

# 13



## Landscape, Recreation & Amenity



## Chapter 13 Landscape, Recreation and Amenity

*Aim: To provide for the protection, management, and enhancement of the landscape of Kildare to ensure that development does not disproportionately impact on the unique landscape character areas, scenic routes or protected views; and to support the provision of high quality and accessible recreational facilities, amenities and open spaces for residents and visitors to the County, in recognition of the contribution of all forms of recreation to quality of life, personal health and wellbeing.*

### 13.1 Introduction

Landscape embraces all that is visible when one looks across an area of land. As well as being an important part of people's lives, giving individuals a sense of identity and belonging, landscape is the context in which all changes take place.

The landscape of County Kildare comprises a central plain bound to the east by the Kildare uplands, which lie at the foothills of the Wicklow and Dublin Mountains. The Curragh, the boglands of north-west Kildare and the fertile lowlands of the south all comprise part of the central plain. The plain lands are interrupted by two groups of isolated hills, the Chair of Kildare and the Newtown Hills. The location of these hills within the central plain has a considerable impact on the landscape of Kildare. Inland waters comprise the River Liffey, River Barrow, River Slate, River Boyne, Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Rye Water River traverse the county, providing important landscape features.

The natural diversity of the landscape, coupled with human interaction in the form of introduced features such as hedgerows, woodlands, archaeological monuments, settlements and buildings, all serve to give Kildare its distinctive characteristic landscape. All development which takes place has the ability to impact on this landscape, positively and negatively. Any new development or building has the ability to either enhance or detract from the environment. It is essential therefore that the landscape is protected and managed in a sustainable and coherent manner.

### 13.2 Policy Context

#### 13.2.1 Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of planning in its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This requires that development plans include objectives for the preservation of landscape, views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty. It also provides for the designation of Landscape Conservation Areas (LCA), Areas of Special Amenity (ASA) and the assessment of landscape character.

### **13.2.2 National Landscape Strategy of Ireland (2015-2025)**

In 2015, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government issued 'A National Landscape Strategy (2015-2025)', which states that:

*"Landscape Character Assessments will be prepared at local and intra-local authority level, building on the National Landscape Character Assessment, using Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines. These regional and local landscape character assessments will inform and guide landscape policy, action plans and local authority development plans."*

The Council will undertake a review of its Landscape Character Assessment on foot of any actions arising from the forthcoming National Landscape Character Assessment.

### **13.2.3 National Outdoor Recreation Strategy**

A National Outdoor Recreation Strategy is currently being developed by Comhairle na Tuaithe (The Countryside Council) in conjunction with the Department of Rural and Community Development. The strategy will provide a vision and an overarching framework for the growth and development of outdoor recreation in Ireland, creating a shared approach for the many strategies, programmes, agencies and elements in Ireland's outdoor recreation sector.

### **13.2.4 National Play Policy 'Ready, Steady, Play, Department of Health and Children (2004)'**

The Council acknowledges the overarching role of the National Play Policy and supports the following objectives contained therein:

- To improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas;
- To ensure that children's play needs are met through the development of a child-friendly environment;
- To give children a voice in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities; and
- To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to all children, particularly children who are marginalised, disadvantaged or who have a disability.

The Council acknowledges the Ready, Steady, Play: National Play Policy (2004) and the TeenSpace: National Recreation Policy for Young People of the Department of Health and Children and the objectives identified therein.

### **13.2.5 TeenSpace - The National Recreation Policy for Young People (2007)**

The TeenSpace - The National Recreation Policy for Young People (2007) seeks to address the recreational needs of young people between the ages of 12 and 18.

The policy's core objectives are to:

