opportunity to seek guidance as to the appropriateness of emerging proposals.</p> <p>TRANS 15 It is a Policy Objective that where projects for new roads or other linear projects, identified in Chapter 10 and Volume 2, are not already provided for by existing plans/programme or are not already permitted, that the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and • Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.
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 	<p>NH P1: Ensure heritage assets that are the focus for tourism development are appropriately managed and their special interest conserved from potential adverse effects from visitors or development in general and that best practice standards in relation for the environmental management of tourism enterprises are adhered to, including in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive;</p> <p>NH P2: Develop a greenway/blueway walking and cycling route along the River Triogue;</p> <p>NH P3: Support and promote, with the co-operation of landowners, public access to heritage sites and features at appropriate locations whilst ensuring heritage related development does not result in negative impacts on the fabric or setting of the town's heritage assets;</p> <p>NH P4: Support the implementation of Ireland's Ancient East by facilitating the provision of visitor information– in line with the policies and objectives with respect to heritage sites; and integrating the objectives of Ireland's Ancient East with transport programmes in the</p>	<p>CS 20 Promote higher densities at appropriate locations, owing to position on public transport network where appropriate to do so having regard to Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas (DEHLG, 2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required;</p> <p>CA ST 1 Protect and enhance the County's floodplains subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" where appropriate and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive;</p> <p>RH 4 Provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2005) ', EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required;</p> <p>NRPO 4 Prepare an Open Space Plan for the County having regard to the town parks, riverside walks and other amenity spaces and resources and ensure that any plan or project associated with open space planning or tourism is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required</p> <p>NRPO 7 Investigate the feasibility of the following specific recreation and leisure projects subject to the Habitats and Birds Directives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the ongoing development of an athletic track, including provision of dressing rooms and tartan resurface in

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

SEA Statement for the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
	<p>habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (e.g. swifts) and bats. 	<p>County;</p> <p>NH P5: Protect environmental quality in Portlaoise through the implementation of European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</p> <p>NH P6: Adopt a pro-active and systematic good practice approach to tree management with the aim of promoting good tree health, condition, diversity, public amenity.</p> <p>NH P7: Make Tree Preservation Orders as appropriate included for reasons of ecology and character value using "Amenity Trees and Woodlands – a Guide to their Management in Ireland" published by the Tree Council of Ireland.</p> <p>NH P8: Support the town in a garden concept through appropriate landscaping and tree planting in the planning and development of urban spaces, streets, roads and infrastructure projects.</p> <p>NH P9: Protect Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) from developments that would adversely affect their special interests.</p> <p>NH P10: Promote a no net loss of biodiversity approach through strategies, planning, mitigation measures, appropriate offsetting and/or investment in Blue-Green infrastructure.</p> <p>NH 01: Identify, protect and conserve natural heritage sites, nationally designated conservation sites and non-designated sites in co-operation and consultation with the relevant statutory authorities;</p> <p>NH 02: Seek integration of all elements of existing green infrastructure into new developments, prevent fragmentation and mitigate potential impacts on the existing green infrastructure network;</p> <p>NH 03: Require the preservation and maintenance of suitable mature trees, hedgerows and natural heritage features in new developments;</p> <p>NH 04: Seek to preserve, protect and maintain trees of special amenity, conservation or landscape value;</p> <p>NH 05: Carry out and require the planting of native trees, hedgerows and vegetation in all new developments;</p> <p>NH 06: Open up visual and physical access via the River Triogue from People's Park as a continuous pedestrian and cycle link through the town centre, and potentially through the Convent Lands having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats;</p> <p>NH 07: Reconnect the Triogue Linear Park with the residential areas to the north of the Town Centre;</p> <p>NH 08: Identify, protect, conserve and enhance wherever possible, wildlife habitats, stepping stones, corridors and features;</p> <p>NH 09: Provide recreational amenities such as playgrounds and outdoor gym equipment within existing areas of open space;</p> <p>NH 10: Protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures with respect to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management;</p> <p>NH 101: Maintain riverbank vegetation along watercourses and ensure protection of a 10m riparian buffer zone on Greenfield sites and maintain free from development;</p> <p>NH 102: Facilitate the work of agencies including Laois County Council redressing the issue of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.</p> <p>NH 103: Protect, conserve and enhance the natural habitats of the Burial Ridge.</p> <p>NH 104: Protect ancient and species rich hedgerows throughout the town.</p> <p>NH 105: Protect trees, groups of trees and hedgerows which act as wildlife corridors in accordance with Article 10 of the EU Habitats</p>	<p>Portlaoise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and facilitate where appropriate the provision of strategic greenways throughout the county. Facilitate where appropriate the provision of additional handball facilities throughout the county. <p>NRPO 13 Facilitate the development of greenways / blueways along the main waterways through the county – Grand Canal, River Barrow and River Nore and their tributaries subject to the Habitats and Birds Directives and the proper planning and development of the areas</p> <p>ABT 2 Support in principle and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive, developing and marketing off-road Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking Trail by Coillte, Mountmellick –Portlaoise – Abbeyleix Greenway (and potential extensions onto Portarlington to connect with the Offaly Greenway network) and Durrow Green Network Cycle Trail in co-operation with relevant stakeholders including Durrow Development Forum.</p> <p>ABT 3 Develop on-road cycle trails in the Slieve Blooms along existing lightly-trafficked roads in partnership with cycling clubs, Offaly County Council, Laois Sports Partnership, Laois Partnership Company and the National Trails Office, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive</p> <p>ABT 6 Promote and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the habitats and Birds Directives, sustainable developing and improving of facilities and infrastructure supporting water based tourism activities, (including shore side interpretive centres and jetties). Development proposals outside settlement centres will be required to demonstrate a need to locate in the area and will be required to ensure that the ecological integrity and water quality of the river or lake, including lakeshore and riparian habitats, is not adversely affected by the development</p> <p>TM 17 Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate</p> <p>CH 2 Take responsibility for the development of a more sustainable tourism industry which minimises adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, habitats and species; leaving them undiminished as a resource for future generations, while supporting social and economic prosperity</p> <p>Support the development and marketing of the Barrow Blueway and facilitate related commercial opportunities in Vicarstown, Portarlington, Graiguecullen and Portlaoise, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive</p> <p>NH 2 Support the development and marketing of the Erkina River Blueway in association with all relevant stakeholders and facilitate related commercial opportunities in the area, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive</p> <p>NH 3 Promote and facilitate the continued development of the Slieve Bloom Mountains bike trail as a key tourism asset for the county and as part of the tourism offer on the Slieve Bloom Mountains, in conjunction with Offaly County Council.</p> <p>In addition, it is the Council policy to (i) promote the further development of walking trails on the mountains, (ii) connect to and develop Clonaslee, Camross, Coolrain and Rosenalisa as a service hubs for the area and (iii) promote and facilitate links to / from other existing and proposed greenways, blueways and peatways (iv) Support the development of visitor centre facilities in Baunreagh, , subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive</p> <p>RL 2 Facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</p> <p>RL 7 Encourage, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, access to forestry including private forestry for amenity and educational purposes including the provision of walking routes, cycling routes, mountain biking routes, mountain trails, nature trails and orienteering;</p> <p>RL 14 Support in principle the expansion of the aggregates and concrete products industry which offers opportunity for employment and economic development generally subject to environmental , traffic and planning considerations and ensure that any plan or project associated with extractive industry is subject to Appropriate assessment screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive and subsequent assessment as required , applicants for planning permission shall have regard to the GSI-ICF Quarrying Guidelines;</p> <p>TRANS 45 Investigate the feasibility of developing a National Scale Centre for Off-Road Mountain-Biking in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, subject to planning permission & the Habitats' and Birds Directives;</p> <p>TRANS 46 Continue to audit, maintain and promote walking trails and walking events in the Slieve Blooms, subject to planning permission & the Habitats' and Birds Directives:</p> <p>TRANS 47 Designate the following graded on-road cycling trails in the Slieve Blooms; install related signage and improve road surfaces along these trails, as resources allow; produce trail maps and market the trails , subject to the Habitats' and Birds Directives; H1. Cut Cycle Climb; H2. Wolftrap Cycle Climb; H3. Glendine Cycle Climb; H4. Mountrath-Clonaslee Trail; H5. Camross Coolrain Trail; H6. Castletown Mountrath Trail</p> <p>TRANS 51 Establish a new Woodenbridge Walking Trail linking Durrow and Ballacolla, subject to the Habitats' Directive</p> <p>BNH 23 Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries and laneways, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for</p>

