

Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

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Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems' (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992).

Flora is all of the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all of the animals found in a given area.

Environmental Problems

Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain Plans and programmes on the environment (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse.

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and ideal targets. If environmental problems are identified at the outset they can help focus attention on important issues and geographical areas where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.

Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are environmental components, such as air, water or soil, through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects.

Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act and Regulations (as amended) to define a structure included by a planning authority in its Record of Protected Structures. Such a structure shall not be altered or demolished in whole or part without obtaining planning permission or confirmation from the planning authority that the part of the structure to be altered is not protected.

Recorded Monument

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A monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places that is set out County by County under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified. Any works at or in relation to a recorded monument requires two months' notice to the former Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

SEA Scoping

Scoping is the process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. SEA coping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

Strategic Actions

Strategic actions include: Policies / Strategies, which may be considered as inspiration and guidance for action and which set the framework for Plans and programmes; Plans, sets of coordinated and timed objectives for the implementation of the policy; and Programmes, sets of projects in a particular area.

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Masterplan and the alternatives can be evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects – unmitigated

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

An Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Draft Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Draft Plan' or the 'Draft KDEDP') has been prepared to comply with the provisions of Article 12 of S.I. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations – as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

This document is a non-technical summary (NTS) of the SEA Environmental Report (ER). It shall endeavour, insofar as possible, to present a condensed summary of the ER, using non-technical terms, but without omitting or understating any environmental effects of note.

The Environmental Report and NTS, which should be read in conjunction with the Draft KDEDP, has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, environmental, planning and landscape consultants, on behalf of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

1.2 Destination & Experience Development Plans

A Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five year commercial destination and experience development plan prepared for an area.

The role of the KDEDP is to 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. The Draft KDEDP has been prepared through a consultative process involving tourism industry representatives, members of the local community and Kilkenny County Council.

1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) stems from *Directive 2001/42/EC*¹ (the 'SEA Directive') of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Article 1 of the Directive states that:

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

In effect, SEA comprises a systematic assessment process of predicting and evaluating the 'likely significant environmental effects' of implementing a proposed plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The overall aim of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through two Statutory Instruments (S.I.):

¹SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 *The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004*, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 *The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*; and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004*, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 *The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*.

The former regulations, (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011), relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for “agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use”, and these provisions are applicable to the Draft KDEDP as a tourism sector plan.

The latter regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, “a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”, and are not applicable to the Draft KDEDP.

1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Draft Plan

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes:

- a) *which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive², or*
- b) *which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)³ i.e. requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken on the plan or programme.*

The Draft Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory tourism sector plan that does not set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when consent of other projects is being granted. Therefore, SEA of the Draft KDEDP is not required under Article 3(2)(a) above of the SEA Directive.

The Draft Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a “plan” contained within the *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended)* and therefore, must be screened for the requirement to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC). The Screening for AA (BSM, 2024) has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity of European sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects

² Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, *on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*

³ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

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are avoided are required. Therefore, in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) above and guidance provided in SEA Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08⁴, a SEA of the Draft KDEDP is been undertaken.

This Environmental Report provides the findings of the SEA and takes account of recommendations contained in submissions from the Environmental Authorities. On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared, summarising, *inter alia*, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

⁴ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

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
- Strategic Objective 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.
- Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the region is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.
- Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.

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

The accompanying strategic objectives of the Draft KDEDP are set out in **Table 8.1** of this report.

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 is provided and are assessed in **Appendix 8.1** of the SEA Environmental Report .

3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.1 Introduction

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

Directive 2001/42/EC⁵ on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the ‘SEA Directive’) requires EU Member States to assess the ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;
- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.


The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental Assessment and defined as:

“...the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision...”⁶

3.2 SEA Stages and Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the Draft KDEDP are outlined in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process


Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	<p>The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a ‘Screening process’, to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.</p> <p>The preparation of the pre-draft <i>Draft KDEDP</i> has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be</p>	<p>Completed</p> 

⁵ SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

⁶ Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

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Stage	Description	Status
	<p>excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft KDEDP</i> is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).</p>	
<p>2. Scoping</p>	<p>Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ methods of assessment; ■ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme; ■ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and ■ the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment. <p>Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.</p>	<p>Completed</p> 
<p>3. Environmental Report</p>	<p>Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P.</p> <p>The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (<i>e.g.</i> Draft, Amended Draft <i>etc.</i>), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011.</p> <p>The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanies the draft P / P required on public display.</p>	<p>Current Stage</p>
<p>4. SEA Statement</p>	<p>Completion / adoption of the Final KDEDP, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report is concluded and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme; ■ how the environmental report, and any submissions /observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme; ■ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and ■ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme. 	<p>Final (Future) Stage</p>

3.3 SEA Screening and Requirement for SEA

The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain P / Ps that are above specified thresholds. Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / P is subject to a 'Screening process', (Stage 1) to consider if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.

Screening for the purposes of SEA is defined as “*the determination of whether implementation of a P / P [Plan or Programme] would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P / P [Plan or Programme] requires SEA.*”⁷ The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria:

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

It is also noted that in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08⁸, SEA for a P / P is also a mandatory requirement where the P / P requires Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The *Draft KDEDP* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive* (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The AA Screening has concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and therefore appropriate assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required.

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*⁹ the *Draft KDEDP* is also required to undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*¹⁰ (the *SEA Directive*).

3.4 SEA Scoping

Scoping allowed for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

The consultation was undertaken with the following Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, on 13 July 2023:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications;
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine; and
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

⁷ EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

¹⁰ DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

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Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and comments have been incorporated into the Draft Plan and Environmental Report as set out in **Table 3.1**.