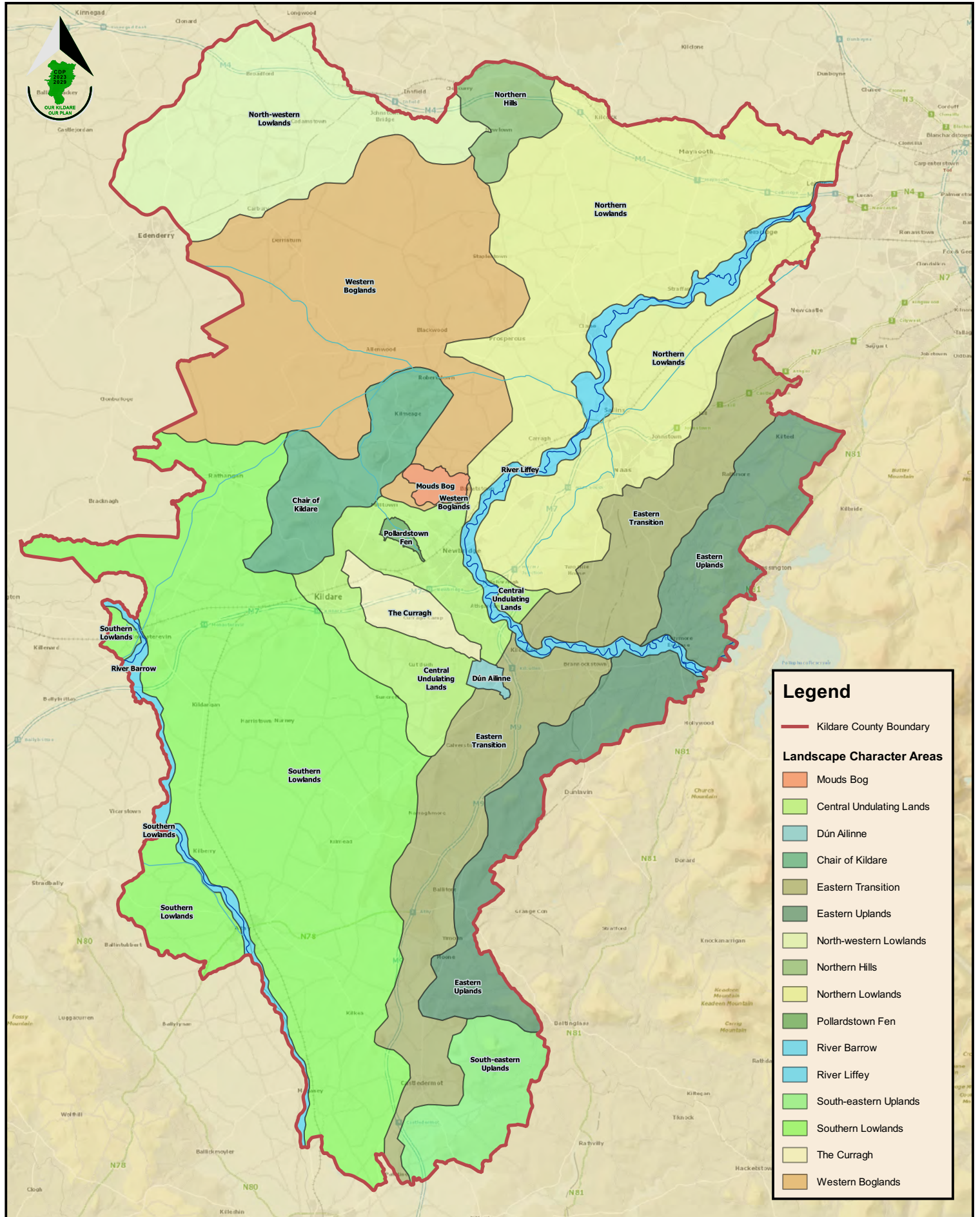
- Give young people a voice in the design, implementation and monitoring of recreation policies and facilities;
- Promote organised activities for young people and examine ways to motivate them to be involved;
- Ensure that recreational needs of young people are met through the development of youth friendly and safe environments;

- Maximise the range of recreational opportunities available for young people who are marginalised, disadvantaged or have a disability;
- Promote relevant qualifications /standards in the provision of recreational activities;
- Develop a partnership approach in developing and funding recreational opportunities across statutory community and voluntary sectors; and
- Improve information on recreational provision for young people in Ireland, including evaluation and monitoring.

### **13.3 Landscape Character Assessment**

In 2004, a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the county was undertaken. The LCA focused on characterisation i.e. the discernment of the character of the landscape based on its land cover and landform, but also on its values, such as historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape. It concentrates on the distinctiveness of different landscapes and on the sensitivity of that landscape to development. Map V1 - 13.1 outlines the indicative Landscape Character Areas of the county.

Landscape Character Areas are areas that generally share the same characteristics. Minor or very small distinctive features that arise from localised topographic circumstances are outcrops, rivers, bogs, fens which are mapped [see Map V1 - 13.1] as Subordinate Landscape Areas. Table 13.1 indicates the dominant sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area. It is important to note that within each of these areas there can be a wide variety of local conditions that can significantly increase or decrease sensitivity. Notwithstanding this, it is possible to identify a dominant sensitivity within each area – as highlighted in Table 13.1. This is determined by examining the presence/absence or dominance of sensitivity factors within each area by using landscape sensitivity. The resulting classification is then used to produce an evidenced–based Landscape Sensitivity Map [see Map V1 - 13.2].