SEA Statement for the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Directive.</p> <p>NH 016: Make a Tree Preservation Order to protect a significant tree group, which is important as a rookery and roost for rooks and jackdaws, at the Downs Portlaoise and Portlaoise Town Park.</p> <p>NH 017: Support local community groups in the development of community gardens and allotments, subject to residential amenity and compliance with all planning and environmental considerations.</p> <p>NH 018: Require new developments to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (for example, through provision of swift boxes or bricks, bat roost boxes, green roofs, etc.) and improve the ecological coherence of wider green infrastructure.</p> <p>NH 019: Protect existing swift roosts as identified in the County Swift Survey and as they relate to Portlaoise and ensure existing nest sites are not lost through inappropriate renovation or destruction. In dealing with applications for new developments, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following: • Inclusion of swift nesting opportunities in new buildings through use of swift brick or swift nest boxes where appropriate.</p> <p>NH 020: Work with relevant stakeholders such as the Office of Public Works (OPW) and local stakeholders to develop a Landscape Conservation Assessment in relation to the Heath and its attributes during the plan period.</p>	<p>the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>LCA 17 Maintain the rivers throughout the county whilst ensuring that all works are carried out subject to appropriate environmental assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, site proposed to be designated and any additional sites that may be designated during the period of this Plan</p> <p>LCA 18 Preserve riverside historic features and their landscape settings. Conserve valuable habitats focused on and around river corridors and estuaries including European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 19 Recognise the potential constraints on development created by river flood plains and the value of these flood plains as increasingly rare habitats</p> <p>LCA 24 Conserve valuable habitats including any European and national designations</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Biodiversity and Designated Sites</p> <p>BNH 1 Protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county’s biodiversity and ecological connectivity</p> <p>BNH 2 Conserve and protect habitats and species listed in the Annexes of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2010 (as amended) and the Flora Protection Orders.</p> <p>BNH 3 Support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage proposed or designated sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of Sites under National and European legislation and International Agreements and maintain and /develop linkages between them where feasible.</p> <p>BNH 4 Protect and maintain the conservation value of all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves in the county.</p> <p>BNH 5 Projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)³. Screening for AAs and AAs undertaken shall take into account invasive species as relevant.</p> <p>BNH 6 Assess, in accordance with the relevant legislation, all proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect or cumulative impact) on designated natural heritage sites, sites proposed for designation and protected species.</p> <p>BNH 7 Protect Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) from developments that would adversely affect their special interests.</p> <p>BNH 8 Recognise and protect the significant geological value of sites in County Laois and safeguard these sites, in consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland and in accordance with the National Heritage Plan and “Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry”.</p> <p>BNH 9 Engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure Integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura sites (or parts thereof) and ensure that plans are fully integrated with the County Development Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.</p> <p>BNH 10 Support the objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 by encouraging the planting of pollinator friendly trees and plants within grass verges along public roads and existing and future greenways, new hedgerows, public parks and public open spaces in towns and villages, including part of mixed use and residential developments</p> <p>BNH 11 Support measures to protect Swift population such as the creation of Swift nest cavities in all new commercial and public buildings (schools/libraries, etc).</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows</p> <p>BNH 25 Undertake a study within the lifetime of the Plan and for all Local Area Plans to document and map significant trees and groups of trees that require preservation and prepare Tree Preservation Orders for individual trees, groups of trees or woodland areas where expedient and in the interests of visual amenity, biodiversity and the environment.</p> <p>BNH 26 Protect individual trees, groups of trees and woodland in the interests of landscape conservation (including townscapes) and nature conservation as part of the development management process</p> <p>BNH 27 Protect existing hedgerows, particularly of historical and archaeological importance of townland boundaries, from unnecessary removal in order to preserve the rural character of the countryside and promote biodiversity</p> <p>BNH 28 Ensure that hedgerow removal to facilitate development is kept to an absolute minimum and, where unavoidable, a requirement for mitigation planting will be required comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the original and where possible linking in to existing adjacent hedges. Native</p>

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 project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

