



**Laois County Council**  
**Comhairle Chontae Laoise**

**MOUNTMELICK LOCAL AREA PLAN**

**2018 – 2024**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

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## 1 Purpose of the Non Technical Summary

This is the Non Technical Summary of the environmental report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Local Area Plan (LAP) prepared for Mountmellick for the period 2018-2024. The purpose of the SEA is to formally and systematically assess the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme, in this instance the above LAP.

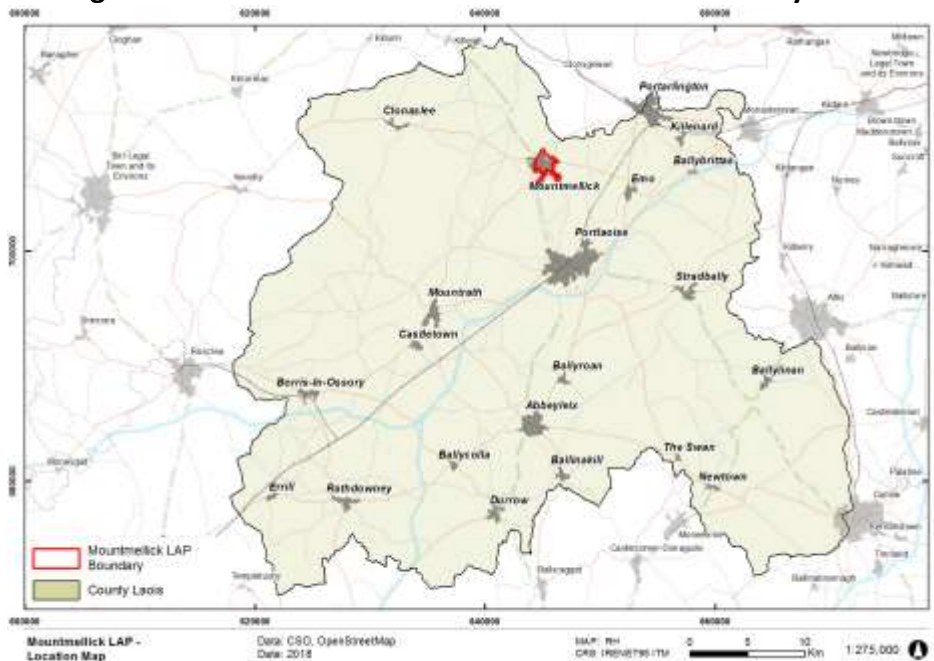
The Environmental Report identifies the significant environmental effects of the plan on the environment and where significant effects are identified, recommends appropriate measures to avoid or reduce such effects. As the plan is being prepared the SEA identifies and influences proposals, particularly through avoiding areas of greatest environmental sensitivity. This Environmental Report forms part of the SEA process, documents the SEA process and is the key consultation document in the SEA process as it facilitates interested parties to comment on the environmental issues associated with the plan itself. This Environmental Report has been prepared under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I 436 of 2004).

**This is the final Non Technical Summary of the SEA ER of the adopted Mountmellick Local Area Plan 2018-2024, please see Annex C of the main SEA ER for SEA comments on material alterations to the LAP as well as the SEA Screening of same.**

### 1.1 Background and Context

The LAP must be consistent with the objectives, Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP). The Settlement Hierarchy of the Core Strategy from the CDP recognises Mountmellick as a “*Service Town*”. Figure 1 below shows the outline of the Mountmellick LAP within the wider context of Laois County.

**Figure 1: Location of Mountmellick Town within County Laois**



## 1.2 Plan Structure and Summary

The LAP was prepared and went on public display in accordance with the requirements of Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The main contents of the LAP relate to the policy context as well as landuse zonings and policies and objectives around the following themes:

- Development vision and strategy
- Core Strategy
- Economic Development
- Town Centre Revitalisation including Opportunity Sites
- Key Infrastructure
- Transport and Movement
- Housing
- Community, Services and Culture
- Built heritage
- Natural Heritage, and
- Flood Management.