### Legend

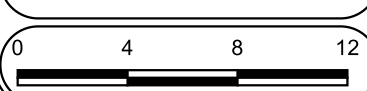
- Kildare County Boundary
- Landscape Character Areas**
- Mouds Bog
- Central Undulating Lands
- Dún Ailinne
- Chair of Kildare
- Eastern Transition
- Eastern Uplands
- North-western Lowlands
- Northern Hills
- Northern Lowlands
- Pollardstown Fen
- River Barrow
- River Liffey
- South-eastern Uplands
- Southern Lowlands
- The Curragh
- Western Boglands

Kildare County Council  
 Planning & Strategic  
 Development Department  
 Áras Chill Dara,  
 Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare.

## County Development Plan 2023-2029

Stage	Date	Description
County Development Plan	28/01/2023	Date the Plan comes into effect
County Development Plan	09/12/2022	Plan adopted by Elected Members

Scale: N.T.S.	Map Ref: V1-13.1
Date: January 2023	Drawing No.: 200/22/1354



## Landscape Character Areas

Ordnance Survey Ireland data reproduced under OSI Licence number 2022/CCMA/KildareCountyCouncil. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Ordnance Survey Ireland and Government of Ireland copyright.






**This drawing is to be read in conjunction  
 with the written statement**

### 13.3.1 Landscape Sensitivity

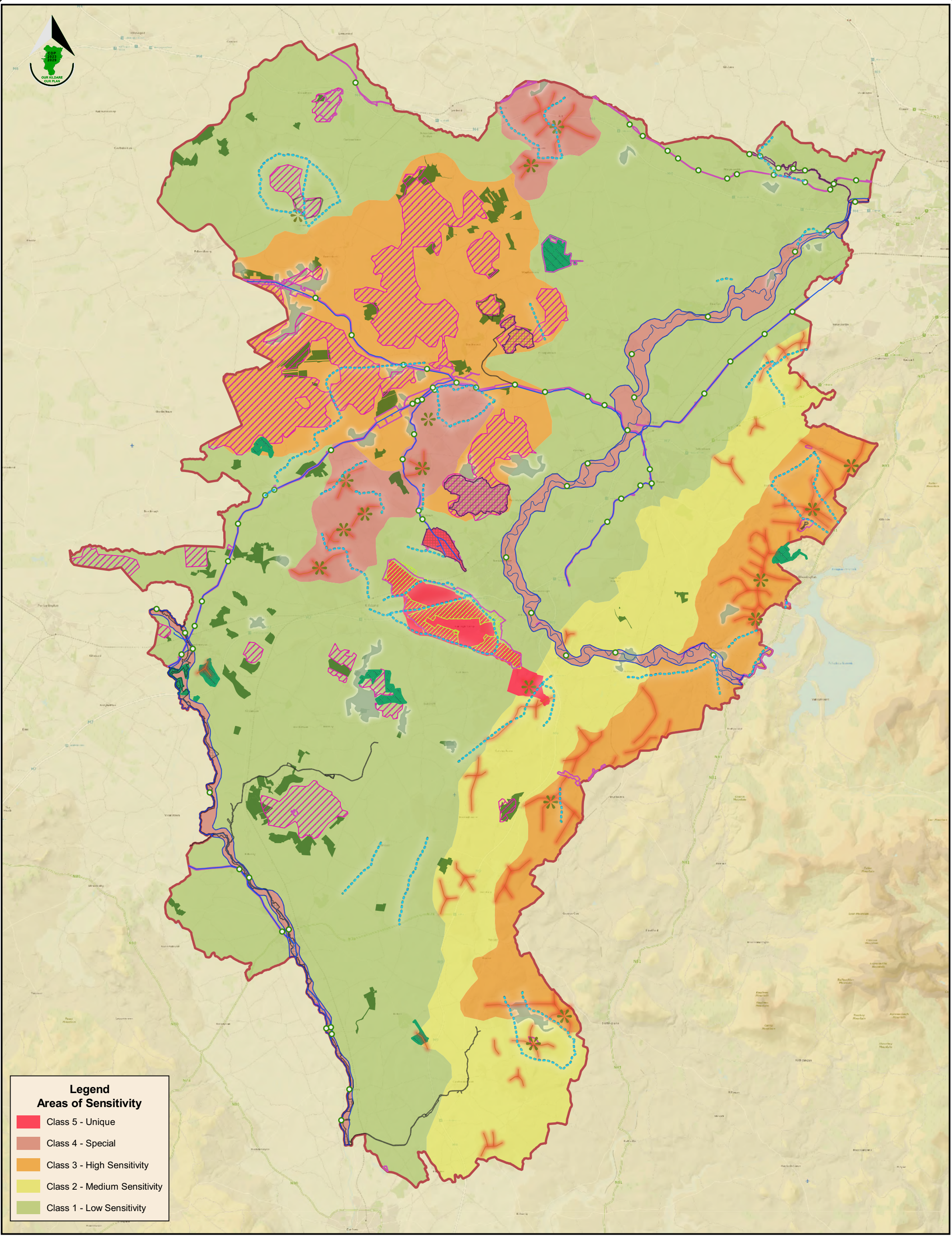
Based on the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment a landscape sensitivity rating was developed for each of the Landscape Character Areas. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. It is determined using the following factors: slope, ridgeline, water bodies, land use and prior development. The Landscape Character Areas have been mapped according to their landscape sensitivity (Tables 13.1, 13.2 and Map V1 - 13.2 refer).

