

Kilkenny Draft Destination &  
Experience Development Plan  
**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING AND  
NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This document comprises an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS), prepared in order to support the Appropriate Assessment for the Draft Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Draft Plan' or the 'Draft KDEDP') in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and article 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended (the Habitats regulations).

The potential impacts on European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites), both as a result of the Draft KDEDP and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

This report should be read in conjunction with the Draft KDEDP and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Environmental Report prepared by Brady Shipman Martin (2024).

## 1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This Report has been prepared by Namrata Kaile, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant with Brady Shipman Martin. She holds a Bachelor's Degree (BSc) in Life Sciences from University of Delhi and a Master's Degree (MSc) with distinction in Environmental Sciences from Trinity College Dublin. She is an associate member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and has been working professionally in the field of environmental consultancy for the last four years. Namrata is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, EIA Screening Reports as well as in coordination of EIARs. She is also experienced in undertaking baseline ecological surveys and preparing Ecological Impact Assessments Reports (EclA).

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

## 1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the "Birds Directive"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*, transposed into Irish law by the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)* (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)* (the "Planning Acts").

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts “European site” means:

- (a) a candidate site of Community importance,
- (b) a site of Community importance,
- (ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
- (c) a special area of conservation,
- (d) a candidate special protection area and
- (e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

*“(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Article 42(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that the AA screening test must be applied to the Plan, as follows:

42. (1) Subject to Regulation 42A, a screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development (plan or project), individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

### 1.3.1 Stages in the Appropriate Assessment Process

There are four main stages in the AA process and are as follows:

#### 1.3.1.1 Stage 1 - Screening

The stage identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

### 1.3.1.2 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects.

### 1.3.1.3 Stage 3 – Alternative Solutions

This stage examines any alternative solutions or options that could enable the plan or project to proceed without adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site.

### 1.3.1.4 Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

Stage 4 examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists.

## 1.4 Baseline data collection

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), further updated in April 2022 (V1.2)*;
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*;
- DoEHLG (2010b). *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*;
- European Commission (2021). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*;
- European Commission (2018). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*;
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission), (2021). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive*;
- National Roads Authority (NRA)<sup>1</sup> (2009). *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes*;
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*;
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). *Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority*.

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:

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<sup>1</sup> Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

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- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht ([www.NPWS.ie](http://www.NPWS.ie));
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) ([www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie));
  - BirdWatch Ireland ([www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie));
  - Bat Conservation Ireland ([www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
  - Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including [www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie);
  - Information on local watercourses from [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie);
  - Information on water quality in the area ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie));
  - Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area ([www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie));
  - Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
  - Ireland's 4<sup>th</sup> National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024);
  - Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and the accompanying reports.

The report takes full account of the details of the Draft KDED and a detailed examination of all relevant elements was undertaken. The Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report (Brady Shipman Martin, 2024) was also reviewed in the preparation of this report.

A desk-based assessment of the receiving environment was undertaken and this focussed on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) for European sites. An assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

## 2 Outline Description of the Draft Plan

### 2.1 Introduction

Kilkenny is a year-round international destination recognised for a creative city experience blending medieval with contemporary. A revitalised Medieval Mile is at the core of the Kilkenny City visitor experience motivating visitors to explore the wider city by linking Kilkenny Castle with iconic attractions who captivate audiences through their new experiential approach.

The City and County are animated by vibrant festivals and events hosted in a mix of venues that reflect the creativity of the destination. Kilkenny is globally recognised as Ireland’s home for design, craft and creative experiences. A growing number of county-wide cultural, heritage and outdoor experiences are easily accessed by walking and cycling trails connecting visitors to the city with our vibrant rural communities. The communities are connected and engaged with the South East Greenway. Kilkenny is established as a centre of excellence for river-based activities supported by an enhanced outdoor proposition delivered through woodlands, trails and activity centres.

In this context the Draft Kilkenny DEDP is a five-year plan designed to be a roadmap for enhancing the existing Kilkenny visitor proposition to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers and spend, and increasing dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination. It has been created through a programme of research and consultation guided by the V.I.C.E. (Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment) model for sustainable tourism development. It represents an operational plan providing a commercial destination development focus building on existing project plans and integrating all related activity for a co-ordinated programme of activity. This includes projects that are currently being implemented, projects featured in existing plans and new concepts to grow the destination’s capacity for new visitor experience development.

### 2.2 Vision

The Kilkenny Vision 2033 statement is for Kilkenny to be:

*“Kilkenny is a leading year round destination by 2033, providing an exceptional experience blending medieval with contemporary and the great outdoors. A revitalised Medieval Mile is at the core of the Kilkenny City visitor experience linking Kilkenny Castle with iconic attractions who captivate audiences through a new experiential approach. A best in class city experience links seamlessly with the outdoor experiences across the county brought alive through our river based activities, woodlands, trails and activity centres. The destination is globally recognised as a Ireland’s home for design, craft and creative experiences. Visitors are attracted by a year round programme of culture, festivals and events, reflecting Kilkenny’s association as a vibrant and fun city experience.”*

### 2.3 Strategic Objectives

The Draft Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland’s Ancient East
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Strategic Objectives:
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- 1.1 Develop the Medieval Mile to become a key attractor for Kilkenny City and the catalyst for visitor attraction and destination experience innovation delivered by a Kilkenny visitor attractions network committed to experience innovation.
- 1.2 Harness Visit Kilkenny, Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland's marketing campaigns to drive awareness in the international and domestic markets.
- 1.3 Maximise the international appeal of Kilkenny Castle and its potential to orientate visitors to other attractions and city wide locations.
- 1.4 Realise the tourism potential of the Abbey Quarter and how it is integrated into the Kilkenny cultural and creative experience.
- 1.5 Develop County Kilkenny into river activity centre of excellence using the Three Sister Rivers to introduce visitors to a mix of urban and rural outdoor activity experiences linked to local communities across the city and county.
- 1.6 Develop Kilkenny into a world class design, craft and creative destination building on its designation as a World Craft Council Craft City and Region.

**Strategic Objective 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.**

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 2.1 Maximise the investment in the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny to become a signature experience within Kilkenny City and enhance their role in developing a new experiential Medieval Mile approach.
- 2.2 Enhance the visitor experience within the network of county wide heritage experiences working with OPW to encourage visitor dispersal to county sites.
- 2.3 Develop the visitor experience and site capacity at Woodstock House and Gardens to become a signature attraction within the county.
- 2.4 Maximise investment in the Kilkenny riverside activity facilities to become a catalyst for river tourism and linkages to river activity hubs across the county
- 2.5 Expand the range of things to do for families through new product development or enhancing existing experiences linked to existing or potential new activity hubs.
- 2.6 Maximise the heritage of craft and artisan producers by creating year round opportunities to meet the makers and build on the investment in crafts hubs in the county. Examine the opportunity to reinvigorate the Castle Yard into a vibrant craft and creatives centre.
- 2.7 Augment the creative experience base through the development of a new city based international attraction focused on animation.
- 2.8 Grow the number and range of rural food experiences to grow the reach of Taste Kilkenny between the city and county. Build on the unique brewing and distilling heritage of Kilkenny City to create a unique portfolio of experiences contributing to the overall food and drink heritage of the area.

- 2.9 Support the city of Kilkennys night time economy initiatives including the use of visitor attractions and public spaces as venues for innovative events and installations.
- 2.10 Develop a new strategy for festivals and cultural events in Kilkenny to enhance and grow the existing calendar of events and the creation of one major creative / cultural event of scale.
- 2.11 Grow the accommodation base across the city and county.

**Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the region is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.**

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 3.1 Develop the trails linkages between rural communities and Kilkenny city to create the infrastructure that will encourage the visitor to explore the county through slow tourism activity e.g. Kilkenny to Inistioge and links to the South East Greenway
- 3.2 Optimise new technologies to disperse visitors across the destination reflecting Kilkenny’s creative and innovation profile.
- 3.3 Examine the opportunity to link Kilkenny with the Dublin to Cork / Waterford Greenway to become part of the wider regional and national trail network.
- 3.4 Examine the requirements to enhance the Kilkenny cycling infrastructure and the development of a network of safe and accessible cycling trails across the county.
- 3.5 Enhance the capacity of existing trails such as the Kilkenny Trails, Butler Trail, Lingaun Valley Trail and opportunities such as the William Marshall story to orientate the visitor around the destination.
- 3.6 Develop the transport links between the city and county, building on existing pilot programmes linked to the rural Kilkenny experience.
- 3.6 Examine new opportunities for innovative visitor orientation and way finding that builds on the destination’s creative and craft heritage adopting a destination theme to link the city to the county e.g. placemaking and signage innovation.
- 3.8 Develop a series of regional connection projects with neighbouring counties destinations through product linkages e.g. Castles, Food, Gardens, Adventure, Craft and Culture.

**Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure that it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.**

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 4.1 Provide the tourism industry training to grow their capacity and capabilities to increase their international sales linked to existing and emerging destination development opportunities.
- 4.2 Grow the digital capacity of the tourism industry in Kilkenny.
- 4.3 Develop an experience development training and capacity programme to enable the crafts and creative community realise economic opportunities through tourism.
- 4.4 Support the development of community experiences and create new level of capacity to ensure rural communities can realise the benefits of tourism.

- 4.5 Encourage participation in key strategic programmes across state agencies to ensure tourism grows as an attractive employment option.
- 4.6 Support Kilkenny tourism businesses to build expertise and knowledge to allow them to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of their business.
- 4.7 Develop the capacity and capabilities of the tourism industry to deliver an enhanced range of family experiences contributing to the development of Kilkenny as a family destination.

**Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.**

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 5.1 Adopt sustainability as a core destination message and promote an enhanced sustainability focus through our environment, heritage, culture and community experiences.
- 5.2 Achieve low carbon and sustainable growth in the development of urban and rural visitor experiences to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.
- 5.3 Collectively work towards reducing the carbon footprint of tourism.
- 5.4 Ensure tourism is integrated into future urban and rural regeneration activity in developing the city and county as a great place to live, work and visit.
- 5.5 Create awareness of the importance of the Kilkenny Tourism structure to support cohesive promotion and development approach in Kilkenny.
- 5.6 Develop the capacity of the Kilkenny Tourism Network to deliver on the tourism vision for the destination through collaboration and new ways of working together, cross promotion and collaboration in the delivery of new visitor experiences.
- 5.7 Develop a series of tourism clusters aligned with the experience development focus within the Kilkenny DEDP.
- 5.8 Work in partnership with the OPW to enhance the visitor experience across key visitor sites.
- 5.9 Work with the Kilkenny Visitor attractions network and experience providers to deliver accessible tourism experiences.
- 5.10 Examine local community experience development opportunities through sport tourism events and the local culture of sport and Gaelic games.

## 2.4 Destination Catalyst Projects Overview

To achieve the above strategic objectives, the KDEDP focuses on five catalyst and seven enabling projects that each include a number of sub-elements that contribute to the overarching objectives of developing the Kilkenny City urban tourism experience, growing the appeal of the wider county and maximising the outdoors as part of the destination experience. The catalyst projects and their key objectives are as follows:

**Re-imagined Medieval Mile-** *Develop the Medieval Mile opportunity to motivate visitors to explore more of the city and maximise investments in attractions such as the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny and other attractions.*

**Creative City Experience** - *Examine the feasibility of a world class animation experience in Kilkenny City and the further development of a creative tourism theme in Kilkenny City and County linking our creative experiences. .*

**River Tourism Centre of Excellence** - *Establish Kilkenny as a destination recognised for best in class river tourism experiences as part of strengthening the destinations association with outdoor activities.*

**Kilkenny Attractions Experience** - *Enhance the quality and range of visitor experiences delivered across the network of Kilkenny Visitor Attractions.*

**Trails and Adventure** - *Develop the trails linkages between rural communities and Kilkenny city to create the infrastructure that will encourage visitors to explore the county through slow tourism activity*

The complete list of catalyst project and enabling projects are summarised in **Section 4.2.4**.

## 3 Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the Draft KDEDP on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As per Section 1.3 and in accordance with article 42 of the Habitats regulations, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out. Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the Draft KDEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

### 3.2 Potential Zone of Influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. DoEHLG (2010a, pp. 31 – 32) states that:

*"The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:*

1. Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area
2. Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects
3. Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species,

*and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment.”*

The 2021 OPR guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence “*should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)*” (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the Draft KDED, and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence for the Draft KDED includes any site to which there is a potential for impacts, as set out in the following sections.

### **3.3 Description of the Receiving Environment and the Potential Zone of Influence**

The description of the receiving environment presented in this section has been based on a desktop study of relevant available information, as cited in the text.

The *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027* states that it is Council policy to *support the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland*. The development of high-quality tourism is an objective (Objective 5C - *To continue to develop sustainable high quality tourism, leisure and complementary activities for the City & County with the key stakeholders enhancing the position of Kilkenny as a Hero site within Ireland’s Ancient East branding*) of the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

County Kilkenny is situated in the south-east of Ireland, with a land area of 2,062 sq. kilometres. The main urban centre is Kilkenny City. The next largest urban areas in the County are the Ferrybank area, adjacent to Waterford City, and the District Towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown. The tourism industry is an important economic driver for the economy of Kilkenny. County Kilkenny is surrounded by County Laois to the north, County Tipperary to the west, County Carlow and County Wexford to the east and County Waterford to the south.

Kilkenny is recognised as an international destination with the capacity to deliver significant growth in international visitor numbers and a substantial increase in tourism related employment in accordance with the Government’s Tourism Strategy. Kilkenny has long been recognised as the centre of Ireland’s design and craft sector and is home to the Design & Craft Council Ireland headquarters in the City and Grennan Mill Craft School in Thomastown, with centres of excellence in jewellery and ceramics at these locations.

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage.

Kilkenny’s biodiversity underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the county’s green infrastructure. A number of areas in County Kilkenny have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level and are protected through national and European legislation.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the

management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas of the County.

There are c. 28no. ancient woodlands and long-established woodlands in Co. Kilkenny. Hedgerows contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. They have an important farming function, they are wildlife habitats, and corridors, between habitats, and they also have historical significance as townland and field boundaries. The Rivers Barrow, Nore and Suir (known collectively as the “Three Sisters”) are the principal rivers flowing through County Kilkenny. They are protected habitats under European legislation. The rivers provide a rich landscape setting for the towns and village of the county and are the primary green infrastructure network in the county.

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, and provide open space and recreational opportunities.

### 3.3.1 Designated European Sites

Within the County, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

All designated European Sites located within County Kilkenny are listed in **Table 3.1** below. There are a further 5no. SPAs and 13no. SACs within the ZoI of the Draft KDEDP listed in **Table 3.2** below. Refer to **Figure 3.1**.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 3.1 European sites located in County Kilkenny**

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004233	River Nore SPA	002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC
		001858	Galmoy Fen SAC
		000831	Cullahill Mountain SAC

<sup>2</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
		000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC
		000407	The Loughans SAC
		002252	Thomastown Quarry SAC
		002137	Lower River Suir SAC
		000404	Hugginstown Fen SAC

Table 3.2 European sites located within the zone of influence of the County Boundary

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004160	Slieve Boom Mountains SPA	002332	Coolrain Bog SAC
004193	Mid- Waterford Coast SPA	002333	Knockacoller Bog SAC
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC
004033	Bannow Bay SPA	000869	Lisbigney Bog SAC
004118	Keeragh Islands SPA	000781	Slaney River Valley SAC
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA	000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC
		000697	Bannow Bay SAC
		000764	Hook Head SAC
		000671	Tramore Dunes and Blackstrand SAC
		001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC
		000668	Nier Valley Woodlands SAC
		000934	Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC
		000412	Slieve Boom Mountains SAC

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website<sup>3</sup>.

### 3.3.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

<sup>4</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>



Refer to **Tables 3.3** and **3.4** and **Figure 3.2** below for the NHAs and pNHAs located in County Kilkenny and within the zone of influence of the County boundary.

**Table 3.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) located in County Kilkenny and within Zone of Influence**

Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within County boundary	Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within zone of influence
002382	Coan Bogs NHA	002388	Slievenamon Bog NHA
		000703	Keeragh Islands NHA
		001853	Nore Valley Bogs NHA
		000652	Monaincha Bog/ Ballaghmore Bog NHA

**Table 3.4 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) located in County Kilkenny and within Zone of Influence**

Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within County boundary	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
001858	Galmoy Fen pNHA	000958	Kilcooly Abbey Lake pNHA
002076	River Nore/Abbeyleix Woods Complex pNHA	000420	The Curragh and Goul River Marsh pNHA
000831	Cullahill Mountain pNHA	000869	Lisbigney Bog pNHA
000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill pNHA	000862	Coolacurragh Wood pNHA
000407	The Loughans pNHA	000417	Grantstown Wood and Lough pNHA
000836	Inchbeg pNHA	000418	Cuffsborough pNHA
000821	Ardaloo Fen pNHA	000806	Cloghrick Wood pNHA
000832	Esker Pits pNHA	000797	Ballymoon Esker pNHA
000401	Dunmore Cave pNHA	000770	Blackstairs Mountains pNHA
001859	Dunmore Complex pNHA	000765	Killoughrum Forest pNHA
001914	Lough Macask pNHA	000812	Pollmounty River Valley pNHA
000845	Newpark Marsh pNHA	000774	Oaklands Wood pNHA
002051	Archersgrove pNHA	000744	Ballykelly Marsh pNHA
000408	Mothel Church, Coolcullen pNHA	000699	Boley Fen pNHA
000855	Whitehall Quarries pNHA	000695	Ballyhack pNHA
000846	Red Bog, Dungarvan pNHA	000787	Waterford Harbour pNHA
000843	Mount Juliet pNHA	001738	Duncannon Sandhills pNHA
000410	Thomastown pNHA	000659	Belle Lake pNHA
000830	Clohastia pNHA	000664	Dunmore East Cliffs pNHA
000837	Inistioge pNHA	000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand pNHA
002094	Ice House, Near Inistioge pNHA	001702	King's Channel pNHA
000844	Murphy's of the River pNHA	001700	Kilbarry Bog pNHA
000409	Rathsnagadan Wood pNHA	000669	Portlaw Woods pNHA

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Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within County boundary	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
000842	Kylecorragh Wood pNHA	000402	Fiddown Island pNHA
000827	Brownstown Wood pNHA	001980	Lizzy Smyth's Bog pNHA
000698	Barrow River Estuary pNHA	000958	Kilcooly Abbey Lake pNHA
000406	Lough Cullin pNHA	000420	The Curragh and Goul River Marsh pNHA
000833	Grannyferry pNHA	000862	Coolacurragh Wood pNHA
000399	Lower River Suir (Coolfinn, Portlaw) pNHA	000417	Grantstown Wood and Lough pNHA
000402	Fiddown Island pNHA	000418	Cuffsborough pNHA
000411	Tibberaghny Marshes pNHA		
000655	River Suir below Carrick-On-Suir pNHA		
000403	Garryrickin Nature Reserve pNHA		
000405	Kyleadohir Wood Nature Reserve pNHA		
000400	Ballykeefe Wood pNHA		
000839	Kilkeasy Bog pNHA		
000404	Hugginstown Fen pNHA		

Figure 3.1 European Sites in County Kilkenny and in the surrounding zone of influence