The LAP is supported by a number of environmental reports including:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report
- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
- Natura Impact Report
- A strategic flood risk assessment has also informed the plan preparation process.

## 2 Contents of SEA Environmental Report

### 2.1 Approach to the SEA

The SEA has been carried out alongside the LAP preparation. Table 1 below sets out the stages in the SEA process and how these relate to the plan preparation so far.

**Table 1: Stages in the SEA and Plan preparation process**

Stage of SEA	Plan
<b>Stage 1: Screening</b>	Screening is first stage of SEA to determine if the plan requires full SEA. As the projected population for Mountmellick exceeds the 5,000 person threshold, the plan did not require Screening and commenced at Stage 2 - Scoping.
<b>Stage 2: Scoping</b>	The purpose of this stage is to work out what environmental topics and issues should be included in the SEA. The Scoping report was issued to statutory bodies including the EPA and National Parks and Wildlife Service to discuss the potential environmental issues, baseline information, and approach to the SEA.  Pre-draft consultation that was held in relation to the LAP also raised a number of environmental issues and these helped to inform the Scope of the SEA also.
<b>Stage 3: Environmental Report-Current Stage</b>	The Environmental Report tells the story of the LAP and how environmental considerations have been addressed and included during the plan preparation process.  The screening for appropriate assessment is also discussed in the Environmental Report.  This report is the main consultation document of the SEA process and hence is on display alongside the plan and supporting reports.  Following the public display period changes to the plan were made and the SEA also assessed material alterations these and the Environmental Report updated.
<b>Stage 4: SEA Statement</b>	This stage is the final output of the SEA process and tells the story of the SEA process. It was prepared when the plan was finalised and adopted.

### 2.2 Relationship to other relevant plans and programmes

Under the SEA Directive, the relationship between the plan and other relevant plans and programmes must be taken into account. A review of the relevant plans and programmes can be found in Appendix B of the SEA ER and a list of same is presented in Chapter 3 of the SEA ER.

The preparation of the plan must be considered within the context of a hierarchy of policies, plans and strategies which include international, national, regional and local level policy documents. These documents set the policy framework within which the plan will operate.

The LAP must be considered within the context of a hierarchy of policies, plans and strategies which include international, national, regional and local level policy documents. These documents set the policy framework within which the plan will operate. The Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 (LCDP 2017-2023) operates as the primary land use framework for the County. The LAP has been prepared having regard to the policies and objectives outlined within the above LCDP 2017-2023. The key environmental protective objectives and policies of the LAP are consistent with the Laois CDP 2017-2023.

### 3 Current Environmental Baseline

Baseline data was gathered for all parameters. Site visits were undertaken by the forward planners and SEA consultant in January 2018. Other data was gathered from the SEA ER of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023, Irish Water, the EPA, Met Eireann and other sources as appropriate.

#### 3.1 Baseline overview

##### Population and Human Health

County Laois has experienced significant population growth in the past decade, growing by 26.3% over the ten year period between 2006 and 2016. In the same ten year period, Mountmellick experienced a population growth rate of 17.4%. However, the proportion of the county's population living within Mountmellick has marginally decreased over this period, falling from 6.1% in 2006 to 4.1% in 2016.

Mountmellick benefits from a relatively young population, with 50% of the population below 35 years of age, compared to 47.1% elsewhere in the State. Mountmellick has a lower proportion of middle-aged and older residents, with just 21% of the population aged 55 or older, compared to 24% elsewhere in the State. Mountmellick also benefits from ethnic diversity with 7% of its population being non-Irish. Of particular note, is that almost 5% of the population is made up of EU nationals excluding the UK.

##### Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Much of the LAP lands can be classified as Built Land and Artificial Surfaces. In turn, this makes the areas of open space and water courses potentially important as green corridors and stepping stones for biodiversity. The Owenass River flows through the town which is a tributary of and forms part of the River Barrow Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002162). The Mountmellick SAC is located approximately 3km east of the settlement.