<b>Sensitivity of Principal Landscape Character Assessment (Dominant Sensitivity Outlined)</b>	<b>Class 1 Low Sensitivity</b>	<b>Class 2 Medium Sensitivity</b>	<b>Class 3 High Sensitivity</b>	<b>Class 4 Special Sensitivity</b>	<b>Class 5 Unique Sensitivity</b>
North Western Lowlands	Class 1				
Northern Lowlands	Class 1				
Central Undulating Lands	Class 1				
Western Boglands			Class 3		
Southern Lowlands	Class 1				
Eastern Transition		Class 2			
Eastern Uplands			Class 3		
South-Eastern Uplands		Class 2			
<b>Sub-ordinate Landscape Areas</b>					
Northern Hills				Class 4	
Chair of Kildare				Class 4	
The Curragh					Class 5
Pollardstown Fen					Class 5
Dun Ailinne					Class 5
Allen Bog				Class 4	
River Liffey				Class 4	
River Barrow				Class 4	

**Table 13.1 - Landscape Sensitivity Classification to Landscape Character Areas**

Sensitivity	Landscape Character Area	Location	Description
<b>Class 1 Low Sensitivity</b>	North-Western Lowlands Northern Lowlands Central Undulating Lands Southern Lowlands		Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area.
<b>Class 2 Medium Sensitivity</b>	Eastern Transition Lands South- Eastern Uplands		Areas with the capacity to accommodate a range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regards to localized sensitivity factors.
<b>Class 3 High Sensitivity</b>	Western Boglands Eastern Uplands		Areas with reduced capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to prevalent sensitivity factors.
<b>Class 4 Special</b>	Chair of Kildare Northern Hills River Liffey River Barrow Mouds Bog		Significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to prevalent sensitivity factors.
<b>Class 5 Unique</b>	The Curragh Pollardstown Fen Dun Ailinne		Areas with low capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to special sensitivity factors.

**Table 13.2** - Landscape Sensitivity Classification to Landscape Character Areas



**Legend**  
**Areas of Sensitivity**

- Class 5 - Unique
- Class 4 - Special
- Class 3 - High Sensitivity
- Class 2 - Medium Sensitivity
- Class 1 - Low Sensitivity

**Legend - Sensitivity Factors**

- Kildare County Boundary
- River Barrow and Liffey
- Ridgelines
- Mixed Forest
- Broad Leaved Forest
- Natural Grassland
- Agri Land with Natural Vegetation
- Peat Bogs
- Water Bodies
- NHA
- pNHA
- SAC
- SPA
- Scenic Routes
- Scenic Viewpoints
- Hilltop Views

Kildare County Council  
Planning & Strategic  
Development Department  
Aras Chill Dara,  
Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare.

**County Development  
Plan 2023-2029**

---

**Landscape Sensitivity  
Areas**

446

Stage	Date	Description
County Development Plan	28/01/2023	Date the Plan comes into effect
County Development Plan	09/12/2022	Plan adopted by Elected Members

Ordnance Survey Ireland data reproduced under OSI Licence number CYAL50250173 © Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland/Kildare County Council


































































































































































































Scale: N.T.S.	Map Ref: V1-13.2
Date: January 2023	Drawing No.: 200/22/1356
Drawn By: M O'Loughlin Date 28/01/2023	Checked By: L Crawford Date 28/01/2023
Approved By: C O'Donnell Date 28/01/2023	

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the written statement



### 13.3.2 Impact of Development on Landscape

In order to determine the likely perceived impact of a particular development on the landscape, the potential impact of the development must be viewed having regard to the sensitivity of the area. Table 13.3 below provides guidance on the likely compatibility between a range of land-use classes and the principal landscape areas of the county classified by sensitivity. Table 13.4 identifies the likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and proximity of less than 300m to the principal Landscape Sensitivity Factors. It should be noted that all developments are unique and at micro / local level, landscapes vary in terms of their ability to absorb development and each site should be assessed on its individual merits.