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Table 3.1 SEA Scoping Submissions / Observation from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</p>	<p>The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations:</p> <p>EPA highlights several key environmental issues to consider in preparing the Plan and SEA. The Plan should set out the implementation arrangement and governance structures, document synergy between the Plan and key national plan and programmes, reflect objective of the SEA Directive. The SEA shall address climate & biodiversity issues.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Draft Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
	<p>Recommendations from the SEA & AA including mitigation measures and monitoring proposals should be integrated into the Plan. SEA Environmental Report and the Plan should include a chapter on how the recommendations and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Plan.</p>	
	<p>EPA recommend that the SEA Environmental Report includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and Plan policies/measures.</p>	
	<p>EPA recommend that the Plan should include summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and, where relevant, Plan policies/measures.</p>	
	<p>EPA highlight their recently published guidance note to help provide guidance and ideas on how to carry out strategic environmental assessments (SEA) of tourism sectoral plans and programmes in Ireland - 'Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector'.</p>	
	<p>The submission describes the key findings and chapters of the 'State of the Environment Report- Ireland's Environment An Integrated Assessment 2020'. The report recognises the need for full implementation of existing environmental legislation and review of governance/coordination on environmental protection across public bodies.</p>	
	<p>EPA highlights the requirement under the SEA Regulations to consult with Environmental Authorities (EPA, Minister of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Department of Environment, Climate & Communications, Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)</p>	

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Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	Appendix I to the EPA submission includes comments on the SEA Scoping Report - scope of the SEA, data and knowledge gaps, range of effects, monitoring, implementation & reporting, SEA statement, integration with other key Plans and Programmes, available guidance & resources, webtools.	
Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)	GSI encourage use of and reference to their datasets attached to their submission. These include geoheritage (county geological sites), culture & tourism, groundwater, geological mapping, geohazards, natural resources, geochemistry of soils, surface waters and sediments, historic mines, physiographic units. GSI also includes a list of publicly available datasets relevant to planning, EIA & SEA processes.	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.

3.5 SEA Environmental Report

The current stage of the SEA process (Stage 3) involves the preparation of the Environmental Report for the identification, description, evaluation and mitigation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the Draft KDEDP and the alternatives taking account of the geographical scope of the Plan.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provides detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report.

The SEA Environmental Report will be placed on public display, together with the Draft KDEDP and for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

3.6 SEA Statement

Following approval of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan, an SEA Statement (Stage 4) will be prepared which includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the KDEDP, highlighting the main changes to the KDEDP which resulted from the SEA process;
- How the SEA Environmental Report and consultations have been taken into account, summarising the key issues raised in consultations and in the Environmental Report indicating what action was taken in response;
- The reasons for choosing the KDEDP in the light of the other alternatives, identifying the other alternatives considered, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the KDEDP, as adopted, was selected; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the KDEDP.

3.7 SEA Guidance

The SEA Environmental Report reflects the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the *SEA Directive*) and the national implementing Regulations S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and by the PDR 2001, as amended.

The following principal sources of guidance were used in the SEA process including in the preparation of the Environmental Report:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004.
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 -European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.
- Guidance on Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission, 2004, at:
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- EPA Water and Air Quality Reports at: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/legislation/air/quality/>
- EPA Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 at:
<https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report-/#>
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- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2002, at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009, at: http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

3.8 Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is *likely to have a significant impact* on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Stage 1 is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08¹¹ (15 February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA screening in that *"where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- An AA of the plan must be carried out, and
- In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."

Hence, where a plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the KDEDP and the SEA Environmental Report.

The AA has concluded that the KDEDP will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

¹¹ NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

4 Relationship with Plans and Programmes

Fáilte Ireland has prepared this Draft Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. The plan is designed to build on the ambition of the Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy. Regional Tourism Development Plans, 2023- 2027 (RTDS) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). These plans provide the strategic framework for other tourism development strategies, most notably, Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) and County Tourism Strategies. The Kilkenny DEDP has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for Ireland's Ancient East.

The Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan (KDEDP) is a five year commercial destination and experience development plan. The role of the KDEDP is to support the development of unique and compelling destination experiences focused on a number of immediate and strategic destination opportunities. The KDEDP was developed through a consultative process involving tourism industry representatives, members of the local community and Kilkenny City and County Council. The KDEDP will guide tourism development through a roadmap of projects linked to a number of destination development opportunities. Over the course of the plan implementation, success will be measured by achieving growth across a range of indicators from new experience supply, visitor demand patterns, growing the value per visitor and a number of additional destination competitiveness indicators.

The key objectives of Destination and Experience Development Plans are:

- Ensure the visitor experience in Kilkenny is brought to life through a mix of tourism products and experiences that will attract domestic and international visitors and retain them in the destination for longer.
- Unlock the economic potential of tourism by progressing key initiatives that will disperse tourists across the city and county.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to local communities by providing sustainable employment opportunities.
- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development by enhancing and creating compelling destination experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to attract leisure visitors on a year round basis to Kilkenny and immerse themselves in the community while providing the opportunity to interact with local people as part of the Kilkenny experience.
- Develop the role of Kilkenny as driver of regional tourism development and influence visitor flows across the South East.

As part of the SEA process, it is necessary to consider the environmental protection objectives, established at the international; European and national level which are relevant to the KDEDP and how they have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. In its making, the KDEDP 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, are detailed below.

There is a legislative framework for the protection of the environment and our natural resources relevant to the KDEDP. **Table 4.1** below provides a list of the principle legislative framework.

Table 4.2 and **Table 4.3** below provide a working list of the principal plans and programmes influencing the formulation of the KDEDP and the Environmental Report, either directly or through European,

National and / or County level policy. The relationship with other plans and programmes is discussed, as appropriate, under the Current State of the Environment in **Section 5** of this Report.