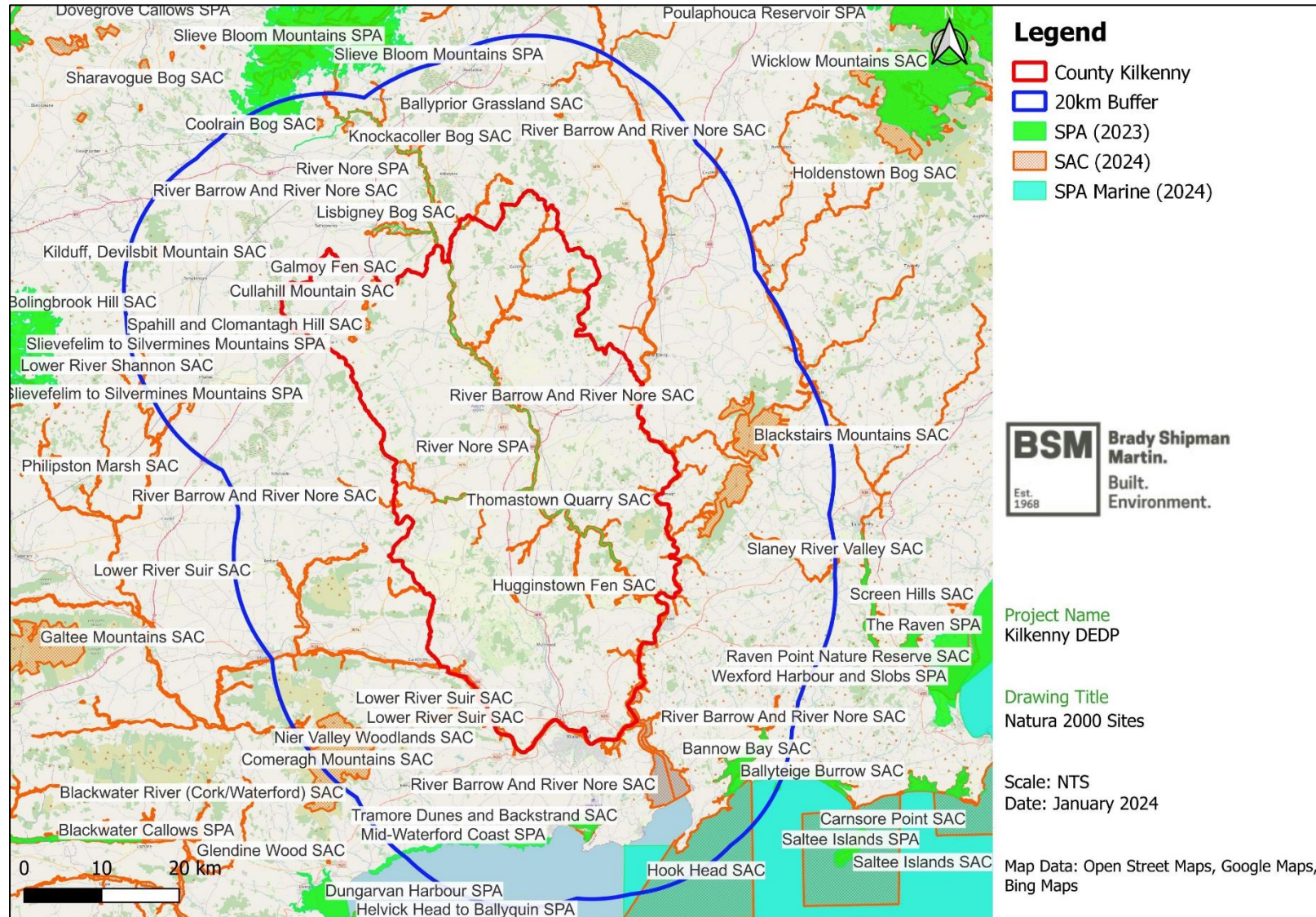
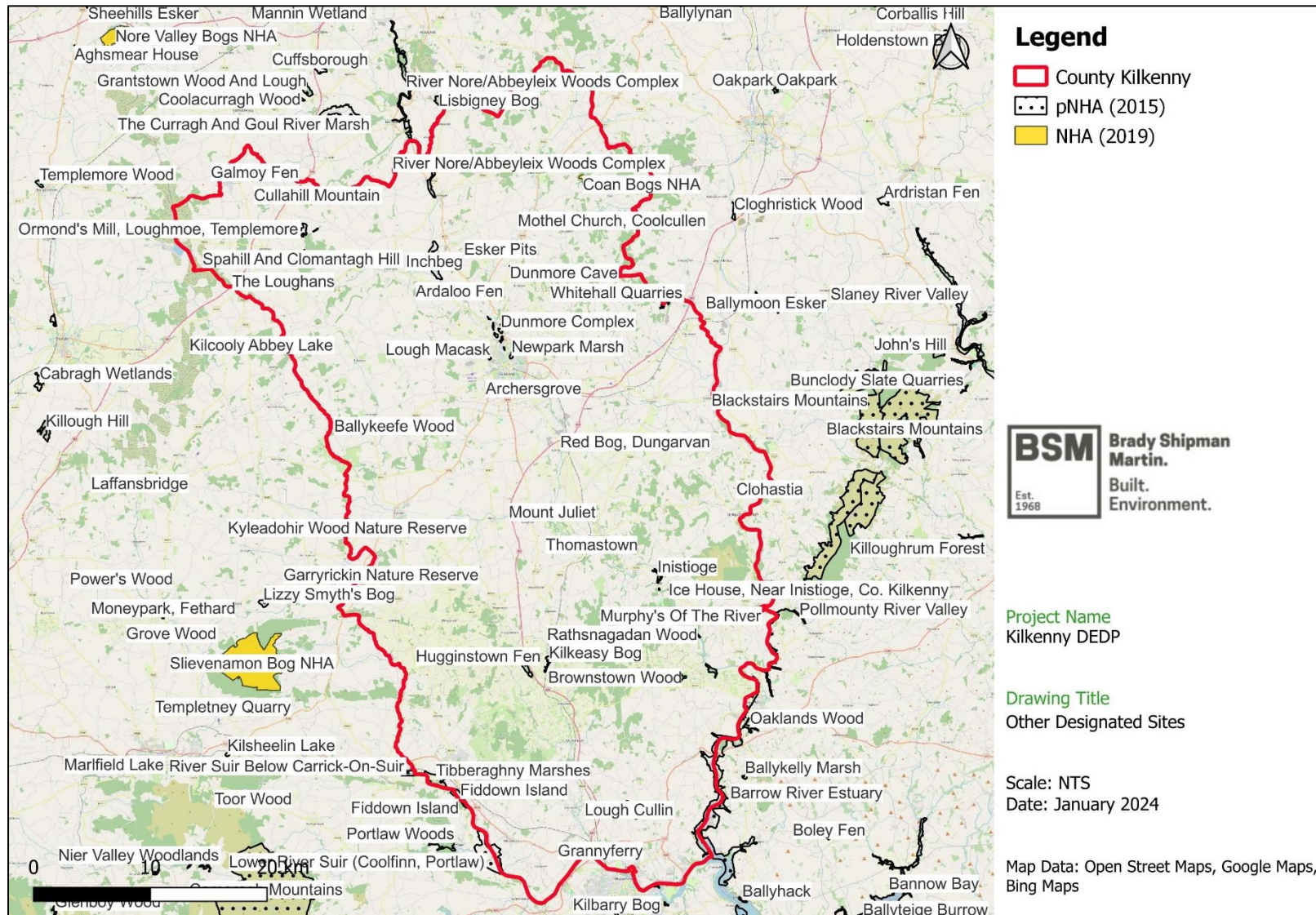


Figure 3.2 Other Designated Sites in County Kilkenny and in the surrounding zone of influence



### 3.3.3 Hydrology

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland’s groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The status of the **river waterbodies** in County Kilkenny ranges from ‘*bad*’ to ‘*high*’, with the majority of the major river waterbodies ranging from ‘*poor*’ to ‘*high*’.

EPA data, on the biological quality of watercourses, based on monitoring up to 2021, indicates that 3no. rivers achieved ‘*high*’ status; 23no. of monitored river waterbodies in County Kilkenny achieved a ‘*good*’ status; 26no. achieved a ‘*moderate*’ status; 10no. were ‘*poor*’; and 1no. was bad.

There are no lakes in County Kilkenny which are designated WFD operational monitoring lakes.

There are six transitional WFD waterbodies within County Kilkenny; Upper Suir Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0600) was designated ‘*bad*’ under WFD Status 2016-2021, Nore Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0400), Barrow Nore Estuary Upper (IE\_SE\_100\_0250), New Ross Port (IE\_SE\_100\_0200), Lower Suir Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0500) and Middle Suir Estuary (IE\_SE\_100\_0550) achieved ‘*moderate*’ status.

**Table 3.5** below has a list of the **WFD Catchments** and **WFD Sub-Catchments** in County Kilkenny.

**Table 3.5 WFD Catchments and Sub-Catchments in County Kilkenny**

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
Nore Catchment (15)	Goul_SC_010 (15_15)
	Erkina_SC_010 (15_14)
	Nore_SC_050 (15_16)
	Nore_SC_070 (15_21)
	Nore_SC_060 (15_7)
	Dinin[North]_SC_010 (15_12)
	Dinin[South]_SC_010 (15_3)
	Nore_SC_080 (15_8)
	Nore_SC_100 (15_4)
	Nore_SC_090 (15_6)
	Munster_SC_010 (15_5)
	King’s[Kilkenny]_SC_010 (15_11)
	Nore_SC_110 (15_19)
	Nore_SC_120 (15_17)
	Glory_SC_010 (15_2)
Nore_SC_130 (15_20)	

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
	Nore_SC_140 (15_18)
Barrow Catchment (14)	Barrow_SC_120 (14_8)
	Barrow_SC_130 (14_7)
Suir Catchment (16)	Suir_SC_040 (16_21)
	Suir_SC_010 (16_22)
	Anner_SC_010 (16_24)
	Blackwater[Kilmacow]_SC_010
	Lingaun_SC_010 (16_15)
	Pil_SC_010 (16_27)

Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally ‘good’<sup>5</sup> across the groundwater bodies in County Kilkenny, with the exception of two groundwater bodies. These are the Durrow (IE\_SE\_G\_156) and Stoneyford Gravels (IE\_SE\_G\_128) groundwater bodies which have a status of ‘poor’. The groundwater vulnerability of County Kilkenny ranges from ‘low’ to ‘extreme’.