SEA Statement for the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>plants of a local provenance should be used for any such planting</p> <p>BNH 29 Promote and develop urban forests in parkland and street trees in urban settlements to enhance public realm and increase tree canopy coverage and diversity.</p> <p>BNH 30 Ensure that hedgerow and mature tree removal to facilitate development is kept to an absolute minimum and, where unavoidable, a requirement for mitigation planting will be required comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the original and where possible linking in to existing adjacent hedges. Native plants of a local provenance should be used for any such planting</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Waterways and Wetlands</p> <p>BNH 31 Protect waterbodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, to ensure they are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the County's rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county.</p> <p>BNH 32 Promote and develop the Barrow Blueway initiative and work with State Agencies, landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to protect and manage inland waters, river corridors and their floodplains from degradation and damage, and to recognise and promote them as natural assets of the urban and rural environment</p> <p>BNH 33 Promote and facilitate the development of the Grand Canal for cycling, walking and nature study in conjunction with the relevant bodies including Waterways Ireland to enhance its amenity. Investigate the possibility of developing long distance walking routes/Greenway, within the lifetime of the Plan, along the disused Mountmellick Grand Canal Line.</p> <p>BNH 34 Protect riparian corridors by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors and maintain them free from inappropriate development. Where developments are proposed adjacent to waterways in previously undeveloped areas, the Planning Authority will require a general setback distance of a minimum of 10 metres from the waterways edge, subject to site-specific characteristics and the nature and design of the development. In previously developed areas, for example, within town centres, this general setback distance is likely to be reduced and should be part of any pre-planning consultations with the Council.</p> <p>BNH 35 Require that development along rivers set aside lands for pedestrian routes and cycleways that could link to the broader area and established settlements in the area.</p> <p>BNH 36 Provide for public access to waterways where feasible and appropriate, in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders, whilst maintaining them free from inappropriate development, subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as appropriate.</p> <p>BNH 37 Protect the Nore Pearl Mussel through the measures set out in the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Nore Sub-Basin Management Plan (2009).</p> <p>BNH 38 Protect the migration of fish in the River Barrow Nore SAC from high risk barriers such as weirs and bridge sills.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Peatlands</p> <p>BNH 40 The County Development will continue to support the objectives of the Strategic Framework for the Future use of Peatlands which identifies new potential future land uses and also seek to progress opportunities under Just Transition Fund.</p> <p>BNH 41 Protect the county's designated peatland areas and landscapes and to conserve and manage their ecological, archaeological, cultural, and educational heritage by promoting high environmental standards in conjunction with Bord na Mona, NPWS, IPPC, NGO's and local communities.</p> <p>BNH 42 Work with relevant agencies such as Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, Bord na Mona, NPWS, Coillte and adjacent Local Authorities to prepare an integrated afteruse framework and management plans for the peatlands and related infrastructure,</p> <p>BNH 43 Support the preparation of a Sustainable Holistic Management Plan for the future use of the Industrial Peatlands in the County, which recognises the role of peatlands in carbon sequestration.</p> <p>BNH 44 Support the designation of a National Park for the peatlands area in the Midlands in conjunction with adjoining Local Authorities.</p> <p>BNH 45 Undertake a feasibility study to identify peatways, where appropriate and examine the tourist potential of same such as a peatway link from Portarlinton to the Grand Canal and River Barrow Greenway.</p> <p>BNH 46 Support relevant agencies to provide for the future sustainable and environmentally sensitive use of large industrial peatlands at Cuil Na Mona.</p> <p>Light Pollution Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 49 Ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised, thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species</p> <p>ES 50 Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>ES 51 Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Green Infrastructure BNH 19 Ensure that areas and networks of Green Infrastructure are identified, protected, enhanced, managed and created to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities. BNH 20 Develop and implement a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Laois in partnership with key stakeholders and the public which reflects a long-term perspective, including the need to adapt to climate change. Ensure the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Laois protects existing Green Infrastructure resources and plans for future Green Infrastructure provision BNH 21 Require all Local Area Plans and Master Plans to protect, enhance, provide and manage Green Infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner. Set targets for the provision of Green Infrastructure elements such as trees and green roofs as part of the preparation of Local Area Plans. BNH 22 Promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes respect and where possible enhances the ecological potential of each site BNH 23 Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries and laneways, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. BNH 24 To identify and map Green Infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.</p>
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors. NH P5: Protect environmental quality in Portlaoise through the implementation of European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management. NH 010: Protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures with respect to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management;</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>COMAH Policy Objectives ES 55 Ensure that any COMAH sites in County Laois are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Seveso III Directive ES 56 Have regard to the following in assessing applications for new developments (including extensions);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Major Accidents Directive Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU); The potential effects on public health and safety; The need to ensure adequate distances between such developments and residential areas, areas of public use and any areas of sensitivity <p>ES 57 Any proposals for developments within the vicinity of major accident hazard sites shall have cognisance of the required minimum separation distances as required by the Major Accidents Directive. In this regard all future proposals of this nature shall be forwarded to the Health and Safety Authority</p>
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water and Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>ES 32 Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality. Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided. <p>Soil Quality Policy Objectives ES 52 Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality ES 53 Recognise the significant impacts of land use, land use change and sludge generation and treatment in relation to carbon loss/stocks and recognise the function of soil assessment and management, carbon sinks, carbon sequestration and restoration of degraded lands in plan led settlement and development strategies</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Geology GEO 1 Work with stakeholders to protect, preserve, enhance, maintain, manage, conserve, recognise and, where appropriate, restore the character conservation value and integrity of these sites for their amenity, scientific, heritage and historic values (including County Geological Sites listed in Table 28, proposed NHA's, areas near site and areas of geomorphological interest GEO 2 Protect geological NHAs as they become designated and notified to the Local Authority, during the lifetime of the Plan; GEO 3 Promote and encourage, where practicable and when not in conflict with ownership rights, access to geological and geomorphological features GEO 4 Encourage and facilitate the development of geo-tourism by conserving and managing geological resources, and by the development of a Rock Trail (named), Geoparks or other similar geo-tourism initiatives</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Eskers GEO 5 Protect, preserve and conserve the landscape and natural heritage and geo-diversity values of esker systems from inappropriate development. Ensure that any plan or project affecting eskers are adequately assessed with regard to their potential impact on the environment GEO 6 Assess applications for quarrying activity and gravel extraction and other development in proximity to eskers, with respect to their landscape importance or amenity value and the need to conserve them free from inappropriate development</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>KI P1: 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 catchment; KI P5: Assess all applications in the context of available and sufficient public infrastructural facilities, the protection of Surface Water and Groundwater Resources;</p> <p>KI 07: 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>KI 08: Require all new developments to include proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems;</p> <p>KI 09: Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in accordance with the National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures;</p> <p>KI 010: Ensure developments, individually as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments, will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG);</p> <p>CMO 5: Support enhancement of flood resilience of buildings and promote the use of permeable surfaces to decrease run-off rates;</p> <p>CMO 6: Protect and enhance the towns floodplains subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" where appropriate and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive;</p>	<p>and to conserve their environmental character values and the extent to which proposals would damage these qualities.</p> <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>ABT 6 Promote and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the habitats and Birds Directives, sustainable developing and improving of facilities and infrastructure supporting water based tourism activities, (including shore side interpretive centres and jetties). Development proposals outside settlement centres will be required to demonstrate a need to locate in the area and will be required to ensure that the ecological integrity and water quality of the river or lake, including lakeshore and riparian habitats, is not adversely affected by the development</p> <p>WS 3 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.</p> <p>WS 21 Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.</p> <p>Water Quality Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 17 Implement the provisions of water pollution abatement measures in accordance with National and EU Directives and other legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate</p> <p>ES 18 Maintain and improve the water quality in rivers and other water courses in the county, including ground waters. The Council will have cognizance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>ES 19 Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from domestic wastewater treatment systems and other potentially polluting sources. The Council will comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009) and the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code for Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels'</p> <p>ES 20 Assist and support with the Blue Dots Catchment Programme which been established under the current River Basin Management Plan specifically for the protection and restoration of high ecological status water bodies</p> <p>ES 21 Ensure the protection of all High Status Water Bodies in the county by complying with the requirements of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended), the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations.</p> <p>WS 22 Ensure where private wastewater treatment systems are permitted by virtue of their remoteness from Public Wastewater Schemes to serve commercial and business developments, e.g Motorway Service Stations, Tourism and the Hospitality Sector etc, that their performance is monitored and audited so that they are operated in compliance with their wastewater discharge license, in order to protect water quality.</p> <p>Groundwater Protection Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 23 Ensure, through the implementation of the relevant River Basin Management Plan and their associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county</p> <p>ES 24 Protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and control development in a manner consistent with the proper management of these resources, in accordance with the County Water Source Protection Zones</p> <p>ES 25 Assist and co-operate with the EPA, LAWPRO and IW in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive</p> <p>ES 26 Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from septic tanks and other potentially polluting sources through compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009).</p> <p>ES 27 Ensure the protection of groundwater dependant Natura 2000 sites which rely on the continued supply of groundwater resources to secure the key environmental conditions that support the integrity of the site and through the protection of groundwater standards as defined by the National River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 (and any subsequent Plan). Where no detailed Plan for protection of a specific source is available wastewater discharge will not be permitted within a radius of 200 metres of that source</p> <p>ES 28 Ensure that Source Protection Areas are identified for any public and group scheme water supplies or multiple unit housing developments with private water supplies;</p> <p>ES 29 Continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended) and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the Surface Water Legislation Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>other relevant Regulations</p> <p>ES 30 Ensure that all industrial development is appropriately located, to seek effluent reduction and 'clean production' where feasible, and require that waste water treatment facilities are adequate, and that effluents are treated and discharged in a satisfactory manner</p> <p>ES 31 New developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in an Extreme Vulnerability Inner Source Protection Area shall be restricted to the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A dwelling for a full-time farmer; b) An existing inhabited dwelling in need of replacement; c) A second family dwelling on a farm where this is required for management of the farm <p>Permission may be granted in the above instances subject to the following stipulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That an alternative site outside the Extreme vulnerability Inner Protection Area is not available b) The existing water quality of the source is not subject to any significant nitrate and /or microbiological contamination c) The existing water quality of the groundwater source is in compliance with the environmental objectives set out in relevant River Basin District Management Plan. <p>ES 32 Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality.</p> <p>Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands b) Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided. <p>ES 33 Encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets, European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017, as amended and comply with the relevant River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>ES 34 Consult as necessary with other competent authorities with responsibility for environmental management</p> <p>ES 35 To work in co-operation with relevant organisations and major stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the county's water resources</p> <p>ES 36 Ensure that developments that may adversely affect water quality will not proceed unless mitigation measures are employed, such as settlements ponds, interceptors etc</p> <p>ES 37 Promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect both surface water and groundwater bodies</p> <p>Flood Risk Management Policy Objectives</p> <p>FRM 1 Ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of all local area plans through the preparation in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009)</p> <p>FRM 2 Ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG 2009) and to ensure that the Justification Test for Development Management is applied to required development proposals and in accordance with methodology set out in the guidelines and new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff.</p> <p>FRM 3 Support the implementation of recommendations in the CFRAM Programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented.</p> <p>FRM 4 Support the implementation of recommendations in the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP's), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>FRM 5 Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and to retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto.</p> <p>FRM 6 Assist the OPW in developing catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans for rivers in County Laois and have regard to their provisions/recommendations.</p> <p>FRM 7 Protect and enhance the County's floodplains and wetlands as 'green infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defenses in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>FRM 8 Protect the integrity of any formal (OPW or Laois County Council) flood risk management infrastructure, thereby ensuring that any new development does not negatively impact any existing defense infrastructure or compromise any proposed new infrastructure.</p> <p>FRM 9 Ensure that where flood risk management works take place that the natural and cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced.</p> <p>FRM 10 Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.</p> <p>FRM 11 Consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the provision of flood alleviation measures in the County.</p> <p>FRM 12 Prioritise plans for flood defence works in the towns as indicated in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in order to mitigate against potential flood risk;</p> <p>FRM 13 Ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff;</p> <p>FRM 14 Protect water sinks because of their flood management function, as well as their biodiversity and amenity value and encourage the restoration or creation of water sinks as flood defence mechanisms, where appropriate</p> <p>Surface Water and Drainage Policy Objectives</p> <p>SWD 1 Support in conjunction with Irish Water the improvement of storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.</p> <p>SWD 2 Implement policies contained in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) in relation to SUDS and climate change.</p> <p>SWD 3 Ensure new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure which meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, associated River Basin Management Plans and CFRAM Management Plans.</p> <p>SWD 4 Require that planning applications are accompanied by a comprehensive SUDs assessment that addresses run-off quantity, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality.</p> <p>SWD 5 Ensure that in public and private developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm, seek to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.</p> <p>SWD 6 Ensure appropriate maintenance of surface water drainage infrastructure to avoid flood risk.</p> <p>SWD 7 Ensure that all storm water generated in a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved storm water system;</p> <p>SWD 8 Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and to incorporate design solutions that provide for collection and recycling of surface water in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as recommended in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009) and Laois County Council's Roads and Drainage Standards, or as amended.</p>
<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>Also refer to various provisions relating to Transport and Movement, including those detailed at Plan Section 11.5.2.</p> <p>CCP 1: Support the implementation of International and National objectives on climate action including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts (and any amending legislation), the 'Climate Action Plan 2021' (and any updated Plans) and ensure that Laois County Councils Climate Change Action Plan and County Development Plan are suitably aligned.</p> <p>CCP 2: In accordance with Action 47 of the Laois Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, to investigate the feasibility of Shared or District Heating in Portlaoise.</p> <p>CMO 1: Support and facilitate the creation of a Decarbonisation Zone in the Key Town of Portlaoise, in line with the objectives of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029;</p> <p>CMO 2: Achieve more compact growth by promoting the development of infill and brownfield/ regeneration sites and the re-use of underutilised land including upper floors within and close to the existing built-up footprint in preference to edge of centre locations thereby encouraging a shift towards sustainable travel modes;</p> <p>CMO 3: Promote higher residential development densities at appropriate locations such as along public transport corridors, that are not located in areas sensitive to flooding, or will increase temperatures of urban areas;</p> <p>CMO 4: Support energy-efficient building design and Green Roof technology particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings;</p>	<p>Climate Action is provided for throughout the Plan, and is focused upon at Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy".</p> <p>Air Quality Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 38 Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>ES 39 Encourage more sustainable modes of transport and a more balanced modal split to reduce carbon emissions</p> <p>ES 40 Encourage the use of appropriate mitigation measures, such as dust dampeners, chimney stack scrubbers, etc. to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality</p> <p>ES 41 Require developments of a certain nature to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality</p> <p>ES 42 Ensure the implementation of the radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations</p> <p>Noise Pollution Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 42 Require an assessment of impact of the developments on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications</p> <p>ES 43 Support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006</p> <p>ES 44 Ensure that relevant planning applications comply with the provisions of any Noise Action Plan or noise maps relating to the area.</p> <p>ES 45 Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards</p> <p>ES 46 Regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA.</p> <p>ES 47 Ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to submit a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.</p> <p>ES 48 Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>CMO 5: Support enhancement of flood resilience of buildings and promote the use of permeable surfaces to decrease run-off rates;</p> <p>CMO 6: Protect and enhance the towns floodplains subject to flooding as “green infrastructure” where appropriate and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive;</p> <p>CMO 7: Require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions);</p> <p>CMO 8: Support rainwater harvesting and grey-water recycling schemes that seek to decrease abstraction of potable surface water resources, thus reducing water stress during periods of low rainfall;</p> <p>CMO 9: Plant pollinator friendly, drought-resistant plants/ trees in public amenity areas to provide shade and increase green infrastructure linkages;</p> <p>CMO 10: Support the European Commission’s paper on Circular Economy Principles for Building Design and advance the reduce-reuse-recycle policy of the Circular Economy in relation to demolition of building stock;</p> <p>CMO 11: Support construction of green routes/cycleways/pedestrian routes throughout the town;</p> <p>CMO 12: Support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport;</p> <p>CMO 13: Strengthen public transport linkages and promote their use;</p> <p>CMO 14: Support localisation of jobs/shops/services to minimise the need for most common travel patterns;</p> <p>CMO 15: Support the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electrical vehicles throughout the town, both on street and in new developments, in accordance with car parking standards and best practice;</p> <p>CMO 16: Promote and support the provision of Park-and-Ride facilities which improve public transport accessibility without exacerbating road congestion, or which cause increased car travel distances, at appropriate locations within the town;</p> <p>CMO 17: Deliver, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport a Public Transportation Hub in Portlaoise to accommodate national, commuter, regional and local bus services;</p> <p>CMO 18: Ensure that planning applications for new critical infrastructure demonstrate resilience to new climatic conditions.</p> <p>CMO 19: Ensure biodiversity assets are appropriately managed and safeguarded from potential adverse effects from development.</p> <p>CMO 20: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to increase awareness of the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town and encourage greater participation of the wider community.</p> <p>CMO 21: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to enhance public realm and conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>CMO 22: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to facilitate the modal shift to active travel and sustainable mobility in Portlaoise.</p> <p>CMO 23: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to identify decarbonisation pathways for Portlaoise to achieve 2030 targets and promote principles of circular economy.</p> <p>CMO 24: Encourage and support a transition to renewable energy sources in Portlaoise, subject to compliance with proper planning and</p>	<p>a noise audit may be required where appropriate</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>environmental considerations.”</p> <p>CMO 25: Support and promote the use of renewable energy technologies and supporting infrastructure at appropriate scales in residential, commercial and community developments and support the principle of on-site energy generation for self-consumption.</p> <p>CMO 26: Support the Climate Action Team in the undertaking of an investigation of the feasibility of Shared or District Heating in Portlaoise.</p> <p>CMO 27: Support, in conjunction with key stakeholders, the implementation of the Laois County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 and facilitate its role as a driver in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation in Portlaoise, and the translation of national climate policy to local and community levels in the town.</p> <p>CMO 28: Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within Portlaoise, in line with the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan.</p> <p>CMO 29: Support the sustainable management of waste and enable a significant reduction in the production of waste in Portlaoise, in line with the principles of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (DECC, 2021).</p> <p>CMO 30: Promote circular economy principles and the incorporation of sustainable waste management measures within developments, in line with the “Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects” guidance.</p> <p>CMO 31: Promote high-quality, secure, and reliable digital connectivity in Portlaoise in line with the objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The National Broadband Plan, (ii) Dimension 2 of the ‘Harnessing Digital – the Digital Ireland Framework’ which supports the rollout of 5G, and (iii) National Strategic Objective 6 of The National Development Plan 2021-2023. 	