Table 4.1 Legislative Framework

Legislative Framework	
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended	Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended	Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EEC)	Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by (2014/52/EU)	Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU) as amended by (EU/2023/2413)
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended)
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979	Renewable Energies in the 21 st Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC)	EU 2020 climate and energy package
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	EU Renewable Energy Road Map
Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)	European Landscape Convention 2000
Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)	Wildlife Acts 1976-2023
Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)	The Water Services Act (2007 – 2017)
Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)	Foreshore Act 1933-2022
Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)	Aquaculture Act 1997-2006
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	Sea Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)	The National Monuments Act 1930-2014
EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Roads Act 1993, as amended
Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)	European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea Fisheries) Regulations 2013

Table 4.2 Relevant National & Regional Plans and Programmes

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)	National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development
National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030	Climate Action Roadmap 2023
Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022	National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region	Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)
Ireland’s Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020	The Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)

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National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
National Mitigation Plan 2017	Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042
Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)
Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)	Ireland’s First National Cycle Policy Framework 2009
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2022)	Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021
Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness - 2016	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan
National 3 rd Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2017-2020
Draft National 4 th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027	Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	The National Broadband Plan 2020
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014- 2020	National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025
Draft National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2030	Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
National CFRAMS Programme	Heritage Ireland 2030
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021	Food Harvest 2020
Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027	National Adaptation Framework Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2018 and Review of the National Adaptation Framework 2022
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)	Climate Action Plan 2024
South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Water Services Strategic Plan / Capital Investment Programme (Irish Water)
People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025	Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) & Ireland Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan	Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019 – 2021	Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices 2021 - 2023
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways	National Physical Activity Plan 2013 – 2025

Table 4.3 Relevant Local Plans and Programmes

Local Plans and Programmes	
Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027	Kilkenny County Council Pollinator Programme 2022

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Local Plans and Programmes	
Draft Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028	Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021
Abbey Quarter Masterplan 2023	Kilkenny Local Transport Plan 2021-2027
County Kilkenny Rural Design Guide	Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy 2018-2022
Kilkenny County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024	Kilkenny Noise Action Plan 2019 – 2023

5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline)

5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the Draft KDEDP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the Draft KDEDP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the Draft KDEDP, if unmitigated.

5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan

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*.

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – ‘*the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.*’ In the absence of the Draft KDEDP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027* (CDP) and Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the County. The CDP details policies and objectives specific to tourism, however, the standalone KDEDP provides significant opportunities for specific set of tourism-related mitigation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

The KDEDP will play an important role In promoting and developing tourism in Kilkenny, help to attract visitors to the county, enhance the visitor experience and support the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry.

Therefore while higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan* and various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the absence of the KDEDP would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled. Less coordinated and controlled development would be less certain to result in the positive effects provided for by the KDEDP.

5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline

The baseline data helps to assess the current state of the environment, facilitate the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the Plan. Thus, this information creates a platform whereby existing issues relevant to the Kilkenny City & County area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of KDEDP does not exacerbate identifiable problems.

Baseline data collection is a first step in the process of evaluating the sensitivity of the environment. The *SEA Directive* requires that information is provided on ‘*any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan or programme.*’. Information is therefore provided on existing environmental

problems which are relevant to the Plan, thus helping to ensure that the Plan does not exacerbate any existing environmental problems in the study area.

The environmental aspects are described in line with the legislative requirements, under the following headings:

- Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna);
- Population and Human Health;
- Land, Soils and Geology;
- Water Quality;
- Air, Noise and Climate;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape;
- Material Assets;
- Interaction of the foregoing; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

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.

5.3.1 Biodiversity

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.

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.

There are 8no. SACs and 1no. SPA within County Kilkenny. There are a further 5no. SPAs and 13no. SACs within the ZoI of the Draft KDED. 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 website¹². Any potential for impact on European Sites have been fully addressed in the NIR that accompanies the Draft KDED and SEA Environment Report.

¹² NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) and *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) located in County Kilkenny and within the zone of influence of the County boundary are detailed in the SEA ER.

There are c. 28no. ancient woodlands and long-established woodlands in Co. Kilkenny. 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.

Under the requirements of the *Water Framework Directive* (WFD) a number of waterbodies (or parts of) must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). 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.

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth. 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. The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. The River Nore in County Kilkenny is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

5.3.1.1 Biodiversity Issues

Existing biodiversity issues / pressures and threats on Ireland’s habitats and species, which are also relevant to the County Kilkenny, include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, recreational activity works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of commercial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example development within watercourses.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes,
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at coastal sites, riverside walkways, pressure from increased visitor numbers etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.

5.3.2 Population and Human Health

The administrative area of Kilkenny covers an area of over 2,062 sq. kilometre. 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. The 2022 Census results showed that the population for County Kilkenny was 104, 160¹³ persons, an increase of c. 5.0% from the 2016 census (99, 232¹⁴ persons). The 2016 Census showed that the population of Kilkenny was an increase of c. 4.0% from the 2011 census (95, 419¹⁵ persons). There has been an increase in the population of the County from 2011 to 2022.

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of Kilkenny. The quality and diversity of Kilkenny's tourism is particularly strong in relation to its rich heritage, quality rural landscape and many towns and villages. 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; People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025, Food Vision 2020-2025 and the three-year Destination Marketing, Sales and Revenue Growth Plan for Kilkenny City and County. 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.

As stated in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan, *the Council will continue the development of major flagship tourism projects within the county to enhance the tourism product and will develop Kilkenny City and County as a leading tourism destination through continued sustainable expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating high-quality visitor services and the continued development and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.*

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being. Nationally there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally. The *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2026* has objectives for delivery of several greenways, blueways and upgrade of towpaths in the County.

5.3.2.1 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of the Kilkenny administrative area, include:

- Health and Well-being - continue the development of recreation and leisure facilities.
- Support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County.
- Radon - Radon risk map levels in the County have been collated from the EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland, refer to SEA ER.
- Flooding - Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. Refer to SEA ER.
- Information on the status of drinking water, wastewater and climate change are provided in other sections of this Report.