## **Water resources including surface water management and flood risk**

Water resources and their quality have a clear interaction and impacts with other environmental parameters, therefore its protection and enhancement is of particular importance and whilst the River Owenass is the principal river that runs through the town centre, the River Barrow drains the northern plan area, and the River Triogue flows southwards towards Portlaoise Town. The latest information from the catchments.ie website shows the overall WFD status of the three surface waters as Moderate (Q value 3-4) as they flow through the plan area.

Following the severe and unprecedented flooding in November 2017 Laois County Council has agreed in conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW) the urgent commencement of detailed design and engineering specifications for flood defences in Mountmellick. The detailed design will include a review of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management mapping (CFRAM) taking into account the recorded flood depths on 22nd November 2017 and the identification of any additional flood defences necessary. A Project Office will be established locally to manage the design, implementation and construction of a flood relief scheme on behalf of an in partnership with the OPW during the lifetime of this plan. The Council is considering further short term actions including an improved flood/rainfall community alert system, further river and channel clearance works and the provision on a pilot basis, of defence equipment for flood prone and flood affected domestic properties. A programme of river channel clearance in the Blackwater and Owenass catchments has taken place in recent months.

## **Soil and Geology**

Mountmellick is located within broad bedrock of Lower Carboniferous Limestones. Whilst much of the LAP lands are classified as urban according to the Teagasc soil map, reflecting the built up character of much of the LAP, the surrounding soils are largely alluvial soils associated with the Rivers Barrow, Owenass and Triogue. Surrounding soils are identified as the Mylerstown subseries of soils, defined by fine loamy drift with limestones and an extent of peat soils south of the plan area.

## **Climate Change and Energy**

Agriculture is the largest contributor to overall emissions, however in terms the LAP – energy and transport –the next largest contributors are the most relevant. Promoting a modal shift in transport patterns, along with energy efficiency are key measures to assist in reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Adapting to extreme weather events including flooding as outlined above, forms a key part of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

## **Material Assets**

Material assets can be explained as the critical infrastructure essential for the functioning of society such as: electricity generation and distribution, water supply, wastewater treatment and transportation.

Mountmellick is located on the N80 National Secondary Route in close proximity to Portlaoise, Tullamore and the Greater Dublin Area. Mountmellick has strategic road links to the entire country via the M7 and M8 motorways in close proximity at the Togher Interchange, Portlaoise, the N80 National Secondary Road and a network of regional (including the R423 Mountrath to Mountmellick and R422 Clonaslee to Emo) and local roads. The N80 is designated a National Transport Corridor in the National Spatial Strategy 2002. Local bus routes provide services in the town and a service linking Mountmellick to Portlaoise and Tullamore.

Currently, within the settlement of Mountmellick 1,634 households are connected to the public mains water supply and 1,565 households are connected to the public sewer system. The Mountmellick Wastewater Treatment Plant has the capacity to cater for a population equivalent of 3,000.

Irish Water has recently (February 2018) commenced upgrading the Wastewater Treatment Plant at Mountmellick which discharges treated wastewater to the Owenass River.

The Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 for the Eastern-Midlands Region encompasses the local authorities: Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Kildare, Louth, Laois, Longford, Meath, Offaly, Westmeath and Wicklow. The regional plan provides the framework for waste management for the next six years and sets out a range of policies and actions in order to meet the specified mandatory and performance targets.

Mountmellick is served by a high capacity electricity system. Within the settlement 1,130 households have broadband internet services.

## **Built Heritage**

Only three sites are listed on the Sites and Monuments Record within the LAP, these are a church, graveyard and the historic town.

In addition to the historic core, numerous additional structures worthy of preservation are located within the LAP boundary. Such buildings or structures are noted within the RPS. Protected Structures are defined as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. There are approximately 74 no. Protected Structures within the development boundary of Mountmellick.



## Landscape

Mountmellick is located at the point where an esker running north for Portlaoise meets the Owenass River. This was a natural route through the bogs and woodlands of north Laois. The river was a traditional political divide since Medieval times.