<b>Compatibility Key</b>		Sensitivity Class	<b>Agriculture and Forestry</b>		<b>Housing</b>	<b>Urbanisation</b>			<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Extraction</b>		<b>Energy</b>	
	<i>Most</i>		Agriculture	Forestry	Rural Housing	Urban Expansion	Industrial Projects	Tourism Projects	Major Powerlines *	Sand & Gravel	Rock	Windfarm	Solar
North Western Lowlands	1												
Northern Lowlands	1												
Southern Lowlands	1												
Central Undulating Lands	1												
Western Boglands	3												
Eastern Transition	2												
Eastern Uplands	3												
South-Eastern Uplands	2												
<b>Sub-ordinate Landscape Areas</b>													
Northern Hills	4												
Chair of Kildare	4												
The Curragh	5												
Pollardstown Fen	5												
Allen Bog	4												
River Liffey	4												
River Barrow	4												
Dun Ailinne	5												

**Table 13.3 - Likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and Principal Landscape Areas.**

	Agriculture and Forestry		Housing		Urbanisation			Infrastructure	Extraction		Energy	
	Agriculture	Forestry	Rural Housing	Urban Expansion	Industrial Projects	Tourism Projects	Major Powerlines	Sand and Gravel	Rock	Windfarm	Solar	
5 - Likely to be very compatible in most circumstances.												
4 - Likely to be compatible with reasonable care.												
3 - Likely to be compatible with great care.												
2 - Compatible only in certain circumstances.												
1 - Compatible only in exceptional circumstances.												
0 - Very unlikely to be compatible.												
Proximity within 300m of Principal Landscape Sensitivity Factors.												
Major Rivers and Water bodies	5	5	2	2	2	3	2	1	0	1	0	
Canals	5	5	2	2	2	3	2	1	0	1	1	
Ridgelines	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	
Green Urban Areas	4	5	2	0	0	4	3	3	3	2	2	
Broad-Leaved Forestry	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	
Mixed Forestry	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	
Natural Grasslands	5	2	2	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	
Moors and Heathlands	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	1	
Agricultural Land with Natural Vegetation	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	
Peat Bogs	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	2	1	
Scenic View	5	5	2	1	1	5	1	3	0	0	2	
Scenic Route	5	5	2	1	1	5	1	3	0	0	2	

**Table 13.4 - Likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and proximity to Principal Landscape Sensitivity Factors.**

## Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

<b>LR P1</b>	Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape.
--------------	---

## Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>LR 01</b>	Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of the proposed development in the landscape will be critical considerations.
<b>LR 02</b>	Require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany proposals that are likely to significantly affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape Sensitivity Factors;</li> <li>• A Class 4 or 5 Sensitivity Landscape (i.e. within 500m of the boundary);</li> <li>• A route or view identified in Map V1 - 13.3 (i.e. within 500m of the site boundary).</li> <li>• All Wind Farm development applications irrespective of location, shall be required to be accompanied by a detailed Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment including a series of photomontages at locations to be agreed with the Planning Authority, including from scenic routes and views identified in Chapter 13.</li> </ul>
<b>LR 03</b>	Require all Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments of specified linear infrastructure projects to be undertaken in line with the guidance on best practice methodology of the TII publication <i>Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of Specified Infrastructure Projects (2020)</i> .
<b>LR 04</b>	Ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area.
<b>LR 05</b>	Preserve, where appropriate, the open character of commonage.
<b>LR 06</b>	Investigate the feasibility of preparing a Landscape Conservation Area Assessment within the county to identify any area(s) or place(s) within the county as a Landscape Conservation Area, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
<b>LR 07</b>	Restrict the quarrying of sensitive sites within the Landscape Character Areas in line with Table 13.3 and Table 13.4 above and to protect and conserve the ecological, archaeological, biodiversity and visual amenity surrounding quarry sites.
<b>LR 08</b>	Ensure that all quarrying activities and projects associated with the extractive industry comply with all relevant Planning and Environmental Legislation and the Guidelines for the Protection of Biodiversity within the Extractive Industry document 'Wildlife, Habitats & the Extractive Industry'.

