



**Laois County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Laoise**

**&**

**Offaly County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí**

**Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan  
2018 – 2024**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT**

**NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

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## 1 Purpose of the Non - Technical Summary

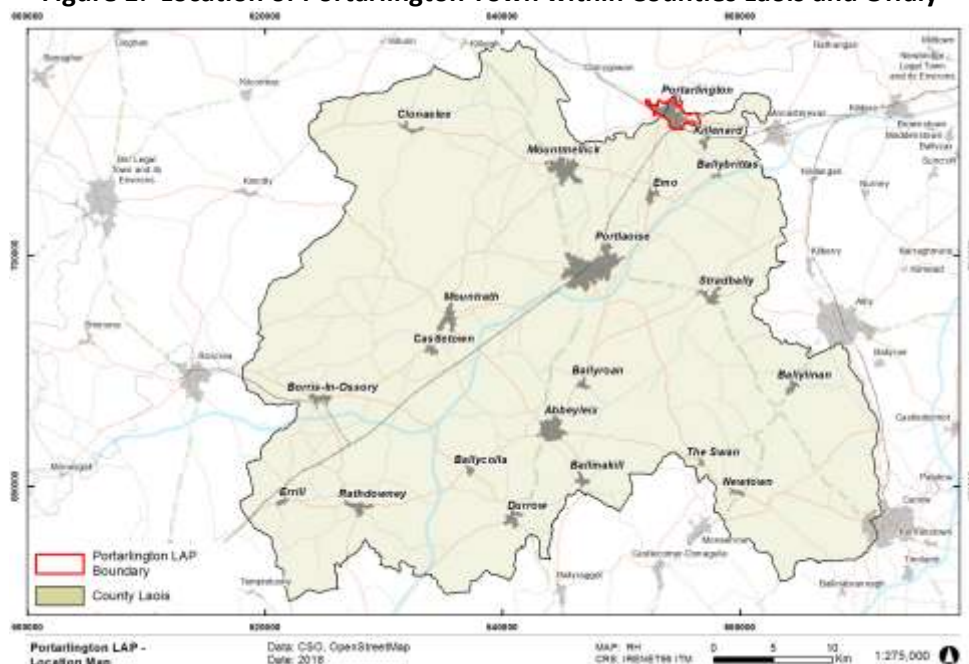
This is the Non Technical Summary of the environmental report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Joint Local Area Plan prepared for Portarlington for the period 2018-2024. The purpose of the SEA is to formally and systematically assess the likely significant effects of implementing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

### 1.1 Background and Context

The Joint LAP must be consistent with the objectives, Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP) and the Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020 and any subsequent reviews or variations. The Settlement Hierarchy of the Core Strategy from both development plans recognise Portarlington as a “*Key Service Town*”. Figure 1 below shows the outline of the Portarlington Joint LAP within the wider context of Laois and Offaly Counties.

**Figure 1: Location of Portarlington Town within Counties Laois and Offaly**



## **1.2 Plan Structure and Summary**

The Joint LAP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The main contents of the Joint 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 Joint 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 Joint LAP preparation. Table 1 sets out the stages in the SEA process and how these relate to the plan preparation.

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

Stage of SEA	Plan
<b>Stage 1: Screening</b>	Screening is the first stage of SEA to determine if the plan requires full SEA. As Portarlington exceeds the 5,000 population 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 Joint LAP also raised a number of environmental issues and these helped to inform the Scope of the SEA also.
<b>Stage 3: Environmental Report</b>	The Environmental Report tells the story of the Joint LAP and how environmental considerations have been addressed and included during the draft 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 was on display alongside the plan and supporting reports.  Following the public display period there may be changes to the plan and the SEA will also assess these and update the Environmental Report as required.
<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 is prepared once the plan is 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 Joint 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 and Offaly CDP 2014-2020 for the relevant part of the plan area. The Joint LAP has been prepared having regard to the policies and objectives outlined within the above LCDP 2017-2023 and the Offaly CDP 2014-2020.

The key environmental protective objectives and policies of the Joint LAP are consistent with both these County Development Plans.