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors and various Land Use provisions.</p> <p>KI P1: 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 catchment;</p> <p>KI P2: Work with Irish Water on developing and upgrading the water supply schemes so as to ensure an adequate, resilient, sustainable and economic supply of piped water;</p> <p>KI P3: Work with Irish Water on upgrading the wastewater treatment plant in line with the projected future growth of the settlement of Portlaoise;</p> <p>KI P4: Promote and support the implementation of Irish Water’s Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project;</p> <p>KI P5: Assess all applications in the context of available and sufficient public infrastructural facilities, the protection of Surface Water and Groundwater Resources;</p> <p>KI P6: Promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, businesses and industries and supports the implementation of Energy Efficiency solutions in Water and Waste Water Systems;</p> <p>KI P7: Promote and encourage the harvesting of rainwater to meet</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors and various Land Use provisions.</p> <p>Public Water Supply Policy Objectives</p> <p>WS 1 Continue in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that a Safe and Reliable Water Supply by managing the sustainability and quality of drinking water from source to tap to protect human health</p> <p>WS 2 Provide for Resilience in Public Water Schemes and support social and economic growth and meet customer demands particularly during drought conditions by working with IW to deliver on the following priority schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portlaoise PWS – Bring into production the 3 non-producing Boreholes in Coolbanagher and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply; • Portarlinton PWS – Bring into Production Borehole(s) and Treatment Plant in the Doolough Wellfield and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply and • Swan PWS – Bring into Production the Borehole and Treatment Plant at Tollerton. <p>WS 3 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.</p> <p>WS 4 Work with Irish Water to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service zoned development and to require developers to engage with IW in a timely fashion by way of submitting a pre-connection enquiry form to IW.</p> <p>WS 5 Laois County Council will not permit developments of greater than one dwelling which propose standalone developer provided waste water infrastructure in areas remote from Public Water Schemes</p> <p>WS 6 Work with IW to minimise wastage of water supply by requiring existing and new developments to incorporate water conservation measures</p> <p>WS 7 Promote and encourage the harvesting of rainwater to meet non-potable water needs</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
	<p>with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. 	<p>non-potable water needs;</p> <p>KI P8: Co-operate with and facilitate the work of national telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas network providers in the improvement, expansion and provision of energy and communication infrastructure subject to proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>KI P9: encourage the integration of 'soft' measures including SuDs, green space, Green Infrastructure and permeable surfaces in the design of drainage and sustainable water management of existing and future developments.</p> <p>KI P10: require the use of SuDs in public and private developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.</p> <p>KI P11: enhance biodiversity and amenity and ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats, including where flood risk management measures are planned.</p> <p>KI P12: encourage the use of Green Roofs where expansive roofs are proposed such as industrial, apartment, civic, commercial, leisure and educational buildings, and non-porous surfacing to create safe places.</p> <p>KI 01: Facilitate economic and social development through the provision of infrastructure and optimise the return of infrastructure investment;</p> <p>KI 02: Promote and encourage the development of the critical mass of Portlaoise and to enhance its strategic location on the National and Regional road and rail network;</p> <p>KI 03: Phase growth in line with the capacity of supporting infrastructure;</p> <p>KI 04: Facilitate Irish Water in the maintenance, expansion and upgrading of wastewater disposal and water supply infrastructure;</p> <p>KI 05: Ensure a good quality of life, through maintaining and improving waste water treatment and water supplies and to minimise the adverse impacts of development on the environment, through policies for the management of wastes and emissions;</p> <p>KI 06: Seek compliance with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure;</p> <p>KI 07: 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>KI 08: Require all new developments to include proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems;</p> <p>KI 09: Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in accordance with the National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures;</p> <p>KI 010: Ensure developments, individually as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments, will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG);</p> <p>KI 011: Facilitate, promote and encourage the expansion and improvement of telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas networks infrastructure subject to proper planning and sustainable</p>	<p>WS 8 Implement Energy Efficiency solutions in Water Systems;</p> <p>WS 9 Encourage industrial and commercial developments with small private water supplies to connect to the public water schemes where technically and financially feasible.</p> <p>WS 10 Ensure Water Conservation through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out further Mains Replacement programmes; Continue with validation of District Metre Areas(DMA's) Carry out focused Find and Fix Programmes to achieve target volumetric reductions in accordance with IW's targets. <p>WS11 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Water and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>WS 12 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol and with the NFGWS on an agreed programme with the Local Authority to take in charge Public Group Water Scheme and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>WS 13 Secure the future sustainability of Laois County Council's INAB Accredited Laboratory and enhance the accreditation status of the Laboratory in order to develop the Laboratory into one of 4 Regional Local Authority Accredited Laboratories nationally.</p> <p>Public Wastewater Objectives</p> <p>WS14 Support and facilitate social and economic growth in line with National, Regional and Local spatial planning policy and the Core Strategy in Chapter 2 of this plan through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure 1: Facilitate Growth: Wastewater Growth Programme: - Upgrade to the Portlaoise WWTP – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study. <p>Roll-out agreed priorities for IW's Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent Programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure 2: Network and Treatment Programmes: Roll-out improvements to network in Portlaoise WW Network as identified in the Portlaoise Drainage Area Plan (DAP). Complete DPAs for Portarlinton and Mountmellick Wastewater Networks and complete modeling for improvements to these networks. Measure 3: Irish Water Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme <p>Under IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent programmes agree priorities for delivering upgrades/replacements of WWTPs with insufficient headroom or plants that are non-compliant and damaging to the receiving environment so as to enhance and provide for growth in small towns and villages throughout the county.</p> <p>WS 15 Work in conjunction with Irish Water and with the DHPLG during the lifetime of the plan for the provision, extension and upgrading of waste water collection and treatment systems in the County that have existing facilities to serve existing populations and facilitate sustainable development of those towns, in accordance with the requirements of the Settlement Strategy and associated Core Strategy. In particular</p> <p>A. Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Compliance (EPA Licensed Plants)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete upgrade to Portlaoise – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study; Upgrades to Ballinakill; Ballyroan – Phase 3, 4 and 5; Castletown – Sludge and Storm Tank Programmes; Mountmellick – Ortho P and Ammonia Compliance <p>B. Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive Compliance: Complete upgrades to COA WWTPs (plants with <500pe design) under the National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP) on a priority basis as agreed with the Local Authority.</p> <p>WS 16 Promote use of wetland systems for treatment of waste-water in accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines "Integrated Constructed Wetlands –Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications" [2010].</p> <p>WS 17 Deliver Energy efficient Capital Programmes where appropriate and as follows</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Borris-in-Ossory – Install Fine Bubble Diffused Aeration <p>WS 18 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Wastewater Infrastructure and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>Rural Water and Wastewater Policy Objectives</p> <p>WS 19 Work in conjunction with the NFGWSs and with the support and funding of the DHPLG by way of the Rural Water Multi-Annual Programme 2019 to 2021 and subsequent programmes to - through various measures - improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for rural dwellers where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.</p> <p>WS 20 Support, monitor, advise and administer Group Water Schemes on behalf of the DHPLG in conjunction with the NFGWSs by implementation of Source Protection Works, Water Treatment Improvements, Amalgamation/Rationalisation of</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
		development.	<p>schemes and administering of Capital Replacement Costs</p> <p>WS 21 Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.</p> <p>WS 22 Embed water conservation at the heart of water policy through prioritising resource management, abstraction control, source protection, tackling leakage and encouraging behavioural change.</p> <p>WS 23 Promoting water conservation and water resource management reflected in investment for leak detection and repair, network improvements, cost effective metering and awareness campaigns among the GWS.</p> <p>WS 24 Ensuring that rural water services investment decisions are aligned with the broad strategic aims of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework and Improve the resilience of rural water supplies by supporting the implementation of the following measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Group Water Schemes and extensions b) Transition of Group Water and Group Sewerage schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Water Sector c) Community Connections (Water & Wastewater) Networks d) Innovation and Research. <p>WS 25 Ensure that the scheme relating to private wells is administered effectively and that improvements to sources and/or treatment works are carried out in accordance with IW and EPA standards</p> <p>WS 26 Work in conjunction with stakeholders through various measures to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for consumers of Small Private Supplies where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.</p> <p>WS 27 Support, monitor, advise and raise awareness among owner/operators of SPSs of their duties as water suppliers under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 as amended to ensure that a safe and dependable water supply is available to those persons who avail of the service (Customers/service users/children etc).</p> <p>WS 28 Collaborate with stakeholders including LA Water and Environmental Services staff, the HSE, LEO staff, Laois Chamber, representatives from the educational, tourist, childcare and hospitality sectors to raise awareness among their members of the duties of the Owners/Operators in relation to the provision of clean and wholesome drinking water</p> <p>WS 29 Maintain and update its register of SPSs and will focus their enforcement powers on those schemes that are non-compliant with the Drinking Water Regulations by carrying out Audits on these schemes and by further enforcement measures if improvements are not implemented. Where the option exists to connect to a public water supply, the water supplier will be encouraged to make an application to IW for a connection.</p> <p>Waste Recovery & Disposal Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 1 Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025.</p> <p>ES 2 Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and any subsequent Waste Management Plan adopted during the current development plan period.</p> <p>ES 3 Promote circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Waste Management Plan for the Region and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.</p> <p>Waste Management Enforcement Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 4 Implement the provisions of the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended and associated Waste Regulations.</p> <p>ES 5 Investigate and take appropriate legal action against those involved in unauthorised waste activities.</p> <p>ES 6 Implement the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended and the Laois Litter Management Plan 2018 -2020 and any subsequent revisions.</p> <p>ES 7 Implement, complete and report to the EPA on the annual agreed Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).</p> <p>ES 8 Encourage and support the segregation of food waste and the provision of separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the EU (Household Food Waste & Bio-Waste) Regulations 2015, the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>ES 9 Implement the provisions of the Laois Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household & Commercial) Waste Bye-Laws 2018 and to take enforcement action where necessary to protect the environment and local amenities.</p> <p>ES 10 Process and make recommendations of all Waste Facility Permit (WFP) and Certificate of Registration (COR) Applications under the relevant Regulations. To monitor and inspect all authorised facilities with WFPs & CORs.</p> <p>ES 11 Require Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>ES 12 Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects.</p> <p>ES 13 Encourage best environmental practice in all agricultural, industry, business and local authority activities.</p> <p>Civic Amenity Facilities & Bring Bank Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 14 Provide for, improve and maintain the network of bring infrastructure (e.g. civic amenity facilities, bring banks) in the County to facilitate the recycling and recovery of hazardous and non-hazardous municipal wastes.</p> <p>ES 15 Develop a 10-year roadmap for the strategic planning and development of the Kyletalesha Transfer Station and Civic Amenity Site.</p> <p>ES 16 Develop the Bring Bank Regional Contract to improve the quality of service and frequency of collection.</p> <p>RL 2 Facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</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>BH P1: Ensure heritage assets that are the focus for tourism development are appropriately managed and their special interest conserved from potential adverse effects from visitors or development in general and that best practice standards in relation for the environmental management of tourism enterprises are adhered to, including in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive;</p> <p>BH P2: Support and promote, with the co-operation of landowners, public access to heritage sites and features at appropriate locations whilst ensuring heritage related development does not result in negative impacts on the fabric or setting of Laois's heritage assets;</p> <p>BH P3: Support and promote, with the co-operation of key stakeholders, the development of the Fort of Maryborough in Portlaoise and ensure that any development will not result in negative impacts on the fabric or setting of the site;</p> <p>BH P4: Support the implementation of Ireland's Ancient East by facilitating the provision of visitor information in line with the policies and objectives with respect to heritage sites, and integrating the objectives of Ireland's Ancient East with transport programmes in the County;</p> <p>BH P5: Encourage and support the provision of foreign language interpretation interventions in order to ensure the appropriate interpretation and appreciation of the county's heritage asset.</p> <p>BH 01: Protect, conserve and enhance the built environment, through promoting awareness, utilising relevant heritage legislation and promoting good quality urban design;</p> <p>BH 02: Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of Portlaoise, including the Architectural Conservation Area, all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Recorded Monuments and Places and the Zone of Archaeological Significance in accordance with best conservation practice;</p> <p>BH 03: Positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change the use of protected structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to consultation with suitably qualified Conservation Architects and / or other relevant experts, suitable design, materials and construction methods;</p> <p>BH 04: Ensure all development works on or at the sites of protected structures, including any site works necessary, shall be carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures / site that render it worthy of protection;</p> <p>BH 05: Support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc.) previously existed;</p> <p>BH 06: Strongly resist the demolition of protected structures, unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist;</p>	<p>Policy Objectives for Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>AH 1 Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the integrity and character of archaeological heritage of the county which avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, settings, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest and secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.</p> <p>AH 2 Support the preservation or conservation of historically significant street patterns, building lines and plot widths in its towns and villages as well as the preservation of features such as town walls, historic revetments, and public realm features such as granite kerbing, historic drinking fountains, cobbles, vent pipes whether or not they benefit from protection in their own right.</p> <p>AH 3 Protect the intrinsic value, character, integrity and settings of monuments and places in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and any forthcoming statutory register and protect Zones of Archaeological Potential against inappropriate development.</p> <p>AH 4 In areas of archaeological potential, where groundworks are proposed, ensure that all works are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas. The Council favours the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains, where areas of archaeological potential are located in town centres or villages, preservation of archaeological remains by record will be considered.</p> <p>AH 5 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access and signage to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State.</p> <p>AH 6 Work closely with the relevant State bodies to deliver the conservation objectives of the Rock of Dunamase and redevelopment of Fort Protector to secure funding for the preservation and development of these culturally important sites.</p> <p>AH 7 Require visual impact statements for developments within the area around the Rock of Dunamase in order to assess the potential impacts of development in the area.</p> <p>AH 8 Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities, Bord Failte and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Laois .</p> <p>AH 9 Maximise the potential of Dunrally Viking Fort, as a heritage/cultural and tourism site.</p> <p>AH 10 Protect where appropriate industrial heritage structures or elements of significance identified in the Laois Industrial Archaeology Survey by adding them to the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of the Development Plan.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Protected Structures</p> <p>PS 1 Consult with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in considering planning applications that may affect Protected Structures or Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). The Council will have regard to comments made by the Department and relevant guidelines such as the Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and other pertinent guidelines regarding energy ratings for Protected Structures.</p> <p>PS 2 Protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2004 and ensure the effective promotion of the Architectural Heritage provisions of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and therefore the protection of Laois's built heritage, including Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Protected Structures.</p> <p>PS 3 Any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure must be prepared by suitably qualified persons and Accompanied by appropriate documentation as outlined in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DAHG, 2011] to enable a proper assessment of the proposed works and their impact on the structure or area and be carried out to best practice conservation standards. Its setting will be considered against the following criteria, and whether it is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitively sited and designed; Compatible with the special character;