<b>LR O9</b>	Continue to support development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of local absorption opportunities provided by the landscape, landform and prevailing vegetation.
<b>LR O10</b>	Recognise that the lowlands and the transitional area are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social well-being of the county and include areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection. Such landscapes include the internationally recognised landscape of Punchestown and its environs.
<b>LR O11</b>	Support collaboration between Kildare County Council, the Midlands Regional Transition Team and all other relevant stakeholders and the development of partnership approaches to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporates the management, rehabilitation and restoration / re-wetting of significant tracts of peatlands in conjunction with appropriate developed after uses.
<b>LR O12</b>	Recognise that boglands, including cutaway and cut-over bogs, are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons, particularly for climate mitigation and adaptation. Development proposals for boglands that reduce biodiversity and increase greenhouse gas will not be considered. Appropriate environmental assessment should be carried out for any development proposals which impact on boglands.
<b>LR O13</b>	Recognise that some cutaway and cut-over boglands may represent degraded landscapes and thus may potentially be fit to absorb a variety of development provided that the development proposal does not increase Green House Gas emissions or damage protected habitats or species. Projects which result in increases in ammonia emissions to watercourses will not be considered.
<b>LR O14</b>	Maintain the visual integrity of Eastern Transition Lands which have retained an upland character.
<b>LR O15</b>	Continue to facilitate appropriate development in the Eastern Transition Lands, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognising the need for sustainable settlement patterns and economic activity within the county.
<b>LR O16</b>	Require the undertaking of a peatland stability assessment, carbon emissions balance assessment and hydrological and ecological impact assessments, as appropriate, when developing project proposals for development on peatlands.

## Actions

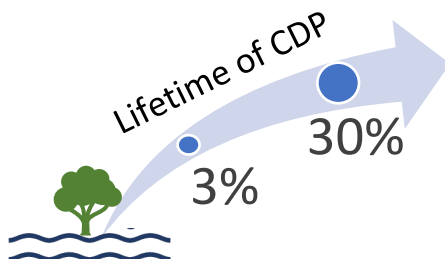
It shall be an action of the Council to:

<b>LR A1</b>	Review and update the County Landscape Character Assessment, within two years of the adoption of this Plan <sup>1</sup> , having regard to the European Landscape Convention Florence 2000, in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and to ensure consistency with the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment. All landscape character designations will be fully reviewed having regard to updated best practice guidance, LCAs of adjoining Local Authorities and other local relevant considerations, including clusters of biodiversity rich areas and the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.
<b>LR A2</b>	Investigate the feasibility of preparing a Historic Landscape Characterisation of the county.
<b>LR A3</b>	Plant gateway roundabouts within the county with innovative design themes, having regard to traffic safety.

## Targets

It shall be a target of the Council to:

<b>LR T1</b>	Endeavour to increase the territory of County Kildare designated to increase nature by 27% from its current base of 3% by the end of this Plan period, in response to the Government's commitment to designate 30% of the territory of Ireland for nature by 2030 and in accordance with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. This may be achieved, in part, by the development of the proposed National Peatlands Park (see objectives in Section 13.6). Such endeavours, such as the development of the National Peatlands Park, shall be subject to an AA Screening Report, and where applicable, Stage 2 AA. They shall have a regard for any hydrological connection shared with a European Site and their qualifying interest species. The project shall account for any potential likely significant effects and provide mitigation and monitoring where appropriate.
<b>LR T2</b>	Increase newly planted forest in line with the Government's Climate Action Plan (2021) and the emerging Forestry Programme (expected to be published in 2023).



<sup>1</sup> Should material changes be identified, a statutory variation may be required.

## **13.4 Areas of High Amenity**

In addition to Landscape Character Areas and the sensitivity of these areas to development, there are certain special landscape areas within the county, some of which overlap with sensitive landscapes. For the purposes of this Plan these areas have been defined as Areas of High Amenity. They are classified because of their outstanding natural beauty and/or unique interest value and are generally sensitive to the impacts of development. These areas are outlined in the following sub-sections.

### **13.4.1 Dun Ailinne**

Dún Ailinne is located on top of Knockaulin Hill, a short distance from the town of Kilcullen. Excavations and other investigations of Dun Ailinne (the Beautiful Fort) have established that it was the scene of major and regular gatherings going right back to Neolithic times. It is the largest pre-Norman earthen enclosure in Ireland, covering some 44 acres. The ditch or 'henge' which surrounds it is the best preserved and largest such feature in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

Dun Ailinne is one of six locations known as Royal Sites which are being assessed for consideration for addition to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Tentative List.