¹³ 2022 Census Data : <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2022&boundary=C03789V04537&guid=2ae19629-14a8-13a3-e055-000000000001>

¹⁴ 2016 Census Data : <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2016&boundary=C03849V04599&guid=2ae19629-14a8-13a3-e055-000000000001>

¹⁵ 2011 Census data : <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2011&boundary=C03994V04752&guid=C07>

5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. Coillte have provided access to many of their forests and support the use of the forests for recreational uses, and provide access to three forests currently in Co. Kilkenny; Jenkinstown, Coill an Fhaltaigh near Kilkenny City and Castlemorris.

County Kilkenny contains a range of soils that support various habitats and land uses and provide valuable mineral resource potential. Kilkenny comprises a mix of soil types which are described in detail in the SEA ER. These soils can be impacted upon by development, land use changes and water quality.

The *Seveso III Directive* (European Directive 2012/18/EU) and the *European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000* (S.I. No. 476 of 2000) apply to companies where dangerous substances are present in quantities equal to or above specified thresholds. At present there are three Upper Tier Seveso (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (Revocation) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 208 of 2015) sites in the county; Grassland Fertilisers (Kilkenny) Ltd. Palmerstown, Tullaroan Road, Kilkenny; Nitrofert Ltd., Raheen, New Ross and Trans-Stock Warehousing and Cold Storage Ltd., Christendom, Ferrybank. There are two Lower Tier Seveso Sites in close proximity to Co. Kilkenny. The Councils will consult with the Health & Safety Authority when assessing proposals for development of, in or near sites which are identified under the COMAH (Seveso II) Directive.

Kilkenny has a low landslide risk as much of the county is low-lying ground. According to Geological Survey, Ireland landslide susceptibility mapping, the vast majority of the county has been rated as having 'low' landslide susceptibility, with the risk rising to 'moderately low' to 'moderately high' in isolated patches throughout the county.

County Kilkenny is underlain by several different rock formations and includes- Tournaisian limestone, Visean Limestone & Calcareous Shale, Namurian Shale, Sandstone, Siltstone & Coal, Westphalian Shale, Sandstone, Siltstone & Coal, ORS, Sandstone Conglomerate & Mudstone, Silurian deep marine mudstone, greywacke & conglomerate, Siluro- Devonian granitic rocks & appinite, Lr Palaeozoic basic intermediate intrusion, Lower-Middle Ordovician slate, sandstone, greywacke, conglomerate, Ordovician Volcanic Rocks, Middle-Upper Ordovician slate, sandstone, greywacke, conglomerate¹⁶.

The GSI has identified 26no. geological sites in Kilkenny which are important Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites.

5.3.3.1 Existing Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology Issues

Existing land, soil and geology issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Soil - the loss / damage of soil from the construction of greenfield sites for development.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites can release CO₂ into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.
- Land- management of woodlands for recreational purposes.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the County.

5.3.4 Water Quality (including Flooding)

The *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface water and groundwater waterbodies. The monitoring programme, as part of the WFD, assesses water quality but also water trends of rivers in relation to ecological and physio-chemical

¹⁶ GSI Bedrock Geology - <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/publications/Pages/Bedrock-Geology-of-Ireland-Map-Scale-1-to-1-Million.aspx>

quality. The WFD status of rivers ranges from ‘high’ to ‘bad’. The EPA also undertakes water quality surveys for transitional and coastal waterbodies.

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. The status of the river waterbodies in County Kilkenny range from ‘bad’ to ‘high’, however the majority of the major river waterbodies range from ‘poor’ to ‘high’. EPA data, on the biological quality of watercourses, based on monitoring up to 2021, indicates that 3no. river 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.

Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally ‘good’¹⁷ 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’. County Kilkenny is underlain with both regionally important and locally important bedrock & gravel aquifers.

As part of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared. The main sources of flooding in Kilkenny are fluvial and other sources are pluvial and groundwater flooding.

5.3.4.1 Existing Hydrogeology and Water Quality Issues

The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Water - the surface waterbodies in County Kilkenny need to be improved to achieve ‘good’ ecological status in waterbodies by 2027.
- Water - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication;
- Water - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, water-based recreational sports, erosion, industry and urbanisation.
- Sustainable management of waterways and water-based recreation activities to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural resources and heritage areas.
- Water - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- Surface, ground & transitional water - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages. There is growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- Flooding - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criteria.

¹⁷ EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

5.3.5 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication '2022 Annual Report on Air Quality in Ireland' which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. County Kilkenny is located within Zone D, within the 'Rural Ireland' zone and Kilkenny city is located within Zone C in the 'other cities and large towns' zone. The air quality monitoring sites in County Kilkenny are located at Callan Road, Kilkenny (Station 36) and Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny (TNO4157).

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' in each region. The current air quality across County Kilkenny is 'good'. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

In accordance with *Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006)*, a *Noise Action Plan* was prepared by Kilkenny County Council (2019). Kilkenny's only major noise source for the purpose of this plan is major roads.

The recent *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland's *Climate Action Plan 2023* sets out Ireland's national and sectoral targets in this regard. The IPCC Working Group II Report, published in February 2022, states that economic damage from climate change has been detected in climate-exposed sectors, with regional effects on agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, and tourism³⁸. The Action Plan supports the further development of sustainable tourism and sustainable destination management and provides for various measures that will contribute to climate mitigation, such as those relating to sustainable mobility, carbon pricing, electricity, agriculture and the built environment.

5.3.5.1 Existing Issues

In urban areas, concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO₂, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible.