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		<p>BH 07: Consider the change of use of protected structures, provided that it can be shown that the structure, character, appearance and setting will not be adversely affected;</p> <p>BH 08: Ensure the protection within Architectural Conservation Areas, of all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects of the environment which form an essential part of their character, as set out in their character appraisals;</p> <p>BH 09: Ensure the design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of an existing building, should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole;</p> <p>BH 010: Promote schemes for the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of Architectural Conservation Areas;</p> <p>BH 011: No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value;</p> <p>BH 012: Ensure archaeological assessment is carried out as required and promote 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings in developments that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features;</p> <p>BH 013: Protect previously unknown archaeological sites and features, including underwater sites, where they are discovered during development works;</p> <p>BH 014: Facilitate public access to National Monuments in State or Local Authority care;</p>	<p>c) Views of principal elevations of the protected structures are not obscured or negatively impacted;</p> <p>d) Of a premium quality of design and appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout, and materials so that the integrity of the structure and its curtilage is preserved and enhanced. Where appropriate, the Protected Structure status is used as a stimulus to the imaginative and considered design of new elements.</p> <p>PS 4 Where the restoration or refurbishment of a Protected Structure or a key Architectural Conservation Area building that is in poor or fair condition is proposed and is for a purpose compatible with the character of the building, the relaxation of development management standards on unit sizes, amenity space or parking will be considered by the Council.</p> <p>PS 5 Refuse planning permission for the demolition of any protected structure unless the Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>PS 6 Favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on its intrinsic character. In certain cases, the Planning Authority may relax site zoning restrictions / development standards in order to secure the preservation and restoration of the structure.</p> <p>PS 7 Review and update the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis and to make additions and deletions as appropriate</p> <p>PS 8 Integrate climate-change adaptation measures into all heritage works and maintenance plans by demonstrating green ways of working in historic buildings, ensuring that the carbon footprint of adaptation measures is considered</p> <p>PS 9 Promote the repair and reuse of existing building stock, including heritage buildings, as a means of avoiding unnecessary carbon outlays with new build</p> <p>PS 10 Support proposals to improve the thermal performance of historic buildings with renewable energy technologies. Such proposals shall be sensitive to traditional methods of construction to ensure that the proposed works are appropriate and do not cause damage to the structure, require the removal of historic fabric such as original windows, doors and floors, or have a detrimental visual impact.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for ACA</p> <p>ACA 1 Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions within an ACA are sited and designed appropriately, and are not detrimental to the character of the structure or to its setting or the general character of the ACA and are in keeping with any Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character Guidance Documents prepared for the relevant ACA.</p> <p>ACA 2 Demolition of buildings or substantial parts of structures in cases where those structures make a positive contribution to the special character of the ACA will not be acceptable in principle. Only in exceptional circumstances, where the redevelopment or replacement structures would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition, would demolition of this nature be considered.</p> <p>ACA 3 Investigate the designation of further ACAs at appropriate locations throughout and prepare a character statement appraisal and area specific policy for each ACA to include Stradbally, Mountmellick Mountrath and Portarlinton, (the latter in collaboration within Offaly County Council).</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Vernacular Structures</p> <p>VS 1 Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture which may not be protected to the promote where feasible the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and use of the vernacular built heritage, including structures that contribute to landscape and streetscape character and discourage the demolition of these structures;</p> <p>VS 2 Resist the demolition of vernacular architecture, in particular thatched cottages and farmhouses and to encourage their sensitive reuse having regard to the intrinsic character of the structure.</p> <p>VS 3 Ensure that both new build, and extensions to vernacular buildings are of an appropriate design and do not detract from the buildings character.</p> <p>VS 4 Seek the repair and retention of traditional timber and/or rendered shop fronts and pub fronts, including those that may not be protected structures.</p> <p>VS 5 Develop and publish guidelines on the conservation and appropriate reuse of Local Authority Cottages and similar vernacular structures.</p> <p>VS 6 Have regard, where appropriate, to guidance in the DAHG Guidelines and conservation best practice in assessing proposed interventions and planning applications relating to vernacular structures, traditional farmhouses, their curtilage, out buildings and settings.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Historic Gardens, Country Houses and Demesnes</p> <p>CH 1 Ensure that new development will not adversely affect the site, setting or views to and from historic gardens and designed landscapes.</p> <p>CH 2 Require that any proposals for new development in an historic garden or demesne include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, and an assessment of significant trees or groups of trees, as appropriate.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>CH 3 Build on the information compiled as part of the National Survey of Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes, and to carry out a survey to assess the intactness of these assets, including developing a strategy for their conservation, restoration and development.</p> <p>CH 4 Assess the demesnes and historic designed landscapes within Laois and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural, while allowing for appropriate re-use</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>AH 1 Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the integrity and character of archaeological heritage of the county which avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, settings, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest and secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.</p> <p>AH 2 Support the preservation or conservation of historically significant street patterns, building lines and plot widths in its towns and villages as well as the preservation of features such as town walls, historic revetments, and public realm features such as granite kerbing, historic drinking fountains, cobbles, vent pipes whether or not they benefit from protection in their own right.</p> <p>AH 3 Protect the intrinsic value, character, integrity and settings of monuments and places in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and any forthcoming statutory register and protect Zones of Archaeological Potential against inappropriate development.</p> <p>AH 4 In areas of archaeological potential, where groundworks are proposed, ensure that all works are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas. The Council favours the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains, where areas of archaeological potential are located in town centres or villages, preservation of archaeological remains by record will be considered.</p> <p>AH 5 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access and signage to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State.</p> <p>AH 6 Work closely with the relevant State bodies to deliver the conservation objectives of the Rock of Dunamase and redevelopment of Fort Protector to secure funding for the preservation and development of these culturally important sites.</p> <p>AH 7 Require visual impact statements for developments within the area around the Rock of Dunamase in order to assess the potential impacts of development in the area.</p> <p>AH 8 Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities, Bord Failte and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Laois .</p> <p>AH 9 Maximise the potential of Dunrally Viking Fort, as a heritage/cultural and tourism site.</p> <p>AH 10 Protect where appropriate industrial heritage structures or elements of significance identified in the Laois Industrial Archaeology Survey by adding them to the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of the Development Plan.</p>
<p>Landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Landscape Character Areas</p> <p>LCA 1 Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity, as indicated in Table 11.6 of the Plan, is an important factor in determining development uses In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations</p> <p>LCA 2 Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape and conserve valuable habitat including any European and National Designations</p> <p>LCA 3 Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development</p> <p>LCA 4 Seek to minimise the individual and cumulative adverse visual impacts that local concentrations of one-off housing, outside of settlements, may have on Hills and Upland, River Corridor and Lakes and Mountain landscape character areas or High Sensitivity areas. In this regard, in locations where the Council considers that there is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for housing developments where a need for the dwelling has been demonstrated in accordance with the criteria contained in the Rural Housing Policy contained in Chapter 4</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Hills and Uplands Areas and Mountain Areas</p> <p>LCA 5 Ensure that development will not have a disproportionate visual impact (due to excessive bulk, scale or inappropriate siting) and will not significantly interfere with or detract from scenic upland vistas, when viewed from areas nearby, scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements</p> <p>LCA 6 Ensure that developments on steep slopes (i.e. >10%) will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from relevant scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements</p>