### 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, Offaly County Development Plan 2014 - 2020, 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, while County Offaly experienced more modest population growth of 9.9%. In the same ten year period, Portarlington experienced a population growth rate of 39%.

Portarlington benefits from a young population, with 53% of the population below 35 years of age, compared to 47.1% elsewhere in the State. Portarlington has a lower proportion of middle-aged and older residents, with just 16% of the population aged 55 or older, compared to 24% elsewhere in the State. Portarlington also benefits from ethnic diversity with 14% of its population being non-Irish. Of particular note, is that almost 12% of the population is made up of EU nationals excluding the UK.

##### Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Much of the Joint 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 River Barrow, which forms part of the River Barrow and Nore Special Area of Conservation (SAC: Site Code: 002162) runs west to east through the centre of the town.

##### 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. The latest information from the [www.Catchments.ie](http://www.Catchments.ie) website shows the overall Water Framework Directive status of the River Barrow to be good.

The Portarlington Strategic Flood Risk and Management Strategy were commissioned by Laois and Offaly County Councils in association with the OPW to evaluate and quantify flood risk in Portarlington. The study recommends a series of mitigation measures in the form of flood walls, levees, embankments and attenuation areas provided at various locations through the centre of Portarlington along the banks of the River Barrow and the Blackstick Drain.

## **Soil and Geology**

Portarlington is located within broad bedrock of Lower Carboniferous Limestones. Whilst much of the Joint LAP lands are classified as urban according to the Teagasc soil map, reflecting the built up character of much of the Joint LAP, the surrounding soils are largely alluvial soils associated with the River Barrow. An extensive area of peat soils predominate north of the plan area; whilst the southern plan area are identified as the Mylerstown subseries of soils, defined by fine loamy drift with limestones.

## **Climate Change and Energy**

Agriculture is the largest contributor to overall emissions, however in terms of the Joint 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. As the majority of Portarlington's population live within 2km of the town centre, measures to increase permeability and walking and cycling can encourage a modal shift for the Joint LAP area.

## **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. Portarlington is linked to key neighbouring towns by a series of Regional Roads and the town is also located on the railway line connecting the south and west of the country to Dublin. There are a number of bus services connecting Portarlington to Kildare, Monasterevin, Portlaoise, Tullamore and Dublin.

The development of an off road cycling network at Derryounce offers potential to connect Portarlington with the Grand Canal via Mount Lucas, forming a vital part of the "Core Network" of the cycling network. Both Local Authorities will work together to achieve such an objective.

Within the settlement of Portarlington 2,840 households are connected to the public mains water supply and 2,813 households are connected to the public sewer system. The Portarlington Wastewater Treatment Plant has the capacity to cater for a population equivalent of 13,000. The River Barrow acts as the receiving waters for this plant. Currently there is capacity in the waste water treatment plant and public water supply. However, extra capacity is required to implement the policies and objectives of this plan.

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.



Portarlington is served by a high capacity electricity system and gas network. Within the settlement 2,202 households have broadband internet services. The Local Authorities of Laois and Offaly will work with broadband providers to facilitate an upgrade of the network, which will give significant economic and social advantage to Portarlington as a place to set up internet based businesses.

### **Built Heritage**

Approximately 14 no. archaeological sites within the plan boundary are on the historical sites and monuments record. These include two ringforts, and a motte and bailey associated with Norman castles.

Lea Castle is a medieval castle on the banks of the River Barrow outside of the settlement of Portarlington. Although outside of the town boundary, the castle is of significant historical and architectural importance.

In addition to the historic core, numerous additional structures worthy of preservation are located within the Joint LAP boundary. Such buildings or structures are noted within the Record of Protected Structures (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 96 no. Protected Structures within the development boundary of Portarlington.

### **Landscape**





Portarlington is located in the heart of an agricultural landscape and serves a large agricultural hinterland. The town retains a relationship to the surrounding landscape. The River Barrow forms a natural corridor through the town centre and is another important natural feature lending particular identity to the town, as well as significant ecological values. The town's public park, People's Park is located on Link Road. Historic photographs demonstrate the value of trees to the quality of the public realm. Walkways have been developed around Derrounce Bog and lakes. Trees are now only intermittently scattered through the town. 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.