### **13.4.2 The Curragh and Environs**

The Curragh, located between Newbridge and Kildare Town, is the largest area of unenclosed natural grassland in the country. It is home to a significant number of archaeological sites and provides a hugely valuable amenity area for the surrounding towns of Kildare, Newbridge and Kilcullen. The Curragh Camp and the Curragh Racecourse are located within the plain.

The Curragh constitutes a unique national asset from the point of view of landscape and geomorphology which extends over 2000 hectares and is a historic open plain of high conservation value. Extensive views can be obtained from the south-east of the site, at St. Ledgers Bottoms, around much of the perimeter of the site. The sense of openness has been diminished over the years with the development of the military camp, the racecourse complex, the railway, the new motorway and power lines.

The Curragh is of conservation value for a number of reasons. It is most unusual in an Irish and European context, in that it is an extensive open plain area of lowland acidic grassland, succeeding to dry heath in places. It has been grazed but unfertilised for hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of years. Due to the management regime on the open grassland, nationally important populations of rare fungi are found which only occur in ancient grasslands.

Curragh archaeological complex (RMP zone of archaeological potential KD022-071) is a rich archaeological landscape containing almost two hundred archaeological monuments. The earliest evidence for human activity on the open plain of the Curragh remains in the form of a possible Neolithic cursus monument (Clancy 2001) along with a number of lithics (O'Ríordain 1950, Duffy 1992). There are numerous ring ditches, barrows and tumuli, showing continuity of burial activity in the Bronze Age and Iron

<sup>2</sup> KILDARE. 2015. Heritage: Dun Ailinne, Gathering place for the Leinster Kings <https://www.kildare.ie/heritage/details.asp?GCID=120>.

Age, and the Curragh itself forms part of a wider landscape centring on the 'royal' hill-top enclosure of Dún Ailinne from the Iron Age onwards.

Land-use at the Curragh is dominated by sheep grazing on the open plains, which are commonage. Horse exercising and training are carried out on the many gallops. There is a military range at the southeast of the Curragh where target practice is regularly carried out.

### **13.4.3 Pollardstown Fen**

Pollardstown Fen is the largest remaining calcareous spring-fed fen in Ireland, a national nature reserve, Special Area of Conservation, and a Ramsar site of approximately 220 ha. It is recognised as an internationally important fen ecosystem with unique and endangered plant communities.

The fen is situated on the northern margin of the Curragh, approximately 3km west-north-west of Newbridge. It lies in a shallow depression, running in a north-west/south-east direction. From a landscape point of view, the unique vegetation and the low-lying nature of the area allows for extensive vistas of the site along the local roads, as well as to the hilltops in the vicinity (e.g. The Hill of Allen). Consequently, development can have a disproportionate visual impact in the local context, due to an inherent inability to be visually absorbed by the existing topography.

### **13.4.4 The River Liffey and the River Barrow Valleys**

The River Liffey and the River Barrow valleys are of significance in terms of landscape and amenity value and as such are sensitive to development. The River Barrow is a designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). They are characterised by smooth terrain and low vegetation, with extensive upland views (i.e. the Chair of Kildare to the west and the Eastern Uplands to the east) and distant views including the neighbouring Wicklow Mountains. The topography is such that it allows vistas over long distances without disruption along the river corridor. As a result, development on the banks of the rivers can have a disproportionate visual impact, due to an inherent inability to be visually absorbed. However, the undulating topography occurring within the river valleys provides physical shielding and has the potential to visually enclose the built form within the river valley, where it does not break the skyline. Shelter vegetation exists along some stretches of the valleys with the presence of natural and native woodland that grows on the floodplains of the rivers, as well as by conifer plantation in adjacent lands. This vegetation has a shielding and absorbing quality in landscape terms. It can provide a natural visual barrier as well as adding to the complexity of a vista, breaking it up to provide scale and containment for built forms.

Many views of the river valleys are available from local roads and from viewing points located along the valleys. While river valleys represent potentially vulnerable linear landscape features, as they are often highly distinctive in the context of the general landscape, in certain circumstances landscape sensitivities may be localised or site-specific.

#### **13.4.5 Rye Water Valley at Carton SAC**

Rye Water Valley/Carlton Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located between Leixlip and Maynooth, in Counties Meath and Kildare, and extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey.