A number of these protected areas are present within Kilkenny and these are as follows:

- The entire ground waterbody beneath the county is included on the Drinking Water - Ground Waterbody
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – Barrow Estuary and Middle Suir Estuary
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Rivers) - River Nore and River Barrow
- WFD RPA Shellfish Areas – Waterford Harbour
- Salmonid Rivers – River Nore.

### 3.3.3.1 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There is one area of Shellfish waters - Waterford Harbour (IE\_SE\_100\_0100) off the Waterford coast designated as Shellfish Waters pursuant to the Shellfish Directive and Section 6 of the *Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006)* require the development of Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) for designated shellfish areas in order to support shellfish life and growth and to contribute to the high quality of directly edible shellfish products. Shellfish PRPs relate to bivalve and

<sup>5</sup> EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

gastropod molluscs, including oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams. They do not cover shellfish crustaceans such as crabs, crayfish and lobsters.

### 3.3.3.2 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes in Ireland are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

The River Nore in County Kilkenny is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

### 3.3.4 Other Designations

#### RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. There are no Ramsar sites located in County Kilkenny. However, relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations. The nearest Ramsar Site to County Kilkenny is Tramore Backstrand, c. 9.5km south of the County boundary in County Waterford.

#### Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68no. sanctuaries in the State<sup>6</sup>. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The River Barrow (Goresbridge) (WFS-31) and Lough Cullin (Holy Lake) (WFS-32) is located within County Kilkenny.

#### Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order.

There are 3no. Nature Reserves in County Kilkenny including Ballykeeffe Wood Nature Reserve (young ash woodland with pedunculate oak and abundant bramble and bluebells), Kyledohir Wood Nature Reserve (mixed, young oak-ash-elm woodland on a low-lying site with moisture-loving species) and Garryricken Woods Nature Reserve (mixture of ash, oak and birch woodland on a variety of soil types).

### 3.3.5 Potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites

The effects that could arise from the Draft KDEDP have been examined in the context of several factors that could potentially affect the integrity of any European site, see **Table 3.6** below.

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<sup>6</sup> NPWS (2021).

Table 3.6 Potential for significant effects on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<b>European sites <i>within</i> Co. Kilkenny</b>			
River Nore SPA (site code 004233), within County Kilkenny	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A229 Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162), within County Kilkenny	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1016 Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>)</li> <li>■ 1029 Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</li> <li>■ 1092 White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)</li> <li>■ 1095 Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)</li> <li>■ 1096 Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>)</li> <li>■ 1099 River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)</li> <li>■ 1103 Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>Yes</b>



European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1106 Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) (only in fresh water)</li> <li>■ 1130 Estuaries</li> <li>■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand</li> <li>■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>)</li> <li>■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> <li>■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> <li>■ 1421 Killarney fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>)</li> <li>■ 1990 Nore freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i>)</li> <li>■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation</li> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> <li>■ 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels</li> <li>■ 7220 * Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)</li> </ul>		

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> <li>■ 91E0 * Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 July 2011), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>		
Galmoy Fen SAC (site code 001858), within County Kilkenny	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7230 Alkaline fens</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 17 July 2019), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
Cullahill Mountain SAC (site code 000831), within County Kilkenny	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially</p>	<b>Yes</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)</p> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 11 November, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	
<p>Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC (site code 000849), within County Kilkenny</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 11 November 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>The Loughans SAC (site code 000407), within County Kilkenny</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 3180 Turloughs*</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 16 December, 2020), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	
<p>Thomastown Quarry SAC (site code 002252), within County Kilkenny</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 02 July, 2019), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>Lower River Suir SAC (site code 002137), within County Kilkenny</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</li> <li>■ 1092 White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)</li> <li>■ 1095 Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1096 Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>)</li> <li>■ 1099 River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)</li> <li>■ 1103 Twaite Shad (<i>Alosa fallax fallax</i>)</li> <li>■ 1106 Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)</li> <li>■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> <li>■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> <li>■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation</li> <li>■ 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels</li> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> <li>■ 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)*</li> <li>■ 91J0 <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles*</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 28 March, 2017), for the listed QIs, the Conservation</p>	<p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDED area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDED.</p>	

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.		
Hugginstown Fen SAC (site code 000404), within County Kilkenny	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7230 Alkaline fens</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 17 July, 2019), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the KDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>European sites <i>outside</i> Co. Kilkenny but potentially within the Zone of Influence of the Draft KDEDP</b>			
Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA (site code 004160), c. 17.6km north-west of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A082 Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 23 September, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 17.6km north-west of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	favourable condition of the bird species listed.	strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.	
Mid-Waterford Coast SPA (site code 004193), c. 11.6km to the south of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)</li> <li>■ A103 Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</li> <li>■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)</li> <li>■ A346 Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.6km south of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>No</b>
Tramore Back Strand SPA (site code 004027), c. 9.6km to the south of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)</li> <li>■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>)</li> <li>■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>)</li> <li>■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 9.6km south of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius Arquata</i>)</li> <li>■ A999 Wetlands</li> </ul> <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 03 October, 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	
<p>Bannow Bay SPA (site code 004033), c. 12km to the south-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) (wintering)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 12km south-east of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>



European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) (wintering)</li> <li>■ A999 Wetlands</li> </ul> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 17 May 2012), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>		
Keeragh Islands SPA (site code 004118), c. 19.6km to the south-east of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)</li> </ul>	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 19.6km south-east of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	
<p>Seas off Wexford SPA (site code 004237), c. 14.1km to the south-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)</li> <li>■ A009 Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>)</li> <li>■ A013 Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>)</li> <li>■ A016 Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>)</li> <li>■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)</li> <li>■ A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>)</li> <li>■ A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>)</li> <li>■ A176 Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>)</li> <li>■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)</li> <li>■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 14.1km south-east of the KDEDP area and there is a hydrological pathway via Waterford Harbour and Eastern Celtic Sea. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)</li> <li>■ A191 Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>)</li> <li>■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)</li> <li>■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)</li> <li>■ A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>)</li> <li>■ A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)</li> <li>■ A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)</li> <li>■ A204 Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 09 January, 2024), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>		
Coolrain Bog SAC (site code 002332), c. 15.3km to the north-west of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7110 Active raised bogs*</li> <li>■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration</li> <li>■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 23 August 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDPP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 15.3km north-west of the Draft KDEDPP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.	strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.	
Knockacoller Bog SAC (site code 002333), c. 15km to the north-west of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7110 Active raised bogs*</li> <li>■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration</li> <li>■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 08 February, 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 15km north-west of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>No</b>
Ballyprior Grassland SAC (site code 002256), c. 10.2km to the north-east of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 11 November 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 10.2km north-east of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.	pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.	
Lisbigney Bog SAC (site code 000869), c. 150m to the north of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>)</li> <li>■ 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i></li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 13 December, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 150m north of the Draft KDEDP area. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
Slaney River Valley SAC (site code 000781), c. 20.1km to the east of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</li> <li>■ 1095 Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)</li> <li>■ 1096 Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>)</li> <li>■ 1099 River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 20.1km east of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1103 Twaite Shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>)</li> <li>■ 1106 Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> (only in fresh water)</li> <li>■ 1130 Estuaries</li> <li>■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> <li>■ 1365 Harbour Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>)</li> <li>■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation</li> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> <li>■ 91E0 * Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 October 2011), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	
<p>Blackstairs Mountains SAC (site code 000770), c.</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
9.8km to the east of the County boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 29 November, 2019), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 9.8km east of the KDEDP area. There is a pathway between this SAC and KDEDP area, via a river known as at Mountain River, part of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. There is however no potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP as the Blackstairs Mountains SAC is c. 9.8km upstream of the KDEDP area and there is no possibility of surface water run-off reaching the SAC.</p>	
Bannow Bay SAC (site code 000697), c. 11.7km to the south-east of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1130 Estuaries</li> <li>■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> <li>■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand</li> <li>■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.7km south-east of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1420 Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (<i>Sarcocornetea fruticosi</i>)</li> <li>■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes')</li> <li>■ 2130 *Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes')</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 09 July, 2012), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>		
Hook Head SAC (site code 000764), c. 15km to the south-east of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays</li> <li>■ 1170 Reefs</li> <li>■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 October, 2011), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDED P could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 15km south-east of the KDED P area and there is a hydrological pathway via the Waterford Harbour and Eastern Celtic Sea. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the</p>	Yes



European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.	strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.	
Tramore Dunes and Blackstrand SAC (site code 000671), c. 9.3km to the south of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> <li>■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> <li>■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)</li> <li>■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 05 September, 2013), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 9.3km south of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Comeragh Mountains SAC (site code 001952), c. 14.6km to the south-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)</li> <li>■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation</li> <li>■ 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> <li>■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths</li> <li>■ 6216 Slender Green Feather-moss <i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i></li> <li>■ 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>■ 8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)</li> <li>■ 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>■ 8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 26 November, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 14.6km south-west of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.		
Nier Valley Woodlands SAC (site code 000668), c. 18.8km to the south-west of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> </ul> <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 11 January, 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.8km south-west of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDEDP.</p>	<b>No</b>
Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC (site code 000934), c. 15.7km to the north-west of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> <li>■ 6230 Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 05 July 2018), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 15.7km north-west of the Draft KDEDP area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the</p>	<b>No</b>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of January 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDED P.</p>	
<p>Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC (site code 000412), c. 21.6km to the north-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>■ 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>■ 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06 September 2016), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Draft KDED P could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 21.6km north-west of the Draft KDED P area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the Draft KDED P.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

### 3.4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment - Summary

According to the draft Guidance published by the European Commission (*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, 21st November 2018) the “integrity of a site” relates to the site’s conservation objectives. For example, it is possible that a plan or project will adversely affect the site only in a visual sense or only affect habitat types or species other than those listed in Annex I or Annex II. In such cases, the effects do not amount to an adverse effect for the purposes of Article 6(3). If none of the habitat types or species for which the site has been designated is significantly affected then the site’s integrity cannot be considered to be adversely affected.