## 4 Strategic Environmental Objectives and Consideration of Alternatives

### 4.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

These 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 and Offaly CDP 2014-2020. Where necessary the SEOs are adapted to reflect particular environmental considerations for this Portarlington Joint 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 Portarlington Joint 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 Human Health Noise</b> 	<b>PHH1:</b> To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses <i>including adverse noise and air quality impacts</i>
<b>Water</b> 	<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)
<b>Soil and Geology</b> 	<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>
<b>Material Assets</b>	<b>M1:</b> To serve new development with adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives
	<p><b>M2:</b> To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean</p>
	<p><b>M3:</b> To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse</p>
<p><b>Climate Change, Air Quality and Noise</b></p>	<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>C2:</b> <i>Ensure that the Joint 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>Cultural Heritage</b></p>	<p><b>CH1:</b> To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context</p>
	<p><b>CH2:</b> To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context</p>
<p><b>Landscape</b></p>	<p><b>L1:</b> To minimise significant adverse visual impacts within and adjacent to the County</p>
	<p><b>L2</b> <i>To protect and enhance landscape character and quality within and adjacent to the Joint LAP area.</i></p>
<p><b>Interrelationships</b></p>	<p><i>Maintain and improve the health of people, ecosystems and natural processes</i>  <i>Actively seek to integrate opportunities for environmental enhancement</i></p>
	

## 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 Portarlington Joint LAP 2018-2024.

In the case of the Joint 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 Joint LAP landuse zonings and policies/objectives (The Do-Nothing Scenario).** Continues with the existing Joint 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 (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 Portarlington through the town centre revitalisation whilst helping to meet the key objectives of the Joint 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 Portarlington Joint 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 Joint 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

Plan preparation was carried out in conjunction with an iterative SEA process 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 Barrow and Nore SAC, as well as rewording particular measures in the Joint LAP, also to further embed sustainable development across the Joint LAP.

### Mitigation Measures

Within the Laois CDP 2017-2023 and the Offaly CDP 2014-2020 there are also a range of existing environmental protection measures which will also apply for development applications arising from the Joint 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 Joint LAP.**

### Key Infrastructure Objective: KI 010:

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 Joint LAP
Population and Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of community facilities, public open space, housing and design;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport and Movement including:</li> </ul>

<b>SEA Theme:</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures in Joint LAP</b>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>- TM 09, TM 010</li> <li>• Natural Heritage including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH P8</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic Development including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EE 05, EE 06</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation including:               <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 Numbers 7 and 8</li> <li>• Natural Heritage including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH P3, NH01, NH 03, NH 013, NH 04, NH 05, NH 06</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key Infrastructure including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KKI 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 Joint LAP;</li> <li>• Maintaining 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 010 and KI 011, KI P1</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Natural Heritage including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NH 013</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<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> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation policies and objectives</li> <li>• Opportunity Sites</li> <li>• Natural Heritage</li> </ul>

SEA Theme:	Key Issues	Mitigation Measures in Joint LAP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>	including: - NH O12, NH P1
<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: - NHP 8, NHP 12, NHO 12</li> <li>• Transport and Movement including: - TMP 6, TMP 13</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: - KI 01 to KI 09</li> <li>• Transport and Movement including: - TMP 6, TMP 7, TMP 14</li> <li>• Natural Heritage including: - NHP 8, NHP 12</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> <li>• Designation of 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>• Built Heritage including: - BHO1 to BH 013, BHP 1 to NHP 3</li> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation including: TCR 01, TCR 03, TCR 04, TCR 05</li> <li>• Opportunity Sites</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 Barrow and Derryounce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Revitalisation including: - TCR 01, TCR 03, TCR 10, TCR 02, TCR 06</li> <li>• Transport and</li> </ul>

<b>SEA Theme:</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures in Joint LAP</b>
	lakes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.</li> </ul>	Movement including: - TMO8, TMO9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Heritage including:                - NH 03 NH06</li> <li>• Opportunity Sites</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 Portarlington Joint 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.