Tourists contribute to greenhouse gas emissions across the same sources/sectors as local and national populations, e.g. transport, heating and electricity, agriculture/food production and waste generation.

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or with snowfall could adversely impact upon town's and people in County Kilkenny leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

5.3.6 Material Assets

The latest *Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2022*¹⁸ was published by the EPA in 2023. The report provides a summary of assessment of drinking water quality in public supplies and public group water schemes in Ireland during 2022. There are currently 34 public wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in Kilkenny county. Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities, etc, and the Council will continue to work with Irish Water to monitor the performance of the networks and to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the County.

EU and National waste management policy can be summarised by the waste hierarchy of prevention, recycling, energy recovery and disposal. County Kilkenny is located within the Southern Region and waste management is controlled in accordance with the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021. The Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021¹⁹ provides a framework for the prevention and management of wastes in a safe and sustainable manner for ten county councils including Kilkenny County Council.

The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner More Competitive Europe, March 2020, forms one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal. A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy²⁰ was published in 2020 and outlines Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.

The '*National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022-2025*' is a national document which seeks to achieve a shift to more sustainable means of transport by setting actions and timeline for Modal Change. There are ten national roads within County Kilkenny. There are 421km of regional routes in the County. Regional roads provide important strategic linkages within the county and to the national road network and other counties. Bus Éireann and a number of private operators operate services throughout County Kilkenny. Kilkenny is well served by a number of regional services providing national and regional connectivity to key urban centres such as Dublin, Cork and Waterford.

There are two passenger railway lines in use in the county. A spur from Kilkenny City at Lavistown connects to the Dublin-Waterford main passenger line. There are stations on the line at Thomastown and Kilkenny City. The Waterford-Limerick passenger line runs in the south of the county, serving Waterford and Carrick-on-Suir stations. Air travel is essential for industrial, commercial and tourism development. The nearest airport to Kilkenny is the Waterford Airport, south of Waterford City centre. It is Council policy to support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County²¹.

The existing transmission network in County Kilkenny comprises mostly 110 kilovolt (kV) circuits and one 220 kV circuit in the south of the county. There is one transmission substation within the County at Clara near Kilkenny City, which is served by two 110 kV overhead lines. High-speed broadband and telecommunications is core to competitiveness. The National Broadband Plan 2019²² (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland.

¹⁸ EPA Drinking Water Quality - <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/drinking-water-quality-in-public-supplies-2022.php>

¹⁹ Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 - <https://www.southernwasteregion.ie/content/southern-region-waste-management-plan-2015-2021-associated-reports>

²⁰ DCCAE (2020).

²¹ Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>

²² DCCAE, 2019: <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Delivering%20the%20National%20Broadband%20Plan.pdf>

ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) are the utility provider responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas. The national gas mains network traverses County Kilkenny from the north west to south east, serving Kilkenny City and Ballyragget in the north of the county before continuing to Tipperary from where it serves Waterford via Carrick-on-Suir.

5.3.6.1 Existing Material Asset Issues

The increased tourism at the Country level will result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services. Existing material assets issues / pressures within County Kilkenny, include:

- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - increased tourist numbers will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- Energy - there is a need to phase out the reliance on fossil fuels, with a shift to renewable energy resources. Identifying and enabling indigenous renewable energy will also support Ireland's energy security. New developments require excellent energy and power services which create direct and indirect emissions, particularly CO₂, methane and dioxins.
- Transport - the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of County Kilkenny. Sustainable development of blueways and greenways is essential to promote recreation and tourism.
- Waste - increased tourist numbers will pose challenge in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure and will put pressure on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.
- Light Pollution - can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed which can in turn lead to inappropriate or excessive light spillage.
- Utilities - provide, protect and maintain adequate utilities to support existing and envisaged development.

5.3.7 Cultural Heritage

Kilkenny's heritage is a valuable economic resource and underpins tourism and associated economic benefits in the County. In Kilkenny the archaeological heritage dates from the Mesolithic period (8000 BC) to the end of the Medieval Period (1700 AD) and includes earthworks (e.g. ringforts), megalithic sites; Fulachta Fiadh; early Christian ecclesiastical sites, churches, graveyards, medieval buildings; castles, industrial archaeology and underwater sites. In 2019 the Council carried out a Preliminary Audit of Archaeological Landscapes in County Kilkenny which identified a number of potential archaeological landscape sites, including 3 sites which were selected as a priority for protection - Freestone Hill and environs, the Lingaun River Valley - specifically the megalithic monuments within it and the relationships between them and Tory Hill and environs.

County Kilkenny has a rich medieval heritage including a number of walled towns and villages, of which Kilkenny city is perhaps the best known. There are also other towns and villages throughout the county

which are known to have been walled, including Callan, Gowran, Inistioge and Thomastown²³. Kilkenny has a wealth of industrial heritage sites - sites of past industrial activity.

Kilkenny County Council has compiled an inventory of the historic graveyards of the County. The data from this survey has been mapped and is available for inspection on the Council's website²⁴. Historic gardens and designed landscapes are of natural heritage, architectural, landscape, cultural and historical importance. A total of 196 potential historic gardens and designed landscape sites in County Kilkenny were identified.

The architectural heritage of Kilkenny contributes to its unique sense of place. The Council wishes to ensure that those buildings, streetscapes and features which are of merit are protected and managed so that they retain their character and special interest. The record of protected structures for County Kilkenny are presented in detail in the SEA ER. There are now approximately 1,400 (City and County) buildings, structures and features listed in the RPS.

An architectural conservation area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve. There are 13 ACA's located within County Kilkenny – Ballyragget, Bennettsbridge, Callan, Castlecomer, Freshford, Gowran, Graiguenamanagh, Inistioge, Johnstown, Kells, Piltown, Stoneyford and Thomastown.