In addition, plans or projects or applications for developments which have “no appreciable effect” on the protected site are excluded from the requirement to proceed to appropriate assessment<sup>7</sup> (Opinion of Advocate General Sharpston in *Sweetman*, para. 48).

In other words, if, following Screening, there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

European sites with no connection/pathway to the Draft KDED area can be screened out (Appropriate Assessment Screening) and they are not considered any further in this report. By virtue of their locations, and the presence of potential pathways, of the 27 European sites listed in **Table 3.1** there is the possibility of there being a significant effect on a total of 12 sites (these are listed in **Table 3.4**), and this results in a requirement for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

There is potential for significant effects (at least, the potential for significant effects cannot be excluded) as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Disturbance to species of conservation concern;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution;
- Emissions to air;
- Emissions to water.

Despite its positive intent there is the possibility that the implementation of certain of the actions listed in the Draft KDED could result in significant effects on 12 European sites. Applying the precautionary principle therefore, and in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive, Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62011CC0258>

## 4 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

### 4.1 Introduction

As set out in Section 3.4 the implementation of the Draft KDEDP has the potential to impact on up to 12 European sites. Given this conclusion, which is based on the Precautionary Principle, it is necessary to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

At this stage it is necessary to determine whether the Draft KDEDP would result in *significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any European site* with respect to the site's structure, function, and/or conservation objectives.

These potential adverse effects may arise either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

The Draft KDEDP, once implemented, will support the development of unique and compelling destination experiences focused on a number of immediate and strategic destination opportunities and catalyst projects in Kilkenny City and County. It is driven by local, regional, national, European and International plans and policy.

Nevertheless, as set out in the preceding sections, there is the potential that the implementation of certain elements of the Draft KDEDP could lead to impacts on these European sites. This is particularly the case for actions that will result in construction or other development, and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

There is the possibility of reduction of habitat area, or loss of habitat within European sites in the Zone of Influence as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the Draft KDEDP. Any development works, no matter how minor, adjacent to watercourses (such as those associated with the River Nore SPA and River Barrow and River Nore SAC) have the potential to cause habitat loss or a reduction in habitat / water quality, with indirect effects on the European sites themselves. Similarly works within any European sites could lead to fragmentation (breakup) of habitats, resulting in impacts on site integrity or cause degradation to, any habitats associated with any European site.

There is the possibility of disturbance to key species arising as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the Draft KDEDP. The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites are sensitive to disturbance from noise, light, vibration and other construction activities including inappropriately timed works, as well as from recreational and amenity activity (human disturbance). Rivers and estuarine sites such as the River Nore SPA, River Barrow and River Nore SAC and Lower River Suir SAC are prone to contamination risk due to surface water runoff during construction. Any works near or within these sensitive sites could lead to disturbance of these species.

There is the possibility of changes to key indicators of conservation value arising as a result of the implementation of the Draft KDEDP. This could arise via pollution, siltation or other run-off to watercourses that could ultimately discharge to the European sites. Any pollution-related impacts on the QIs/SCIs of any European site could adversely affect the integrity of the sites.

## 4.2 Potential impacts from the Draft KDEDP, including in-combination effects

### 4.2.1 Is the Draft KDEDP necessary for the management of European sites?

As set out in the Habitats Directive (Article 6(3)), plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require Appropriate Assessment. Management in this context means management for nature conservation and the qualifying interests of the European site, specifically the conservation objectives – to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitats and species for which the site has been selected.

While the Draft KDEDP has been developed with sustainability as core elements its purpose is to deliver and promote enhanced tourism experience within the County. Therefore, the Draft KDEDP is not considered to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

### 4.2.2 Are there elements of the Draft KDEDP with potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites

The elements/actions of the Draft KDEDP have potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites during construction and operational phase. Any development of existing and new infrastructure located within the potential zone of influence of any European site has the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, for example via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water and, potentially, disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

The Draft KDEDP, once implemented, is expected to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. Despite its positive intent, the Draft KDEDP has the potential to give rise to effects on European sites within its zone of influence under the following scenarios:

- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect water quality, flow and/or morphology and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly increase risk of flooding and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect groundwater quality or supply and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect air quality due to emissions and affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any risk of habitat loss, fragmentation or degradation to European sites or network supporting European sites, protected habitats and species, including via increased visitor numbers and human activity;
- Any potential for a risk of direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species, e.g. development at coastal sites /along rivers/within bogs, noise disturbance due to construction, light pollution etc.;
- Any Action that could risk a reduction in ecological connectivity between European sites and/or the ecological networks supporting them.

#### 4.2.3 Appraisal of the of the Strategic Objectives of the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Draft KDEDP is presented in **Table 4.1**.



Table 4.1 Appraisal of the Strategic Objectives of the Draft KDEDP

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
<p><b>Vision</b></p> <p>The Kilkenny Vision 2033 statement is for Kilkenny to be:</p> <p><i>“Kilkenny is a leading year round destination by 2033, providing an exceptional experience blending medieval with contemporary and the great outdoors. A revitalised Medieval Mile is at the core of the Kilkenny City visitor experience linking Kilkenny Castle with iconic attractions who captivate audiences through a new experiential approach. A best in class city experience links seamlessly with the outdoor experiences across the county brought alive through our river based activities, woodlands, trails and activity centres. The destination is globally recognised as a Ireland’s home for design, craft and creative experiences. Visitors are attracted by a year round programme of culture, festivals and events, reflecting Kilkenny’s association as a vibrant and fun city experience.”</i></p>	<p>This vision statement sets a target objective for destination experience and tourism in Kilkenny. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, industry and associated workers. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore no negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
<b>Strategic Objective 1 : Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland’s Ancient East.</b>		
1.1 Develop the Medieval Mile to become a key attractor for Kilkenny City and the catalyst for visitor attraction and destination experience innovation delivered by a Kilkenny visitor attractions network committed to experience innovation.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
1.2 Harness Visit Kilkenny, Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland’s marketing campaigns to drive awareness in the international and domestic markets.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
1.3 Maximise the international appeal of Kilkenny Castle and its potential to orientate visitors to other attractions and city wide locations.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
1.4 Realise the tourism potential of the Abbey Quarter and how it is integrated into the Kilkenny cultural and creative experience.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
1.5 Develop County Kilkenny into river activity centre of excellence using the Three Sister Rivers to introduce visitors to a mix of urban and rural outdoor activity experiences linked to local communities across the city and county.	<p>While the overall intention of this objective is positive, resulting actions (e.g. water-based activities) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. The development of new and existing blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from</p>	<b>Yes</b>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
	both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
1.6 Develop Kilkenny into a world class design, craft and creative destination building on its designation as a World Craft Council Craft City and Region.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 : Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.</b>		
2.1 Maximise the investment in the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny to become a signature experience within Kilkenny City and enhance their role in developing a new experiential Medieval Mile approach.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
2.2 Enhance the visitor experience within the network of county wide heritage experiences working with OPW to encourage visitor dispersal to county sites.	The development works might give rise to uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	<b>Yes</b>
2.3 Develop the visitor experience and site capacity at Woodstock House and	The development works might give rise to uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these	<b>Yes</b>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
Gardens to become a signature attraction within the county.	locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites (River Nore SPA and River Barrow and River Nore SAC).	
2.4 Maximise investment in the Kilkenny riverside activity facilities to become a catalyst for river tourism and linkages to river activity hubs across the county	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
2.5 Expand the range of things to do for families through new product development or enhancing existing experiences linked to existing or potential new activity hubs.	The development works might give rise to uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	<b>Yes</b>
2.6 Maximise the heritage of craft and artisan producers by creating year round opportunities to meet the makers and build on the investment in crafts hubs in the county. Examine the opportunity to reinvigorate the Castle Yard into a vibrant craft and creatives centre.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
2.7 Augment the creative experience base through the development of a new city based international attraction focused on animation.	The development works might give rise to uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	<b>Yes</b>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
2.8 Grow the number and range of rural food experiences to grow the reach of Taste Kilkenny between the city and county. Build on the unique brewing and distilling heritage of Kilkenny City to create a unique portfolio of experiences contributing to the overall food and drink heritage of the area.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
2.9 Support the city of Kilkennys night time economy initiatives including the use of visitor attractions and public spaces as venues for innovative events and installations.	In the absence of mitigation, the use of visitor attractions and public spaces presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from the use of these spaces and/or provision of ancillary infrastructure for the events.	<b>Yes</b>
2.10 Develop a new strategy for festivals and cultural events in Kilkenny to enhance and grow the existing calendar of events and the creation of one major creative / cultural event of scale.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
2.11 Grow the accommodation base across the city and county.	The development of new and existing accommodations might result in uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Hence, mitigation is required.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the destination is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.</b>		
3.1 Develop the trails linkages between rural communities and Kilkenny city to create the infrastructure that will encourage the	The development of new and existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations, has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility,	<b>Yes</b>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
<p>visitor to explore the county through slow tourism activity e.g. Kilkenny to Inistioge and links to the South East Greenway.</p>	<p>reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain effects on all Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	
<p>3.2 Optimise new technologies to disperse visitors across the destination reflecting Kilkenny’s creative and innovation profile.</p>	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
<p>3.3 Examine the opportunity to link Kilkenny with the Dublin to Cork / Waterford Greenway to become part of the wider regional and national trail network.</p>	<p>This objective will result in a better understanding of the baseline, encourage modal shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and encourage use of active travel measures, resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environment.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
<p>3.4 Examine the requirements to enhance the Kilkenny cycling infrastructure and the development of a network of safe and accessible cycling trails across the county.</p>	<p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>3.5 Enhance the capacity of existing trails such as the Kilkenny Trails, Butler Trail,</p>	<p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
Lingaun Valley Trail and opportunities such as the William Marshall story to orientate the visitor around the destination.	construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
3.6 Develop the transport links between the city and county, building on existing pilot programmes linked to the rural Kilkenny experience.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	<b>Yes</b>
3.7 Examine new opportunities for innovative visitor orientation and way finding that builds on the destination’s creative and craft heritage adopting a destination theme to link the city to the county e.g. placemaking and signage innovation.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
3.8 Develop a series of regional connection projects with neighbouring counties destinations through product linkages e.g. Castles, Food, Gardens, Adventure, Craft and Culture.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure that it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.</b>		
4.1 Provide the tourism industry training to grow their capacity and capabilities to increase their international	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
sales linked to existing and emerging destination development opportunities.		
4.2 Grow the digital capacity of the tourism industry in Kilkenny.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
4.3 Develop an experience development training and capacity programme to enable the crafts and creative community realise economic opportunities through tourism.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
4.4 Support the development of community experiences and create new level of capacity to ensure rural communities can realise the benefits of tourism.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
4.5 Encourage participation in key strategic programmes such as the Fáilte Ireland Employer Excellence Programme to ensure tourism is an attractive employment option.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
4.6 Support Kilkenny tourism businesses to build expertise and knowledge to allow them to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of their business.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
4.7 Develop the capacity and capabilities of the tourism industry to deliver an enhanced range of family experiences	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for families and will have positive effect on population and human health.	<b>Yes</b>



Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
contributing to the development of Kilkenny as a family destination.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.</b>		
5.1 Adopt sustainability as a core destination message and promote an enhanced sustainability focus through our environment, heritage, culture and community experiences.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
5.2 Achieve low carbon and sustainable growth in the development of urban and rural visitor experiences to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
5.3 Collectively work towards reducing the carbon footprint of tourism.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
5.4 Ensure tourism is integrated into future urban and rural regeneration activity in developing the city and county as a great place to live, work and visit.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
5.5 Create awareness of the importance of the Kilkenny Tourism structure to support cohesive promotion and development approach in Kilkenny.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism opportunities in Kilkenny.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
5.6 Develop the capacity of the Kilkenny Tourism Network to deliver on the tourism vision for the destination through collaboration and new ways of working together, cross promotion and collaboration in the delivery of new visitor experiences.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism opportunities in Kilkenny and promote collaboration for effective working.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
5.7 Develop a series of tourism clusters aligned with the experience development focus within the Kilkenny DEDP.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.  In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	<b>Yes</b>
5.8 Work in partnership with the OPW to enhance the visitor experience across the key visitor sites.	This objective will promote collaboration with OPW, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of sites and have positive effect on population and human health.  No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore no negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
5.9 Work with Kilkenny Visitor attractions network and experience providers to deliver accessible tourism experiences.	This objective will promote collaboration with OPW, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of sites and have positive effect on population and human health.  In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	<b>Yes</b>

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required ? Yes / No
5.10 Examine local community experience development opportunities through sport tourism events and the local culture of sport and Gaelic games.	This objective would result in positive effects for promoting sports tourism and cultural heritage and will not result in adverse environmental consequences. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>

#### 4.2.4 Appraisal of the Catalyst Projects and Destination Enablers listed within the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

The Draft KDEDP includes a list of catalyst projects and destination enablers which will be delivered to support the above strategic objectives of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the catalyst projects is detailed in **Table 4.2** below.

There are 5no. catalyst projects and 7no. destination enablers in total. Projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might give rise to uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

Where potential negative or uncertain effects on European sites have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided. See **Section 4.4** of this Report.

Table 4.2 Appraisal of the Catalyst Projects and Destination Enablers of the Draft KDEDP

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
<b>CATALYST PROJECTS</b>				
<b>1.</b>	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 1 : RE-IMAGINED MEDIEVAL MILE</b>			
1.1	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Develop a visitor experience master plan for the Medieval Mile to develop a best in class urban tourism experience linking all elements of the Kilkenny medieval experience from visitor orientation, way finding, wider industry engagement and a new experiential approach across all visitor touchpoints.	<p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
1.2	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Undertake an attractions experience audit among Kilkenny City attractions to influence a new experience led approach across all Kilkenny attractions as part of the ambition to deliver a world class Medieval Mile visitor experience.		
1.3	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Grow the number of ultra lux experiences linked to emerging opportunities around craft, design, river activities and a new vision for the Medieval Mile experience.		
1.4	<b>Medieval Mile Master Plan</b>	Develop the opportunity to link the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny with sacred sites in Co. Kilkenny such as the Lingaun Valley and local community experiences.		
1.5	<b>Kilkenny Urban Gardens Experience Trail</b>	Examine the opportunity for a Kilkenny Urban Gardens Experience Trail linking existing gardens and new experiences to include Kilkenny Castle, Butler House, Butler Gallery, Rothe House and future Abbey Quarter developments.		
1.6	<b>Kilkenny City Interpretation</b>	Examine the opportunity to develop new standards of interpretation of key historical/heritage buildings across Kilkenny City through an innovative approach to information delivery that enhance walking and cycling tours of the city.		
1.7	<b>Kilkenny Living History Project</b>	Examine the feasibility of developing a Kilkenny “Living History” project focused on the evening time animation of the city’s urban experience.		
1.8	<b>Kilkenny Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan</b>	Undertake an assessment of the future orientation and way finding requirements based on the Kilkenny Living City model and potential mobility		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		projects around the city core and future investment in the public realm to include a focus on the visitor experience.		
1.9	<b>Kilkenny Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan</b>	Develop a roadmap and vision for the Kilkenny Outdoor Spaces and their future incorporation into how the urban open spaces contribute to the tourism economy, visitor experience and link with existing attractions and community amenities.		
1.10	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Deliver on the vision for the Abbey Quarter masterplan detailing the elements that will contribute to the city’s visitor experience and the opportunity to influence visitor flow across the city via incorporated infrastructures such as coach parking. This will include the development of the area as a key city event space (i.e. pre-planned infrastructure for outdoor events, provision for a Spiegeltent).		
1.11	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Undertake an opportunity assessment on buildings in or adjacent to the Abbey Quarter that have the potential to contribute to the international vision for craft, design and cultural provision in the city.		
1.12	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Examine the opportunity to develop a creative/design and arts centre in the Abbey Quarter to grow the scale of creative and design experiences in Kilkenny.		
1.13	<b>Abbey Quarter Masterplan</b>	Explore the expansion of the Smithwicks Experience into the Abbey Quarter as part of the areas future integration of tourism within the area.		
<b>2.</b>	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 2: CREATIVE CITY EXPERIENCE</b>			
2.1	<b>World Class Creative and Animation Visitor Experience</b>	Develop a world class creative and animation space delivering visitor experiences that motivate domestic and international visitors to visit Kilkenny.	This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.	<b>Yes</b>
2.2	<b>Creative Visitor Orientation</b>	Develop a creative destination approach to way finding, orientation and place making that builds on the previous success of the ‘Kilkenny Catwalk’ installations across the city.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing	

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No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.3	<b>Kilkenny Creative Theme</b>	Undertake an assessment of the requirements to develop a visitor focused 'Kilkenny Creative Theme' linking existing and emerging cultural, creative and design experiences to reflect a world class creatives and design destination.	infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	
2.4	<b>World Crafts Council Craft City and Region Vision &amp; Action Plan</b>	Develop a World Crafts Council Craft City and Region Vision and Growth Action Plan to create international visibility for Kilkenny supported by the associated experiences to realise the global opportunity. This will also examine the requirements to dedicated resources to grow the craft and design opportunity for Kilkenny as evident in comparable international destinations.		
2.5	<b>Castle Courtyard Development Plan</b>	Undertake a concept development plan for the Castle Courtyard to maximise its potential as a focal point for Kilkenny craft and design and its role in orientating visitors across the city and county to explore associated craft experiences.		
2.6	<b>Jewellery/ Goldsmith and Ceramics Centres of Excellence</b>	Complete the development of the Crafts Centres of Excellence in jewellery/goldsmith and ceramics and pottery in Thomastown supported by an experience development programme that links the city with the Thomastown craft experience.		
2.7	<b>Experience Development Programme</b>	Develop the experience development capacity of the design and craft sector through a dedicated experience development programme.		
3.	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 3: RIVER TOURISM CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE</b>			
3.1	<b>River Barrow Masterplan</b>	Develop and implement a tourism masterplan for the River Barrow.	While the overall intention of this project is positive, resulting actions (e.g. water-based activities) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. The development of new and existing blueways has the	Yes
3.2	<b>River Tourism Experiences</b>	Grow the number of river experiences in Kilkenny linked to water activities, local heritage and community tourism.		
3.3	<b>Platforms for Growth Activity Centre</b>	Develop the Platforms for Growth activity centre in Kilkenny City supported by a programme of training for the activity industry to maximise the river amenity opportunity and the enhancement of Three Sisters River Experience.		

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No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
3.4	<b>Kilkenny City / Thomastown River Navigation Project</b>	Examine the feasibility of a river navigation project linking Kilkenny City with Thomastown.	potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.  The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. Increased tourism in these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
3.5	<b>Waterways College</b>	Develop the Waterways College in Graiguenamanagh to become a catalyst for river enterprise and activity development in the county. Develop the “learn to” tourism opportunity through the Waterways College focused on river activities.		
4.	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 4: KILKENNY ATTRACTIONS EXPERIENCE</b>			



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No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
4.1	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Develop a visitor experience plan for Kilkenny Castle to continuously operate as international best in class experience. This will include a visitor experience audit and also account for projects being delivered under the Castle’s masterplan and potential new experiences in the Castle and Gardens. This will also include an examination of signage and wayfinding, foreign language capabilities, use of technology and tour guide training.	<p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
4.2	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Examine future visitor experience opportunities for the ultra luxe market and Kilkenny Castle.		
4.3	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Deliver the elements of Kilkenny Castle accessibility project and the enhancement of the castle and grounds as leading accessible tourism experience.		
4.4	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Examine the opportunity for Kilkenny Castle to promote other sites and encourage visits to city centre attractions and county wide attractions e.g. Castle to St. Canice’s Cathedral. Examine the interpretation opportunity on the Blue Corridor of Kilkenny Castle to introduce visitors to other sites on the Medieval Mile and regional attractions such as Ormond Castle. Examine the visitor orientation opportunities linking Kilkenny Castle to Medieval Mile and the ability to influence visitor flow from the site to the city.		
4.5	<b>Kilkenny Castle Visitor Experience</b>	Review the development of saleable Kilkenny Castle Gardens experiences across the four seasons and the associated opportunities provided by a seasonal approach.		
4.6	<b>Kilkenny Tourism - Attractions Network</b>	Establish a dedicated capacity building approach for the Kilkenny attractions through Kilkenny Tourism to work collectively to develop the destinations visitor attraction experience scale and grow the collective marketing capacity of attractions.		
4.7	<b>Kilkenny Famine Experience</b>	Enhance the visitor experience at the Kilkenny Famine experience with the implementation of a multilingual and enhanced audio-visual approach.		
4.8	<b>Museum of Medieval Kilkenny</b>	Undertake an experience review and commercial performance assessment after one year following the opening of the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny to examine learnings and adjustments to commercial planning if required.		