Mountmellick is located in the heart of an agricultural landscape and serves a large agricultural hinterland. The town retains, to a degree, a relationship to the surrounding landscape. The River Owenass meanders along a south to north trajectory through the town and is another important natural feature lending particular identity to the town. A riverside walk runs along the river bank. Trees are intermittently scattered through the town. The town centre has as its primary focus an elegant Georgian Square called O’Connell Square. Heavy town centre traffic results in pedestrian /vehicular conflict. The town lacks comfortable and safe facilities for cyclists. Poor quality interventions have degraded the town centre. The Character Appraisal for the proposed Architectural Conservation Area refers to clutter, to a myriad of street furniture types, and paving materials and to over-prominent use of traffic marking and pedestrian barriers.




## 4 Strategic Environmental Objectives and Consideration Of Alternatives

### 4.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Objectives are presented in this chapter and are developed into a monitoring programme in the form of targets and indicators which are presented in more detail in Chapter Nine Monitoring Programme. To facilitate consistency with the primary landuse plan for the Counties and reflect data gathering requirements, these SEOs reflect where possible the SEOs developed for the SEA of the Laois CDP 2017-2023. Where necessary the SEOs are adapted to reflect particular environmental considerations for this Mountmellick LAP. Where they differ from the above CDP SEA objectives, the text is shown in italic bold font. The results of this are summarized in a table, called an evaluation matrix (Chapter Six of the SEA ER). The Strategic Environmental Objectives are as follows:

**Table 2: Strategic Environmental Objectives for Mountmellick LAP**

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna</b>	<b>B1:</b> To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species
	<b>B2:</b> To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species
	<b>B3:</b> To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of listed species
<b>Population and</b>	<b>PHH1:</b> To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible land

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives
human health Noise 	uses <i>including adverse noise and air quality impact</i>
Water 	<b>W1:</b> To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters  <b>W2:</b> To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water <b>W3:</b> To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009).
Soil and Geology 	<b>S1:</b> To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource <b>S2:</b> <i>To maximise the sustainable re- use of brownfield lands, and the existing built environment, rather than developing greenfield lands</i>
Material Assets 	<b>M1:</b> To serve new development with adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment <b>M2:</b> To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean  <b>M3:</b> To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse
Climate Change, Air Quality and Noise 	<b>C1:</b> To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport  <b>C2:</b> <i>Ensure that the LAP proposals are adaptive to expected climate change patterns in line with Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (EPA) as appropriate</i>
Cultural Heritage 	<b>CH1:</b> To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context <b>CH2:</b> To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and proposed Architectural Conservation Areas and their context
Landscape 	<b>L1:</b> To minimise significant adverse visual impacts within and adjacent to the County <b>L2:</b> <i>To protect and enhance landscape character and quality within and adjacent to the LAP area</i>
Interrelationships 	<i>Maintain and improve the health of people, ecosystems and natural processes. Actively seek to integrate opportunities for environmental enhancement</i>

## 5 Consideration of Alternatives

One of the critical roles of the SEA is to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative development scenarios, in this case the Mountmellick LAP 2018-2024.

In the case of the LAP, possible alternatives include different land uses and scales of development were examined. These alternative development scenarios should meet the following considerations:

- 1. Continuation of Existing LAP landuse zonings and policies/objectives (The Do-Nothing Scenario).** Continues with the existing LAP in its current context.
- 2. Town centre consolidation:** This approach would be to focus explicitly on the densification of the town centre with intensification of land uses and focus on employee intensive sectors.
- 3. Town centre consolidation and designation of future development lands in a tiered structure:** Promotion of development lands within the town centre for development and the designation of sequential areas where this type of development is considered appropriate in certain circumstances. It would also promote the development of neighbourhood centres to provide a level of retail services locally.

Following the assessment against the SEOs (see Table 2) Alternative 3 provides for the most positive effects when assessed against the SEOS. This alternative provides for the promotion of development lands within the town centre for development and the designation of sequential areas where this type of development is considered appropriate in certain circumstances. It would also promote the development of neighbourhood centres to provide a level of retail services locally.