SEA Statement for the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>LCA 7 Facilitate, where appropriate, developments that have a functional and locational requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoirs, telecommunication masts or wind energy structures) where residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated</p> <p>LCA 8 Maintain the visual integrity of areas which have retained a largely undisturbed upland character and Respect the remote character and existing low-density development in these areas.</p> <p>LCA 9 Have regard to the potential for screening vegetation when evaluating proposals for development within the uplands</p> <p>LCA 10 Actively propose the designation of the Slieve Blooms as a Special Amenity Area and seek an Order to that effect.</p> <p>LCA 11 Protect the positive contribution that views across adjacent lowland areas and landmarks within the landscape make to the overall landscape character.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Lowland Agricultural Areas</p> <p>LCA 12 Recognise that this lowland landscape character area includes areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection, particularly the 18th and 19th century estate landscapes and associated parkland & woodland to develop them as a tourism resource.</p> <p>LCA 13 Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation</p> <p>LCA 14 Recognise that the lowlands are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social wellbeing of the county</p> <p>LCA 15 Promote good agricultural practices to create a sustainable rural economy and support incentives for smaller rural/family farms to manage their land to avoid loss of hedgerows and field patterns.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for River Corridors and Lakes Areas</p> <p>LCA 16 Recognise the importance of river corridors for scenic value, ecology, history, culture and for recreational purposes such as walking, cycling and various on-water activities;</p> <p>LCA 17 Maintain the rivers throughout the county whilst ensuring that all works are carried out subject to appropriate environmental assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, site proposed to be designated and any additional sites that may be designated during the period of this Plan</p> <p>LCA 18 Preserve riverside historic features and their landscape settings and Conserve valuable habitats focused on and around river corridors and estuaries including European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 19 Recognise the potential constraints on development created by river flood plains and the value of these flood plains as increasingly rare habitats</p> <p>LCA 20 Avoid unsustainable exploitation of watercourses, e.g. for abstraction and dilution of effluent, to the point that these water courses lose their ecological and amenity value</p> <p>LCA 21 Collaborate with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate public access to waterway corridors and maintain and enhance the natural character of rivers, lakes and canals by reserving land to facilitate walking, cycling and other non-noise generating recreational activities</p> <p>LCA 22 Explore the establishment of the Barrow/Nore Valley and the Grand Canal as Areas of Special Amenity, as per section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Peatland Areas</p> <p>LCA 23 Recognise the importance of peatlands for ecology, history, culture and for alternative energy production</p> <p>LCA 24 Conserve valuable habitats including any European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 25 Support the identification of projects that have the potential to achieve commercial value such as industrial developments, renewable energy, tourism developments etc. while at the same time promoting high environmental standards and supporting Biodiversity objectives</p> <p>LCA 26 Support the restoration of peatlands on suitable sites</p> <p>LCA 27 Recognise that intact boglands are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons and recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially robust to absorb a variety of appropriate developments</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Urban Fringe Areas</p> <p>LCA 28 Diversify the urban fringe by developing mixed-use amenity areas, which will create a landscape buffer creating a transition between urban and rural areas</p> <p>LCA 29 Define the urban fringe with planting of native species and mixed woodland to tie into existing rural landscape</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Rolling Hill Areas</p> <p>LCA 30 Maintain the visual integrity of rolling hill areas which have retained an upland character</p> <p>LCA 31 Continue to facilitate appropriate development, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognising the need for sustainable settlement patterns</p>