Laois 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 Joint LAP, in accordance with Section 13J(2) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004, as amended.


Table 4: Monitoring Measures


SEA Topic	Strategic Objectives	Environmental 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	<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.</li> </ul>
	 <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	<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 provided for by 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>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years);</li> <li>• Review of Council Ecological Network Mapping.</li> </ul>



SEA Topic	Strategic Objectives	Environmental	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
	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>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 the Plan <b>B3ii:</b> Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	<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 the Plan <b>B3ii:</b> No significant impacts on the protection of listed species	<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>
<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	<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>

SEA Topic	Strategic Objectives	Environmental	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
			Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency		
<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 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)	<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>
	<b>W2:</b> To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water		<b>W2:</b> Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	<b>W2:</b> Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	<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>
	<b>W3:</b> To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009)		<b>W3:</b> Number of incompatible developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant	<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	<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 Objectives	Environmental	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
			flood risk	Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities	
<b>Soil and Geology</b>	<b>S1:</b> To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource		<b>S1:</b> Soil extent and hydraulic connectivity	<b>S1:</b> To minimise reductions in soil extent and hydraulic connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant)</li> </ul>
	<b>S2:</b> To maximise the sustainable re- use of brownfield lands, and the existing built environment, rather than developing greenfield lands.		<b>S2:</b> Permission granted on Opportunity Sites % Occupancy of buildings in town centre	<b>S2:</b> Number of Opportunity Sites developed over lifetime of the plan	<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 wholesome and clean		<b>M2:</b> Number of non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a	<b>M2:</b> No non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of	<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 Objectives	Environmental	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
			potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan	implementing the Plan	
	<b>M3:</b> To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse		<b>M3i:</b> Total collected and brought household waste <b>M3ii:</b> Packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers	<b>M3i:</b> Minimise increases in and, where possible, reduce household waste generation <b>M3ii:</b> Maximise increases in packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA National Waste reports</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change, Air Quality and Noise</b>	<b>C1:</b> To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport		<b>C1:</b> Percentage of population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means	<b>C1:</b> An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO Population Data</li> </ul>
	<b>C2:</b> <i>Ensure that the Joint LAP proposals are adaptive to expected climate change patterns in line with Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (EPA) as</i>		<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</i>	<b>C2:</b> <i>An increase in extent of Blue and Green infrastructure linkages in plan area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants of permission</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Objectives	Environmental	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
 <b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<i>appropriate</i>		<i>applications.</i>		
	<b>CH1:</b> To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context		<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	<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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants of Permission</li> </ul>
	<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 Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission	<b>CH2:</b> 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"> <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.</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Strategic Objectives	Environmental	Indicator	Selected Target	Source (Frequency)
<b>Landscape</b>  	<b>L1:</b> To minimise significant adverse visual impacts within and adjacent to the County		under the Plan <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 Joint LAP area.</i>		<b>Number of Opportunity Sites and interventions from the development vision and strategy for Portarlington implemented over lifetime of plan</b>	<b>Adherence to all principles in the development vision and strategy for Portarlington implemented over lifetime of plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant)</li> </ul>
<b>Interrelationships</b>  	<b>Maintain and improve the health of people, ecosystems and natural processes</b>		<b>L2: Blue and Green Infrastructure measures implemented over lifetime of plan</b>	<b>L2: Increased network of blue and green infrastructure achieved over lifetime of the plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant)</li> </ul>
	<b>Actively seek to integrate opportunities for environmental</b>		<b>As above</b>	<b>As above</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant)</li> </ul>



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<b>SEA Topic</b>	<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Environmental Indicator</b>	<b>Selected Target</b>	<b>Source (Frequency)</b>
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*enhancement*

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## **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 Portarlington Joint LAP 2018 -2024 including detailed design at planning application stage; it is considered that significant adverse impacts on the environment will be avoided.