It acknowledges the need to consolidate Mountmellick through the town centre revitalisation whilst helping to meet the key objectives of the LAP. Therefore, the preferred alternative was developed by the planning team and others having regard to the key requirements of:

- Environmental effects identified through the SEA consideration of alternatives;
- Objectives of the Mountmellick LAP including social and economic effects of the development, and
- National Policy documents.

By complying with appropriate mitigation measures - including those which have been integrated into the LAP - potential adverse environmental effects which could arise as a result of implementing this scenario would be likely to be avoided, reduced or offset.

## 6 Assessment of Significant Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

As the plan process was ongoing and an iterative process with the SEA, areas of particular environmental sensitivity have been avoided in the first instance where possible, and the plan elements as they have evolved have been amended during the process.

Key positive effects have been identified for population and human health, cultural heritage, landscape, transport and green infrastructure through the provision of integrated landuse and transport, town centre revitalisation, retention of hedgerows, integrating blue and green infrastructure, and buffer zones around the River Barrow.

Potential adverse effects on some biodiversity, soil and water and landscape SEOs are identified, therefore additional mitigation measures have been identified to strengthen the protection of the River Owenass, as well as rewording particular measures in the LAP, also to further embed sustainable development across the LAP.

### Mitigation Measures

Within the Laois CDP 2017-2023, there are also ranges of existing environmental protection measures which will also apply for development applications arising from the LAP.

Examples of mitigation measures that included additional SEA text are provided below; new wording from the SEA process are shown in **green, bold** font.

#### Chapter 1: Key Plan Objectives:

**To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this LAP.**

#### Key Infrastructure: Objective: KI 09:

Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in accordance with ~~the South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan~~ **National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures.**

The Table below summarises the Main Environmental Issues for each SEA Topic and Identifies the Key Mitigation Measures present.

**Table 3: Environmental issues and Mitigation Measures**

SEA Theme:	Key Issues	Mitigation Measures in LAP
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of community facilities, public open space, housing and design;</li> <li>• Transport Network and Public Transport;</li> <li>• Environmental Health relating to air quality in particular;</li> <li>• Addressing and increasing employment opportunities;</li> <li>• Town centre revitalisation and economic activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport and Movement including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TM 05, TM 03</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Natural Heritage including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH 09</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic Development including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ED 01, ED 02</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TCR 01, TCR 04, TCR 05, TCR P1</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing existing ecological resources;</li> <li>• Promoting and facilitating ecological connectivity;</li> <li>• Enhancing ecological considerations within the public realm;</li> <li>• Provision of green and blue infrastructure to enhance ecological connectivity and provide mitigation in relation to air quality as appropriate as well as water storage/surface water attenuation where possible;</li> <li>• Managing and controlling alien invasive plant species;</li> <li>• Minimising soil sealing and sustainable use of soil and water resources;</li> <li>• Avoiding disturbance to habitats and species associated with the River Barrow;</li> <li>• Water quality of the surface waters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Plan objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Numbers 7 and 8</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Natural Heritage including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH O1, NH O7, NH O9, NH O10, NH O11</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key Infrastructure including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KI 09, KI 010</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Water Resources including Flooding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and mitigating flood risk;</li> <li>• Ensuring flood risk is fully considered and embedded in the LAP;</li> <li>• Improving surface water quality;</li> <li>• Ensuring the status of Not at risk (of meeting WFD objectives) is kept and maintained for Groundwater;</li> <li>• Avoiding the spread of alien and invasive species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Infrastructure including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KI O 9, KI 010</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Natural Heritage including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH 011</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Flood Management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FM 01 to O3 and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