There are many 18th and 19th century bridges still in use in the county today. These include : Greensbridge and Johns Bridge (Johns Bridge was replaced in 1910) in Kilkenny City, Bennettsbridge, Thomastown Bridge, Castlecomer Bridge (over the River Dinan), Graiguenamanagh Bridge (over the River Barrow), and Inistioge bridge. These bridges, along with some late 18th century River Barrow bridges of Croomaboo Bridge in Athy, Co. Kildare, and Maganey Bridge in Laois, have been identified as forming a distinct local typology, and were labelled the "Kilkenny Group" of bridges.

5.3.7.1 Cultural Heritage Issues

Increased tourist activities have the potential for direct negative impacts on heritage features and their setting. This could directly impact upon the cultural amenity resource and tourism potential of County Kilkenny.

Existing cultural heritage issues / pressures include:

- Development of infrastructure -increased visitor numbers can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features and their views to / from architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest.
- Development in close proximity to sites and areas of cultural heritage may adversely impact upon the cultural landscape setting.
- Development has the potential to impact archaeological heritage which is sub-surface. This includes the insertion of services (e.g. cycleways), landscaping works, ground levelling and tree planting.
- Architecture - impact on heritage streetscapes of regional and local importance.
- Archaeology - impact on archaeological monuments and their settings including undiscovered sites / features.
- Risk - protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk.

²³ Kilkenny City and County Development Plan - <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/vol1-master-ccdp-2-11-2021.pdf>

²⁴ <https://historicgraves.com/>

5.3.8 Landscape & Visual

The landscape of County Kilkenny is a dynamic and valuable resource which incorporates all aspects of the natural, built and cultural heritage. The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for Kilkenny divides the county into four main Landscape Character Types (LCT) and these are - Upland Areas, Lowland Areas, River Valleys and Transitional Areas. These LCTs are further sub-divided into 14no. geographically specific Landscape Character Areas. These includes:

- Upland Areas - The Slieveardagh Uplands, The Castlecomer Plateau, Brandon Hill Uplands, The South Western Uplands and The South Eastern Hills
- Lowland Areas - The Kilkenny Basin and South Kilkenny Lowlands
- River Valleys - The Nore Valley, The Barrow Valley and The Suir Valley
- Transitional Areas - The Slieveardagh Transition, The Castlecomer Transition, The Brandon Hill Transition and The South Western Transition

Landscape values can be described as the environmental or cultural benefits (including services and functions) derived from various landscape attributes. The Landscape Character Assessment highlights the special landscape value of several of the Landscape Character Areas– in particular Brandon Hill Uplands and the River Valley Areas of the Rivers Nore, Barrow and Suir have been identified as being highly scenic and visually pleasing, and as having significant visual amenity value and tourism potential within the county.

Landscape Character Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from ‘High’ to ‘Low’ and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and / or tolerant of change.

There is a need to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads and river valleys throughout the county where these views are of high amenity value. Many of these views are associated with heritage and tourism sites and provide vantage points over high quality landscapes. These scenic views are of an amenity and tourism value and contribute to our quality of life. Within County Kilkenny, c.32no. views and prospects have been identified and c. 17no. views have been identified in Kilkenny City.

5.3.8.1 Existing Problems

Areas of a highly sensitive landscape have a low capacity to absorb new development and this can be a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive.

Existing landscape and visual issues / pressures include:

- New development having adverse and visual impacts on the landscape.
- Green Infrastructure - protecting the existing green infrastructure network from fragmentation and loss due to pressures of urban development within and adjoining the network.
- Ecosystem Services - recognising and promoting the value of ecosystem services that the green infrastructure network provides to the County.
- Protected views – development has potential to obstruct protected views and scenic routes

6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’ Given the position of the Draft KDEDP beneath the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 in the land use planning hierarchy, the measures identified in the SEA for the Development Plan have also been considered in this assessment, with some modification where appropriate.

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the Draft KDEDP (refer to **Table 6.1**). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the Draft KDEDP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the Draft KDEDP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the strategic objectives within the Draft KDEDP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives.

Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for Draft KDEDP

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ²⁵ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B_2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.
	B_3	Ensure Draft KDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH_2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.

²⁵ ‘Annexed habitats and species’ refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

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Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC_1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC_2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.

7 Assessment of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the plan will be implemented within the national planning hierarchy. As preparation of the Kilkenny Destination & Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory plan, the 'do-nothing' or 'do-minimum' scenarios are viable alternatives, as is the 'do-something' scenario.

7.2 Alternative 1: Do-nothing / Do-Minimum

Tourism operations in Kilkenny City and County would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan, whose objective is to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders involved in tourism activities and interest.

7.3 Do-something (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Plan)

The do-something scenario sees the preparation of a Plan that seeks to better manage tourism in Kilkenny City and County. The Plan will facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment.

While the Plan would co-ordinate activities and stakeholders in the tourism area, it would not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent (such frameworks fall under the remit of other public authorities). Therefore, any projects arising from the Plan would be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

In essence the Plan would present a five year sustainable tourism development plan for Kilkenny City and County. The key objectives of the Plan would be:

- Ensure local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of hero and ancillary tourism products that attract visitors and retain them for longer in the destination.
- Unlock the economic growth potential of an area by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate tourists to explore the wider destination.
- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development centred on creating strong signature, supporting and ancillary experiences that are commoditised through the creation of saleable experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to attract leisure visitors on a year round basis to Cork to immerse themselves actively in the community, interacting with local people.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

There are two separate alternatives under the 'do-something' (prepare a Plan) scenario.

Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects including land use and infrastructural development and land use activities. In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities, Alternative 2A would require stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the relevant Fáilte Ireland published guidance and documents.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) would have to demonstrate compliance, as relevant, with various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Further environmental requirements would be integrated into the Plan under Alternative 2A, relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management

Alternative 2B would not include the requirements for environmental protection and management described under Alternative 2A. Projects would continue to be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

7.4 Assessment of Alternatives

Three reasonable alternatives for the Kilkenny DEDP have been identified and assessed. The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

7.5 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Whilst unlikely to have negative environmental effects, Alternative 1 does not deliver positive benefits for tourism in Kilkenny City and County.

Alternative 2A will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Kilkenny City and County, whilst at the same providing for sustainable development and environmental protection.

Alternative 2B will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Kilkenny City and County, but without ensuring environmental protection.

Given the tourism and environmental benefits, Alternative 2A is selected as the preferred approach.

8 Assessment of Effects of the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

8.1 Introduction

The Draft KDEDP has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in **Section 5** of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the Draft KDEDP. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are detailed in **Section 6** of this Report.

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’. It is noted that during its preparation the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*, was subject to full SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)²⁶.

The environmental assessment of the ‘Strategic Objectives’ and of the ‘Catalyst Projects’ of the Draft KDEDP are set out separately in the following sections of this Report. The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

8.2 Environmental Assessment of the Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision, Strategic Objectives of the Draft KDEDP is presented in **Table 8.1**.

²⁶ <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/city-and-county-development-plan/adopted-city-and-county-development-plan.html>

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Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Strategic Objectives of the Draft KDDEP

(SEO Key: B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, ANC – Air Quality, Noise & Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p>Vision</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</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 the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>			<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p>No</p>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<i>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>						
Strategic Objective 1 : Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland's Ancient East.						
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. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes
1.2 Harness Visit Kilkenny, Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland's marketing campaigns to drive awareness in the international and domestic markets.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county, raise awareness and have positive effect on population and human health.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.					
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. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes
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. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2),		CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes
1.5 Develop County Kilkenny into river activity centre of excellence using the	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. water-based activities) could	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2),	ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p>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>	<p>have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. 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 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</p>		<p>MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)</p>			

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	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.					
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 overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No
Strategic Objective 2 : Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.						
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. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes

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<p>2.2 Enhance the visitor experience within the network of county wide heritage experiences working with OPW to encourage visitor dispersal to county sites.</p>	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage and biodiversity. The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>CH (CH1, CH2) B (B1, B2, B3),</p>	<p>LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>2.3 Develop the visitor experience and site capacity at Woodstock House and Gardens to become a signature attraction within the county.</p>	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, landscape & visual and biodiversity.</p> <p>Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain.</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2), B (B1, B2, B3), MA (MA1, MA2), WQ (WQ1, WQ2),</p>	<p>LSG (LSG1), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA3)</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.					
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	<p>The increased investment in river activity facility will result in positive effect for population and human health and neutral effects on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
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 of new and existing activity hubs might give rise to uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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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.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on architectural heritage.</p> <p>The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1)	Yes
2.7 Augment the creative experience base through the development of a new city based international attraction focused on animation.	The development of new animation attraction might give rise to uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such development and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
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	<p>This objective will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
of Kilkenny City to create a unique portfolio of experiences contributing to the overall food and drink heritage of the area.	therefore, mitigation is not required.					
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.	This objective will result in positive effects on population. However, in the absence of mitigation, the use of visitor attractions and public spaces presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from the use of these spaces and/or provision of ancillary infrastructure for the events.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
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. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on air quality & noise and human health due to elevated levels of noise & congestion.	PHH (PHH1)		ANC (ANC1, ANC2), PHH (PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.					
2.11 Grow the accommodation base across the city and county.	The development of new and existing accommodations might result in uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the destination is easy to access, navigate and consume for the visitor.						
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.	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	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), MA (MA3)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1, MA2), CH (CH1, CH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)		Yes

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	<p>including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects 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.</p>					
3.2 Optimise new technologies to disperse visitors across the destination reflecting Kilkenny's creative and innovation profile.	This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
3.3 Examine the opportunity to link Kilkenny with the Dublin to Cork / Waterford Greenway to become part of the wider	This objective will result in a better understanding of the baseline, encourage modal shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2),	No

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regional and national trail network.	encourage use of active travel measures, resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.				CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	
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>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health and on material assets by promoting sustainable transportation.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects 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.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), MA (MA3)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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<p>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.</p>	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>
<p>3.6 Develop the transport links between the city and county, building on existing pilot programmes linked to the rural Kilkenny experience.</p>	<p>This objective will enhance connectivity and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing transport links, presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>

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	such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
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 enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), CH (CH1, CH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No
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 enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No
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.						

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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.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism and also provide economic benefits to the county population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
4.2 Grow the digital capacity of the tourism industry in Kilkenny.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
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 support in raising awareness regarding the craft heritage of Kilkenny and also provide economic benefits to the county population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
4.4 Support the development of community experiences and create new	This objective would result in positive effects for the rural communities and will not result	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1,	No

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level of capacity to ensure rural communities can realise the benefits of tourism.	in adverse environmental consequences.				ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
4.5 Encourage participation in key strategic programmes across state agencies to ensure tourism grows as an attractive employment option.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
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 will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1, PHH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)				No
4.7 Develop the capacity and capabilities of the tourism industry to deliver an enhanced range of family experiences contributing to the	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for families and will have positive effect on population and human health.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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development of Kilkenny as a family destination.	However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.						
5.1 Adopt sustainability as a core destination message and promote an enhanced sustainability focus through our environment, heritage, culture and community experiences.	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1, PHH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)				No
5.2 Achieve low carbon and sustainable growth in the development of urban and rural visitor experiences to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1, PHH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA				No

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		(MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)				
5.3 Collectively work towards reducing the carbon footprint of tourism.	This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1, PHH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3),			LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2)	No
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.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
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 arise.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No

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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 arise.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
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. However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
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	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2,	No

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	<p>sites and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>				MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
5.9 Work with the Kilkenny Visitor attractions network and experience providers to deliver accessible tourism experiences.	<p>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.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
5.10 Examine local community experience development opportunities through sport tourism events	This objective would result in positive effects for promoting sports tourism and cultural heritage and will not result in	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2,	No

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and the local culture of sport and Gaelic games.	adverse environmental consequences.				MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	

8.3 Environmental Assessment of the Catalyst Projects listed within the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

The Draft KDEDP includes a list of catalyst projects and associated actions which will be delivered to support the above strategic goals and objectives of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the catalyst projects is detailed in the accompanying SEA ER.