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No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
4.9	<b>City Gaol Development</b>	Undertake feasibility analysis into the development of the City Gaol (underneath the Courthouse that currently houses ten gaol cells with an isolation unit with an opportunity to develop a visitor experience to create a new visitor experience linked to the Medieval Mile cluster).		
4.10	<b>OPW Attractions</b>	Undertake a programme of visitor experience training / development across all visitor focused OPW sites		
4.11	<b>Jerpoint Abbey</b>	Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience at Jerpoint Abbey and opportunities to maximise the sites potential as a county based attraction.		
4.12	<b>Kells Priory</b>	Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience requirements at Kells Priory as Ireland's largest enclosed ecclesiastical site.		
4.13	<b>Dunmore Cave</b>	Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience requirements at Dunmore Cave.		
<b>5.</b>	<b>CATALYST PROJECT 5: TRAILS AND OUTDOORS</b>			
5.1	<b>Castlecomer Discovery Park Master Plan</b>	Implement the Castlecomer Discovery Park master plan and grow its capacity to support the county's ability to attract the family market, grow the outdoor product base and add to the accommodation stock in rural communities. Explore the opportunity with Coillte to expand the experience at the Castlecomer Discovery Park.	The development of new and existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations, has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.  The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential	<b>Yes</b>
5.2	<b>Castlecomer Discovery Park Needs Analysis</b>	Develop a needs analysis for Castlecomer Discovery Park that provides a road map aligned with existing site activities and future opportunities identified in the master plan. This will examine Castlecomer Discovery Park as a key site project that will motivate city visitors to explore the county.		
5.3	<b>Kilkenny Trails Enhancement Programme</b>	Undertake an assessment of the Kilkenny trails to identify immediate and longer term enhancements to continuously add to progress the user experience and identify potential new trails and enhancement of the Kilkenny outdoor activity product.		
5.4	<b>South Kilkenny Development</b>	Assess the opportunity for South Kilkenny communities to develop local experiences, accommodation and supporting services linking to the Waterford to New Ross Greenway.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
5.5	<b>South Leinster Way Trail Opportunities</b>	Examine the opportunity to grow the community experience base associated with the South Leinster Way. Assess the South Leinster Way to establish trail opportunities linking Kilkenny with adjoining counties.	to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
5.6	<b>Kilkenny to Inistioge Walking and Cycling Trails</b>	Develop a planned approach to link Kilkenny City to Inistioge through the development of the required walking and cycling trail infrastructure.		
5.7	<b>Inistioge to Waterford/ New Ross Greenway</b>	Undertake a feasibility analysis of connecting Inistioge to the Waterford to New Ross Greenway and potential recreational linkages with Woodstock Estate and Gardens.		
5.8	<b>Glenmore / Slieverue to Waterford / New Ross Greenway</b>	Examine the feasibility of a future connection to the Waterford to New Ross Greenway linking with Glenmore and Slieverue.		
5.9	<b>Barrow Way Pedestrian Cycle Bridge</b>	Examine the infrastructural requirements to unlock the tourism and activity potential on the Barrow Way and Tinnahinch Castle with the addition of a pedestrian / cycle bridge.		
5.10	<b>Woodstock House and Gardens Master Plan</b>	Develop a visitor experience master plan for Woodstock House and Gardens to become a key catalyst for sustainable tourism and outdoor product excellence in Kilkenny. This will include an analysis to identify the requirements to develop.		
5.11	<b>Kilkenny Forest Experiences</b>	Develop a five year roadmap with Coillte to examine the requirements at agreed Kilkenny Forests with capacity for visitor experience development and the creation of a collective destination forest experience to include sites such as Woodstock House and Gardens, Jenkinstown and Millenium Woods.		
<b>DESTINATION ENABLERS</b>				
<b>6.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 1: TOURISM INDUSTRY CAPABILITIES</b>			
6.1	<b>International Sales Project</b>	Develop and implement a new international sales project for Kilkenny supported by the appropriate capacity and capability training required across the tourism industry to successfully target international visitors.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of	<b>Yes</b>

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
6.2	<b>Family Market Development</b>	Develop an industry wide focus on growing the share of the family market in Kilkenny linking day and evening time experiences with the accommodation sector.	potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	
6.3	<b>Night Time Economy Innovation</b>	Develop Kilkenny City as a regional night time economy hub growing the range and diversity of things to do and see in the evening. Implement the night time economy pilot and identify a number of key night time opportunities for development aligned with Kilkenny DEDP.		
6.4	<b>Key City Visitor Attractions</b>	Examine the visitor experience development requirements for key city visitor attractions to motivate visitors to explore the city with a focus on priority sites including St. Canice’s, Rothe House and the Medieval Mile Museum.		
6.5	<b>Cultural Experiences Development</b>	Grow the range of new Kilkenny cultural experiences across the city merging different experience categories to create a unique blend of experiences e.g. the Clay Rooms and Cake Face.		
6.6	<b>“Learn to” Experiences</b>	Expand the range of signature “learn to” experiences with the potential to extend into the evening time economy e.g. the development of Cake Face Cookery School and expansion into the evening “learn to” experiences.		
6.7	<b>Kilkenny Tourism Digital Capacity Audit</b>	Undertake a digital capacity audit of the Kilkenny tourism industry to identify key gaps in how the industry markets and sells its experience and informs future training needs.		
<b>7.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 2: REGIONAL CONNECTORS</b>			
7.1	<b>Regional Conference Centre</b>	Examine the feasibility of developing an opportunity site in Kilkenny City to deliver a regional conference centre.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 3: FOOD AND DRINK HERITAGE</b>			
8.1	<b>Kilkenny Whiskey Trail</b>	Develop an international Kilkenny whiskey trail experience built on the origins of Irish Whiskey and its reference in the Red Book of Ossory. Support the development of the whiskey trail with the required industry training and development of premium saleable experiences around the whiskey story in Kilkenny.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
8.2	<b>Red Book of Ossory Experience</b>	Examine the feasibility of permanently housing the Red Book of Ossory in Kilkenny to create an international experience based on the heritage and origins of Irish Whiskey.		
8.3	<b>Brewing and Distilling Heritage</b>	Develop a series of drinks experiences linked to the heritage of brewing and distilling in Kilkenny. Support the development of new experiences in local breweries through the examination of a dedicated “Brew Kilkenny Experience Trail” to complement the Whiskey Trail.		
8.4	<b>County wide Food Trail</b>	Grow the Taste Kilkenny Food Trail through annual growth in the number of food and drink experiences through Kilkenny and enhancing the commercial capacity of food producer to consider new tourism opportunities.		
<b>9</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 4: SUSTAINABILITY / CLIMATE ACTION</b>			
9.1	<b>Empowering Climate Action Change</b>	Drive change at individual business level, through recruitment of all stakeholders into a long-term programme of Fáilte Ireland supports.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>
9.2	<b>County Wide Sustainable Tourism Initiative</b>	Develop a county wide sustainable tourism initiative to develop the profile of Kilkenny as a sustainable visitor destination.		
9.3	<b>Kilkenny Sustainable Transport Model</b>	Develop a sustainable transport model linking Kilkenny City and county and providing visitors with the opportunity to visit key attractions, activities and communities.		
<b>10.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 5: RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT</b>			
10.1	<b>Lingaun Valley Master Plan</b>	Undertake a Lingaun Valley tourism development master plan to create a road map of the opportunities that exist to develop the destination, cluster development focus and community tourism opportunities.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or	<b>Yes</b>
10.2	<b>Lingaun River Valley Slate Quarry Outdoor Recreation and Activity Hub</b>	Undertake a feasibility / opportunity assessment on the potential for Lingaun River Valley Slate Quarry to develop into an outdoor recreation and activity hub.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
10.3	<b>Community Tourism Access Hub</b>	Develop Wind Gap as a community tourism access hub to the Lingaun Valley. Examine local opportunities to expand the accommodation base and grow the area's capacity to retain visitors in the Lingaun Valley.	their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in sensitive locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
10.4	<b>Lingaun Valley App</b>	Examine the feasibility of developing a Lingaun Valley augmented reality mobile app to deliver an augmented reality heritage experience based on the sacred sites in the Lingaun Valley and key points of interest on the Lingaun Valley trail.		
10.5	<b>Callan Friary Complex Master Plan</b>	Examine the tourism elements of the Friary complex master plan in Callan to develop associated tourism opportunities for the area and cultural, heritage and creative experiences.		
10.6	<b>Graiguenamanagh Cycle Bridge</b>	Explore the feasibility of the development of a cycle bridge in Graiguenamanagh to expand the town's ability to link with an additional network of trails.		
10.7	<b>Graiguenamanagh Hotel Concept</b>	Support the development of the dispersed hotel concept in Graiguenamanagh linking a range of repurposed rooms across the town.		
10.8	<b>County Creative &amp; Design Focal Points</b>	Develop a series of county creative focal points and visitor experiences in Callan, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown to develop community, arts and creative experiences linked to the Kilkenny creative, craft and design story.		
10.9	<b>Kilkenny GAA Community Experiences</b>	Grow the GAA cultural visitor experience linking city and county through a series of Kilkenny GAA community experiences. Undertake a pilot with interested GAA clubs and interested private sector operators to assess the feasibility of growing the summer time GAA experiences focused on the heritage of hurling and introducing visitors to hurling matches.		
<b>11.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 6: FESTIVALS AND EVENTS</b>			
11.1	<b>International Events and Festivals Strategy</b>	Develop a five year international events and festivals strategy for Kilkenny City and County to grow key events across the year and examine new event opportunities. This will include a re-appraisal previously successful niche events hosted in Kilkenny e.g. Roots Festival, Food and Drink festivals.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>No</b>