SEA Statement for the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Laois County Development Plan measures, including:
			<p>and economic activity within the county</p> <p>LCA 32 Continue to permit development that can utilise existing infrastructure, whilst taking account of local absorption opportunities provided by the landscape, landform and prevailing vegetation</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Views and Prospects</p> <p>SV 1 Protect views from designated scenic routes indicated in Table 11.7 and Map 11.8 (Scenic Views and Prospects in County Laois) of the Plan, by avoiding any development that could disrupt the vistas or disproportionately impact on the landscape character of the area, thereby affecting the scenic and amenity value of the views.</p> <p>SV 2 Review and update all Scenic Routes and Views in the county during the lifetime of the Plan.</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 Laois 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 authorities⁴ 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. No submissions from environmental authorities were received.

3.3 Submissions on the Draft Plan, Environmental Report and associated documents

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

Updates to environmental related provisions integrated into the Draft Plan on foot of submissions and referred to by the SEA Environmental Report/SEA Statement include:

- IM. P1: Implement in conjunction with key stakeholders, the policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan and to review the success or otherwise of the implementation of policies and objectives with reference to Section 10.3 of the Development Plan

⁴ The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Wicklow County Council; Wexford County Council; Kilkenny County Council; Tipperary County Council; Offaly County Council; and Kildare County Council.

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022), Section 6.5 of Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013) and Chapter 14 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- NH P9: Protect Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) from developments that would adversely affect their special interests.
 - NH P10: Promote a no net loss of biodiversity approach through strategies, planning, mitigation measures, appropriate offsetting and/or investment in Blue-Green infrastructure.
 - NH 016: Make a Tree Preservation Order to protect a significant tree group, which is important as a rookery and roost for rooks and jackdaws, at the Downs Portlaoise and Portlaoise Town Park.
 - NH 017: Support local community groups in the development of community gardens and allotments, subject to residential amenity and compliance with all planning and environmental considerations.
 - NH 018: Require new developments to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (for example, through provision of swift boxes or bricks, bat roost boxes, green roofs, etc.) and improve the ecological coherence of wider green infrastructure.
 - NH 019: Protect existing swift roosts as identified in the County Swift Survey and as they relate to Portlaoise and ensure existing nest sites are not lost through inappropriate renovation or destruction. In dealing with applications for new developments, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:
 - Inclusion of swift nesting opportunities in new buildings through use of swift brick or swift nest boxes where appropriate.
 - NH 020: Work with relevant stakeholders such as the Office of Public Works (OPW) and local stakeholders to develop a Landscape Conservation Assessment in relation to the Heath and its attributes during the plan period.
 - CMO 20: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to increase awareness of the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town and encourage greater participation of the wider community.
 - CMO 21: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to enhance public realm and conserve and enhance biodiversity.
 - CMO 22: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to facilitate the modal shift to active travel and sustainable mobility in Portlaoise.
 - CMO 23: Support the actions of the Laois Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 to identify decarbonisation pathways for Portlaoise to achieve 2030 targets and promote principles of circular economy.
 - CMO 24: Encourage and support a transition to renewable energy sources in Portlaoise, subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.”
 - CMO 25: Support and promote the use of renewable energy technologies and supporting infrastructure at appropriate scales in residential, commercial and community developments and support the principle of on-site energy generation for self-consumption.
 - CMO 26: Support the Climate Action Team in the undertaking of an investigation of the feasibility of Shared or District Heating in Portlaoise.
 - CMO 27: Support, in conjunction with key stakeholders, the implementation of the Laois County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 and facilitate its role as a driver in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation in Portlaoise,