SEA Theme:	Key Issues	Mitigation Measures in LAP
		FM P01 to 010
<b>Soil and Geology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining and enhancing soil function and its carbon storage role where possible;</li> <li>• Retention of areas of greenfield in terms of flood risk, water storage, open space, green infrastructure and biodiversity considerations;</li> <li>• Potential soil contamination associated with brownfield sites or sites subject to previous industrial activities;</li> <li>• Because of the complex interrelationship between water, air and soil, declining soil quality can contribute to negative or declining water or air quality and function.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation policies and objectives</li> <li>• Opportunity Sites</li> <li>• Natural Heritage including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH 09</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for and adapting to climate change;</li> <li>• Sectoral policies can assist in this including transport and energy;</li> <li>• Measures including carbon sequestration in existing soils and additional appropriate vegetation planting associated with green infrastructure and ecological corridors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Heritage including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NHO 9</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Transport and Movement including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TMP 6 and TMP 13</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets including transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for and maintaining sufficient water services and capacity for the plan area;</li> <li>• Consideration of receiving waters for wastewater;</li> <li>• Encouraging sustainable use of resources;</li> <li>• Reducing reliance on private transport, and enhancing walking/cycling measures around the town and to the wider area;</li> <li>• Workable alternatives to private transport and future public transport services and infrastructure in the area;</li> <li>• Development standards affecting transport e.g. car parking;</li> <li>• Energy efficiency;</li> <li>• Promotion of the circular economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Infrastructure including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KI 01 to KI 011</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Transport and Movement including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TM 05, TM 06 TMP 1, TMP 5</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Natural Heritage including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH 09</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for additional archaeological resources;</li> <li>• Enhancing and linking cultural heritage of the area;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built Heritage including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BHO1 to BH 013, BHP 1 to NHP 3</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

SEA Theme:	Key Issues	Mitigation Measures in LAP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designation of an ACA and support for same;</li> <li>• Promotion of heritage features as tourist attractions;</li> <li>• Archaeological input on the archaeological implications of any new development proposed in the Local Area Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TCR 01, TCR 03, TCR P3</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Opportunity Site</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the public realm;</li> <li>• Integrating blue and green infrastructure;</li> <li>• Encouraging re-use of buildings;</li> <li>• Sensitive and appropriate interventions relating to the River Owenass;</li> <li>• Enhancing permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TCR 01, TCR 03, TCR 05, TCR 010</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Transport and Movement including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TM 07, TM 08, TM 09</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Natural Heritage Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH 02, NH 03, NH 06</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 7 Monitoring Measures

It is proposed, in accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, to base monitoring on a series of indicators which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality, for example water pollution levels. Monitoring will focus on the aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly impacted upon by the implementation of the Mountmellick LAP.


The monitoring programme will consist of an assessment of the relevant indicators and targets against the data relating to each environmental component. Similarly, monitoring will be carried out frequently to ensure that any changes to the environment can be identified.

In turn the list below is subject to review at each reporting stage to reflect new data.

Laos and Offaly County Councils are responsible for the implementation of the SEA Monitoring Programme.



Table 4 below presents the SEA Monitoring Table. This table sets out the strategic environmental objectives, indicators and targets to be applied in monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the LAP, in accordance with Section 13J (2) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004, as amended.

**Table 4: Monitoring Measures**



SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna</b>  	<b>B1:</b> To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species	<b>B1:</b> Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	<b>B1:</b> Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the plan	<b>B1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant effects;</li> <li>Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years);</li> <li>Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs’s National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years);</li> <li>Consultations with the NPWS (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4).</li> </ul>
	<b>B2:</b> To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of	<b>B2:</b> Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from development provided for by the Plan	<b>B2:</b> No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from development	<b>B2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant);</li> <li>CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years);</li> <li>Review of Council Ecological Network</li> </ul>




SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	<p>features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species</p>		provided for by the Plan	Mapping.
	<p><b>B3:</b> To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites</p>	<p><b>B3i:</b> Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by</p>	<p><b>B3i:</b> Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant);</li> <li>• Consultations with the NPWS.</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	including Wildlife Sites and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of listed species	the Plan  <b>B3ii:</b> Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	the Plan  <b>B3ii:</b> No significant impacts on the protection of listed species	
<b>Population and human health Noise</b> 	<b>PHH1:</b> To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible land uses <i>including adverse noise and air quality impacts</i>	<b>PHH1:</b> Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from development provided for by the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	<b>PHH1:</b> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations with EPA and Health Service Executive.</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b> 	<b>W1:</b> To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters	<b>W1:</b> Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations	<b>W1:</b> Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' 47 by 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant);</li> <li>• Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).</li> </ul>


SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
		2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)		
	<p><b>W2:</b> To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water</p>	<p><b>W2:</b> Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC</p>	<p><b>W2:</b> Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant);</li> <li>• Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>W3:</b> To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009)</p>	<p><b>W3:</b> Number of incompatible developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk</p>	<p><b>W3:</b> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk in compliance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>
<b>Soil and Geology</b>	<p><b>S1:</b> To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource</p>	<p><b>S1:</b> Soil extent and hydraulic connectivity</p>	<p><b>S1:</b> To minimise reductions in soil extent and hydraulic connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	<b>S2:</b> <i>To maximise the sustainable re- use of brownfield lands, and the existing built environment, rather than developing greenfield lands.</i>	<b>S2:</b> <i>Permission granted on Opportunity Sites % Occupancy of buildings in town centre</i>	<b>S2:</b> <i>Number of Opportunity Sites developed over lifetime of the plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant by grant</li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets</b>	<b>M1:</b> To serve new development with adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment	<b>M1:</b> Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan	<b>M1:</b> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>
	<b>M2:</b> To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both	<b>M2:</b> Number of non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water)	<b>M2:</b> No non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	wholesome and clean	Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan	(No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan	
	<p><b>M3:</b> To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse</p>	<p><b>M3i:</b> Total collected and brought household waste</p> <p><b>M3ii:</b> Packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers</p>	<p><b>M3i:</b> Minimise increases in and, where possible, reduce household waste generation</p> <p><b>M3ii:</b> Maximise increases in packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPA National Waste reports.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change, Air Quality and Noise</b>	<p><b>C1:</b> To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport</p>	<p><b>C1:</b> Percentage of population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means</p>	<p><b>C1:</b> An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO Population Data.</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	<p><b>C2:</b>  <i>Ensure that the LAP proposals are adaptive to expected climate change patterns.in line with Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (EPA) as appropriate</i></p>	<p><b>C2:</b>  <i>Number of SUDs measures included and developed as part of planning applications. Number/extent of additional tree planting as part of planning applications.</i></p>	<p><b>C2:</b>  <i>An increase in extent of Blue and Green infrastructure linkages in plan area</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants of permission.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<p><b>CH1:</b>                      To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context</p>	<p><b>CH1:</b>                      Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Areas of Archaeological Potential and Significance (and the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) - protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan</p>	<p><b>CH1:</b>                      Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Areas of Archaeological Potential and Significance (and their context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	<b>CH2:</b> To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context	<b>CH2:</b> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and proposed Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan	<b>CH2:</b> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and proposed 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"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant);</li> <li>• Consultation with Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 10.4).</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	<b>L1:</b> To minimise significant adverse visual impacts within and adjacent to the County	<b>L1:</b> Number of complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	<b>L1:</b> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>
	<b>L2:</b> <i>To protect and enhance landscape character and quality within and adjacent to the LAP</i>	<b>L2:</b> <i>Number of Opportunity Sites and interventions from A vision for Mountmellick 2014 implemented over lifetime of plan</i>	<b>L2:</b> <i>Adherence to all principles in the Development Vision and Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	<i>area.</i>			
<b>Interrelationships</b>	<i>Maintain and improve the health of people, ecosystems and natural processes</i>	<i>Blue and Green Infrastructure measures implemented over lifetime of plan</i>	<i>Increased network of blue and green infrastructure achieved over lifetime of the plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>
	<i>Actively seek to integrate opportunities for environmental enhancement</i>	<i>As above</i>	<i>As above</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).</li> </ul>



## 8 Conclusion

The SEA and Natural Impact Report have been undertaken in line with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 to 2011 (as amended). Subject to the full and proper implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in this SEA Environmental Report and the Mountmellick LAP 2018-2024 including detailed design at planning application stage, it is considered that significant adverse impacts on the environment will be avoided.