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No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
11.2	<b>Heritage Site Event Venues</b>	Develop a pilot programme to explore the extended use of heritage sites as potential event venues and deliver niche Kilkenny experiences <i>e.g.</i> St. Canice's as a concert / gala dining venue.		
<b>12.</b>	<b>DESTINATION ENABLER 7: ACCOMMODATION GROWTH</b>			
12.1	<b>Accommodation – Opportunity Sites</b>	Grow the accommodation base in opportunity sites across Kilkenny City and county focused on developing a mix of new hotel bedroom stock combined with a mix of sustainable accommodation options suitable for rural locations.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in sensitive locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
12.2	<b>Accommodation Audit</b>	Undertake an accommodation audit and destination accommodation strategy for Kilkenny identifying short to long term development opportunities.		
12.3	<b>RV / Camper Van Accommodation</b>	Undertake a review of possible county wide sites to expand the recreational vehicle (RV/campervan) options in the county aligned with the growth of the outdoor product base. Undertake a county wide accommodation audit to establish accommodation growth requirements and the opportunities that exist to support rural communities and the outdoors <i>e.g.</i> campsites, RV/glamping and niche accommodation.		

#### 4.2.5 Direct, indirect or secondary effects?

None of the Actions of the Draft KDEDP have any resource requirements from any European site as a result of any of the actions contained therein.

Any pollution could adversely affect the habitats and species listed as qualifying interests in any of the European sites, many of which rely on good water quality. Also, during construction works there is potential for an increase in run-off due to compaction of the soil which will in turn reduce the infiltration capacity and increase the rate and volume of surface water run-off. This can increase surface water run-off and sediment loading which has potential to impact the local drainage and in turn on the European sites.

In addition to the habitats and species associated with the European sites, bird species, may be sensitive to disturbances arising as a result of any proposed development. Construction works have the potential for indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites and their qualifying features of interest. Potential impacts include habitat degradation as well as disturbance to habitats, species and ecosystem dynamics due to noise, vibration, air quality, and disturbance due to human activities. In addition there is a potential risk to flora and fauna arising from dust deposition, which in extreme cases can inhibit photosynthesis in plants and can increase turbidity in watercourses.

During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

#### 4.2.6 In-combination / Cumulative effects with other plans and programmes

It is a requirement of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that when considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects.

If it can be clearly demonstrated that the plan or project will not result in any impact on the integrity of a European site then the plan or project should proceed without considering the in-combination test; further, if there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have an impact on the integrity of a European site alone, then any such impacts must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The Actions listed within the Draft KDEDP will be required to comply with the relevant international, national and regional policies, plans and programmes and also undertaken individual environmental assessments for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and any other relevant processes as appropriate.

The Draft KDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also be subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. **Table 4.3** lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the Draft KDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the Draft KDEDP.



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The Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, and management, cultural heritage, climate change, etc. for County Kilkenny. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan and have been assessed as such. The Draft KDEDP will comply with the provisions set within the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan which itself has been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the Draft KDEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed the implementation of the Draft KDEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher level plans in relation to increased economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

**Table 4.3 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes**

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040  National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 ( <i>As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030</i> )	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National CFRAMS Programme  South- eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have	No

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Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
National 4 <sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	No
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
County Development Plans (Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027, Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028, Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028)	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. Each of the CDP with Zone of Influence of County Kilkenny has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Ireland’s Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No

### 4.3 Conservation objectives, threats and vulnerabilities of the European Sites

A key aim of the Habitats Directive is to ‘maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest’. Site-specific conservation objectives aim to define favourable conservation condition for particular habitats or species within a European site. In the case of European sites for which site-specific conservation objectives have not yet been prepared, generic conservation objectives have been provided by NPWS.

The integrity of a site is the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

Site specific conservation objectives for each of the 12 European sites under appraisal in the NIS have been published by NPWS. For every SAC the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Qualifying Interests (habitats), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out. For every SPA the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Special Conservation Interests (the bird species and the wetland habitat), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.

### 4.4 Mitigation measures

The findings set out in **Section 4.2** of this Natura Impact Report confirm that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan have potential for adverse effects on the integrity of a total of 12 European sites.

This Plan sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the **Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027** especially the **Ireland’s Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy**. As stated in the KDEDP these include:

- **Infrastructure Capacity** - *With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential impact on existing infrastructure as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant. The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.*
- **Visitor Management** - *Those receiving funding 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, including ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities.*

*Extensive research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas with visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.*

- **Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services** - *Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities.*

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027. The Development Plan provides for sustainable planning and management control of all development in County Kilkenny – including the delivery of Destination & Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Proposals for development within the Draft KDED area must comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions included within the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*. Given that the KDED sits within and at a lower level in the planning hierarchy, the measures contained to the Development Plan, and in its Natura Impact Report (NIR), SEA Environmental Report / SEA Statement and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) are applicable to the Draft KDED.

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*, provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the Draft KDED. These measures include the following selected aims / policies / objectives:

#### Strategic Aims:

- **Open Space and Recreation** – *‘To ensure the provision of open space and recreational facilities in order to maintain, and improve open spaces that contribute to the well-being and making of place for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors to the County while protecting and enhancing biodiversity.’*
- **Infrastructure & Environment** – *‘To ensure a sufficient level of water services within the county for the implementation of the core strategy, provide a framework for the protection of the environment, including water quality, the avoidance of flood risk and the provision of a high-quality telecommunications infrastructure.’*

#### Key Environmental Protective Policies in the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027:

- **Infrastructure & Environment-**

*It is Council policy to adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk. In accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, the avoidance of development in areas where flood risk has been identified shall be the primary response.*

*It is the Council’s policy to have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.*

- *To have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.*
- *For all significant construction/demolition projects, the developer shall include an Environmental Management Plan. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.*
- *Construction and demolition waste management plans, to be prepared in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.*

#### Key Environmental Protective Objectives in the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027:

##### ■ Protection of Natura 2000 Sites -

Objective 1A - *To implement the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive and ensure that any plan or project within the functional area of the Planning Authority is subject to appropriate assessment in accordance with the Guidance Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 or any subsequent version, and is assessed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in order to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of the site.*

##### ■ Natural Heritage –

Objective 9A - *Continue to identify and map habitats and green infrastructure of county importance, and raise awareness and understanding of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity identifying green corridors and measures to connect them.*

Objective 9B - *To identify and map green infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.*

##### ■ Infrastructure and Environment -

Objective 10 A - *To facilitate Irish Water and to assist, subject to service level agreements, with the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure provision in accordance with the water services strategic plan, made in accordance with the Water Services Act 2007*

Objective 10B - *To implement the measures of the River Basin Management Plan, including continuing to work with communities through the Local Authority Waters Programme to restore and improve water quality in the identified areas of action.*

Objective 10G - *To implement the Southern Region Waste Management Plan.*

#### Development Management Requirements:

- *To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.*
- *To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road*

*verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands, trees) which are not within designated sites.*

- *To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development.*
- *To protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character of the county, and to ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.*
- *To have regard to, and seek the conservation of identified trees and woodlands from a) the National Survey of Ancient and Long-Established Woodlands, b) the Tree Register of Ireland (c) sites of significance identified in the Kilkenny Woodlands Survey 1997, (d) the National Survey of Native Woodlands, and (e) Survey of Mature Trees in Kilkenny City and Environs, in the assessment of planning applications.*
- *To retain hedgerows, and other distinctive boundary treatment such as stone walls, when undertaking, authorising or approving development; where the loss of the existing boundary is unavoidable as part of development, to ensure that a new hedgerow is planted using native species, and species of local provenance to replace the existing hedgerow and/or that the wall is re-built using local stone and local vernacular design.*
- *To discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and, where appropriate make use of Tree Preservation Orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an amenity, biodiversity or historic value.*
- *To require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments as appropriate*
- *To require relevant development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.*
- *For proposals connected to surface water systems, risks associated with the spread of crayfish plague shall be considered and applicants should submit a crayfish plague management strategy where appropriate.*
- *To protect the landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness of County Kilkenny, and have regard to the guidance set out in the Landscape Character Assessment.*
- *Where necessary, to require that applications are accompanied by a visual impact assessment, particularly in upland areas, river valleys and areas of greater sensitivity.*
- *To seek the protection and sustainable management of historic gardens, parklands and designed landscapes in the Kilkenny County and City, their setting and their visual amenity.*
- *To require an assessment, including mitigation measures, of the potential environmental, visual, and heritage impacts of proposals to floodlight buildings and structures.*
- *Where flood risk may be an issue for any proposed development, a detailed flood risk assessment should be carried out appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks arising. In particular, any area within or adjoining flood zone A or B, or flood risk area, shall be the subject of a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed. This shall be undertaken in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanying this Plan.*
- *To have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal.*

- *For all significant construction/demolition projects, the developer shall include an Environmental Management Plan. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.*
- *Construction and demolition waste management plans, to be prepared in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual waste.*

## 4.5 Summary and Conclusion

This Natura Impact Statement has considered the potential impacts of the implementation of the Draft Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan on the integrity of the relevant European sites.

This report concludes on the best scientific evidence that it can be clearly demonstrated that no elements of the Draft KDEDP will result in any impact on the integrity or Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives, provided mitigation measures are implemented.







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