- and the translation of national climate policy to local and community levels in the town.
- CMO 28: Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within Portlaoise, in line with the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan.
 - CMO 29: Support the sustainable management of waste and enable a significant reduction in the production of waste in Portlaoise, in line with the principles of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (DECC, 2021).
 - CMO 30: Promote circular economy principles and the incorporation of sustainable waste management measures within developments, in line with the "Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects" guidance.
 - CMO 31: Promote high-quality, secure, and reliable digital connectivity in Portlaoise in line with the objectives of:
 - (i) The National Broadband Plan,
 - (ii) Dimension 2 of the 'Harnessing Digital – the Digital Ireland Framework' which supports the rollout of 5G, and
 - (iii) National Strategic Objective 6 of The National Development Plan 2021-2023
 - KI P9: encourage the integration of 'soft' measures including SuDs, green space, Green Infrastructure and permeable surfaces in the design of drainage and sustainable water management of existing and future developments.
 - KI P10: require the use of SuDs in public and private developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.
 - KI P11: enhance biodiversity and amenity and ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats, including where flood risk management measures are planned.
 - KI P12: encourage the use of Green Roofs where expansive roofs are proposed such as industrial, apartment, civic, commercial, leisure and educational buildings, and non-porous surfacing to create safe places.

For further information on how submissions were considered, refer to the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Draft Plan and associated documents and the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Proposed Material Alterations and associated documentation – both available on the website of Laois County Council.

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Alterations and Further Modifications. The mitigation integrated into the final, adopted Plan includes that identified at Table 2.1 of this report.

3.4 SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report

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

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

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

Section 4 Summary of Alternatives considered

4.1 Introduction

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

4.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by the existing, already in force, Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan. The alternatives available for the Plan are significantly limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the County Plan. These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan including on topics such as land use zoning.

4.3 Alternatives Already Considered

The preparation of the Laois County Development Plan and associated SEA process already considered various different types of alternatives, including those relating to population allocations, land use zoning and densities. The selected alternatives for the County Development Plan sets requirements for lower tier planning in the County and have been integrated into the Local Area Plan, as appropriate.

4.4 Local Transport Plan Alternatives

- **Local Transport Plan Alternative 1:** Inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes.
- **Local Transport Plan Alternative 2:** Do not inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plan.

Informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Area Based Transport Assessment Alternative 1**) would provide a more coordinated and more orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, more likely. This approach would be more likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts on environmental components including ecology and water would need to be adequately mitigated at project level.

Not informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Area Based Transport Assessment Alternative 2**) would provide a less coordinated and less orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, less likely. This approach would be less likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use.

Potentially adverse impacts arising from more coherently planned transport developments on environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both LAP and project level.

Selected Local Transport Plan Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

4.5 Transport Infrastructure Alternatives

In integrating provisions relating to the provision of transport infrastructure into the Plan, the following alternatives were considered:

- **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1:** Provide new transport infrastructure with all additional environmental mitigation left to be defined until project level.
- **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2:** Provide new transport infrastructure, subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts such as disturbance from lighting – includes minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.

Under **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1**, new transport infrastructure would be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This would include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques. By focusing on mitigation at both plan and project levels, Alternative 1 would offer the most certainty for environmental protection and management and would be more likely to result in important individual projects (relating to sustainable mobility and emissions/energy objectives) receiving permission.

Under **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2**, all additional environmental mitigation would be left to be defined in the future, at project level. This would offer the least certainty for environmental protection and management and would be more likely to result in important individual projects (relating to sustainable mobility and emissions objectives) not been given permission.

Selected Transport Infrastructure Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

4.6 Ecosystem Services Approach Alternatives

The importance of fulfilling natural capital⁵ and ecosystem⁶ service obligations has increasingly emerged in recent years. An Ecosystems Services Approach would provide a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. An Ecosystems Services Approach would include the integration of ecological considerations at a local level across the Plan area.

- **Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1:** A Plan that follows an Ecosystems Services Approach to a greater degree.
- **Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2:** A Plan that that does not follow, or follows to a lesser degree, an Ecosystems Services Approach.

Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1 would integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Principles that would be integrated throughout the Plan, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, would include:

- Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function;

⁵ Renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals).

⁶ Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing.

- Taking into account of the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation or recreation, culture and quality of life; and
- Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them.

This would mean that there would be:

- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues, such as the management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, pollination, flood risk, water bodies and river basins and natural resources supporting energy production and recreation; and
- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2 would not integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

As has been the case over previous plan periods, many natural capital and ecosystem service issues would be integrated into individual Plan Policy Objectives and into decision making at lower tiers of plan preparation and development management. However, this approach would be less coordinated and comprehensive than would be the case under an Ecosystems Services Approach.

This would mean that there would be:

- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues; and
- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

Selected Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

4.7 Built Heritage Alternatives

- **Built Heritage Alternative 1:** A Plan that adds detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage.
- **Built Heritage Alternative 2:** A Plan that does not add detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plan.

A Plan that adds detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage (**Built Heritage Alternative 1**) would further contribute the protection of existing heritage that is already contributed towards by the existing planning framework. By integrating heritage considerations into the Plan, Alternative 1 would be most likely to ensure that new development respects the historic grain of the built environment and archaeology that currently exists.

A Plan that does not add detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plan (**Built Heritage Alternative 2**) would not further contribute the protection of existing heritage that is already contributed towards by the existing planning framework. By not integrating heritage considerations into the Plan, Alternative 2 would be least likely to ensure that new development respects the historic grain of the built environment and archaeology that currently exists.

Selected Built Heritage Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

4.8 Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternatives

Land use zoning objectives, which provide for a wide range of potential uses, for the Plan area are set out in the Laois County Development Plan. Alternatives under this heading relate to Opportunity Sites across the Plan area.

- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1:** Do not include specific guidance for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites; development would be market-led and would seek to comply with relevant planning provisions in the absence of additional guidance.
- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 2:** Include specific guidance for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites, but which allow for flexibility in areas such as final design, layout and uses.
- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3:** Include Opportunity Sites that would outline criteria (which would not allow for flexibility in areas such as design, layout and uses) for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites.

A Local Area Plan for Portlaoise would help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the County and beyond and to focus on directing compact, sustainable development within and adjacent to the existing built-up footprint of Portlaoise. Development of areas within and adjacent to the existing built-up footprint of Portlaoise, which is generally more robust, better serviced and better connected than other lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, would contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development would be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable Portlaoise to become a more desirable place to live – so it can sustainably accommodate new residents and maintain and improve services to existing and future communities.

Not including specific guidance for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites (**Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1**) would reduce the likelihood of sustainable development. Development would be market-led and would seek to comply with relevant planning provisions in the absence of additional guidance. The sustainable development of the Plan area would be less likely than under Alternative 2.

By including specific guidance for Opportunity Sites while, at the same time, allowing for flexibility in areas such as final design, layout and uses, for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites, **Alternative 2** would increase the likelihood of sustainable development.

Including Opportunity Sites that would outline criteria (which would not allow for flexibility in areas such as design, layout and uses) for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites (**Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3**) would increase the potential to hinder compliance with rigid criteria in the longer term, in a context of evolving market needs and planning requirements.

Selected Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 2

4.9 Reasons for choosing the Plan in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

Selected alternatives for the Plan from each of the types of alternatives that emerged from the planning/SEA process are indicated above.

These alternatives have been adopted by the Members having regard to both:

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

Section 5 Monitoring Measures

5.1 Introduction

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

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

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

5.2 Indicators and Targets

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

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

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

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

5.3 Sources

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

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

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

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁷ 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.

⁷ The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

5.4 Reporting

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

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

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

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

Table 5.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)⁸ DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)⁹ Consultations with the NPWS¹⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of preparation of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water quality in water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems

⁸ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

⁹ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

¹⁰ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
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 County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" 	<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 County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" All citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps (Also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives Consultations with DECC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DECC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Laois County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH AA/Screening for AA for each application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems

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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 	<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 River Basin Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance ¹¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission Consultations with the Uisce Éireann DHLGH in conjunction with Local Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Laois County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategies 2019-2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.

¹¹ Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Air	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous National Travel Survey levels 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 previous 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above
Climatic Factors	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of Laois County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategies 2019-2024 EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting Climate Action Regional Office Consultations with DECC (at monitoring evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure, in compliance with the provisions of the Plan 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Laois County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategies 2019-2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Laois County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategies 2019-2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
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 	<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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> Consultation with DHLGH. 	
Landscape	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the 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 	<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