There are 5no. catalyst projects and 7no. destination enablers in total and projects 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and destination enablers 1, 5, 6 & 7 in the absence of mitigation, could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Refer to Table 8.1A in Appendix 8.1 of the SEA ER for the detailed assessment of effects of the catalyst projects and their actions.

8.4 The Interrelationship between Environmental Factors

An overview of the key and minor / no interaction between environmental factors with potential for effects arising from the Draft KDEDP are set out in the matrix in **Table 8.2**.

Actions within the Draft Plan that give rise to positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component also have the potential to generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components – e.g. negative effect on soils can have a negative effect on biodiversity, water, and / or landscape. Likewise, actions supporting the delivery of SuDS will improve water quality, which in turn can have a positive effect on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is already embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that has been carried out in this environmental report. This ensures that there is adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of plan actions. In addition the mitigation measures set out in **Section 9.0** of this Report.

Table 8.2 Significant Interrelationships between Environmental Factors

Component Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Biodiversity		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☒	☑
Population & Human Health	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Land, Soils & Geology	☑	☑		☑	☒	☑	☑	☑
Water Quality	☑	☑	☑		☒	☑	☒	☑
Air Quality, Noise and Climate	☑	☑	☒	☒		☑	☑	☒
Material Assets	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑		☒	☒
Cultural Heritage	☒	☑	☑	☒	☑	☑		☑
Landscape & Visual	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Legend: Key Interaction ☑ Minor/No Interaction ☒								

8.5 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are 2 types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. The interrelationships

between environmental factors that help determine these potential effects are identified on **Table 8.2**.

- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, projects, etc.

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 8.3** 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.

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 8.2 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	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood	No

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Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
South- eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	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 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 th 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	No

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Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	

9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in **Section 8.0** of this Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Kilkenny Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan have potential for uncertain or negative effects on aspects of the environment. These potential negative and / or uncertain effects, which derive from potential works resulting from the relevant action, focus primarily on biodiversity, water, cultural heritage, material assets and landscape. This section of the Environmental Report identifies measures for the mitigation and avoidance of potential uncertain or negative environmental effects.

9.2 Mitigation Measures

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**. 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 are detailed in the accompanying SEA ER.

10 Monitoring

10.1 Introduction

Monitoring of the KDEDP and its implications on the environment is important to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. In accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”*

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (**Section 6**) used in the assessment. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the targets. The monitoring programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for monitoring and the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action. It is recommended that the monitoring for the KDEDP and review is undertaken in parallel with monitoring and review of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan for efficiency and given that similar data sets will be used to measure the progress of each plan.

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

Refer to **Table 10.1** below for the monitoring programme set for the SEA which includes details on the indicators, targets and data sources to monitor the progress of the KDEDP.

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Table 10.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)				
B1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ²⁷ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under European and International legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for habitats and species protected under European and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years). Consultation with NPWS (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
B2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under International and National legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under International and National legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Consultation with NPWS (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
B3	Ensure Draft KDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	Kilkenny County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
Population & Human Health (PHH)				

²⁷ 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
PHH1	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.	To comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	No contravention of the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan	Central Statistics Office (CSO) census data. Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
PHH2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.	Occurrence of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the KDEDPP, as identified by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and / or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of the KDEDPP.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Consultations with the HSE and EPA (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)				
LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.	Extent of conversion of land cover / green field to developed / artificial surfaces.	Contribute towards the target of the SEA for the National Planning Framework's (2018) to " <i>Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%.</i> "	CORINE mapping surveys (every 5 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
Water Quality (WQ)				
WQ1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment,	Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities	No deterioration in the status of any groundwater or surface water, or adverse effect upon the ability of any groundwater or	Consultations with the OPW, EPA and Inland Fisheries (every 3 years).

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
	in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	<p>Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009).</p> <p>Groundwater compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD.</p> <p>Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies reported.</p>	surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the KDEDP.	<p>Information issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
WQ2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.	Flood-related incidences related to the KDEDP.	Compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that any new developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands.	<p>Consultations with OPW (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)				
ANC1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.	<p>Demonstration of compliance with air quality and noise provisions.</p> <p>Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National</p>	To maximise the amount of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented.	<p>Consultations with EPA (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p>

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
		Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.		Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
ANC2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation.	To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented.	Consultations with EPA (every 3 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
Material Assets (MA)				
MA1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure.	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	Consultations with Uisce Éireann and EPA (every 3 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
MA2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.	Increase waste recycling in the County. Reduce waste generation in the County.	Consultations with Regional Waste Authority and EPA (every 3 years). Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
		<p>Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p>		
MA3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	<p>% change in modal split.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network.</p> <p>Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county.</p> <p>Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the County</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives</p>	<p>Consultations with TII and NTA (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
Cultural Heritage (CH)				
CH1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on archaeological or cultural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	<p>Consultations with National Monuments Section of Department (every 3 years).</p> <p>Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years).</p>

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
CH2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
Landscape & Visual (LV)				
LV1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.	Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
LV2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the CDP. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	Kilkenny County Council Environmental Monitoring (every 3 years). Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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