The river was arterially drained in the early 1950s but remains the only significant salmon spawning and nursery stream discharging into the River Liffey downstream of Leixlip dam. The Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC is designated for the protection of two molluscs listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. These semi-aquatic snails, *Vertigo angustior* and *V. moulinsiana* occur in marsh vegetation near Louisa Bridge, downstream of the Intel site. In addition, the marsh, mineral spring and seepage area found at Louisa Bridge, which supports the presence of these molluscs is of a type considered to be rare in Europe and is a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

This site is important due to the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and the presence of petrifying springs, a habitat type listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The woods found on Carton Estate and their birdlife are of additional interest.

#### **13.4.6 The Grand and Royal Canal Corridors**

The Grand Canal and the Royal Canal are extensive water corridors that flow through the county. The Grand Canal flows in an east to south-west direction and divides at Sallins into the Naas and Corbally Branch and is further divided in three branches at Robertstown: the Milltown Feeder, the Barrow Line and the continuation of the Grand Canal into neighbouring County Offaly.

The Royal Canal flows in an east to west direction along the northern boundary of the county through Leixlip, Maynooth and Kilcock and continues into County Meath.

The canal corridors and their adjacent lands have been landscaped and enhanced along the sections where the canals flow through urban areas and with the development of Greenways and Blueways. Canal locks are distinctive features of these water corridors. The smooth terrain, generally gentle landform and low canal bank grassland that characterise the canal corridors allow vistas over long distances without disruption, where the canal flows in a straight-line direction. Consequently, development can have a disproportionate visual impact along the water corridor, and it can prove difficult for the existing topography to visually absorb development. The occurrence of natural vegetation, coniferous and mixed plantations adjacent to the water corridors can have shielding and absorbing qualities in landscape terms, by providing natural visual barriers.

Canal corridors are potentially vulnerable linear landscape features, as they are often highly distinctive in the context of the general landscape. In some cases, landscape sensitivities may be localised or site-specific.



#### **13.4.7 Ballynafagh Lake SAC**

Ballynafagh Lake is located about 2 km north-west of Prosperous in Co. Kildare. The Blackwood Feeder, which connects Ballynafagh Lake to the Grand Canal, is also included in the site.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for Alkaline Fens, Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) and Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*). Ballynafagh Lake is a shallow alkaline lake with patches of emergent vegetation in the middle, as well as around the shore.

Ballynafagh Lake has developed a very natural vegetation with some interesting plant communities, including alkaline fen, a habitat that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site supports a high diversity of molluscan species, with some rare species recorded, including *Vertigo moulinsiana*, a species that is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also of ornithological importance.

#### **13.4.8 Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA**

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, located in the western foothills of the Wicklow Mountains, was created in 1944 by damming of the River Liffey for the purpose of generating electricity from hydropower. The reservoir covers an area of approximately 20 square kilometres and is the largest inland water body in the mid-east and south-east regions. The reservoir receives water from two main sources, the River Liffey at the northern end, and the Kings River at the southern end. The exit is into the River Liffey gorge at the western end. Underlying the reservoir are sands and gravels deposited of the last glaciation. The shores of the lake are mostly sandy.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Greylag Goose and Lesser Blackbacked Gull. A range of other wildfowl species also occurs, including Whooper Swan, species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The site is also notable as a winter roost for gulls, especially for the Lesser Black-backed Gull. Part of Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

#### **13.4.9 Mouds Bog SAC**

Mouds Bog is located about 3 km north-west of Newbridge in Co. Kildare, close to the Hill of Allen, and includes amongst others, the townlands of Grangehiggin, Barrettstown and Hawkfield. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. Much of the margins of the site are bounded by trackways.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following: Raised Bog (Active), Degraded Raised Bog and Rhynchosporion Vegetation. Mouds Bog is significant in terms of its high bog area and geographical location as it is at the eastern extreme of the range of raised bogs in Ireland. It is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising a large, raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats including hummock/hollow complexes, pools and flushes, and cutover, all of which add to the diversity and scientific value of the site.

Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

#### **13.4.10 Ballynafagh Bog SAC**

Ballynafagh Bog SAC is a raised bog situated about 1 km west of Prosperous in Co. Kildare. The site comprises a relatively small core of uncut high bog (approx. 70 ha), which is surrounded by a more extensive area of cutover bog (approx. 90 ha). The high bog area can be divided into a wet core of active bog which covers an area of 23 ha, surrounded by approximately 44 ha of degraded raised bog which is experiencing drying-out at present.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which supports the following habitats listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive: Raised Bog (Active), Degraded Raised Bog and Rhynchosporion Vegetation. Of particular note is that the bog is one of the most easterly examples of a relatively intact raised bog in Ireland and, together with Mouds bog, is one of only two such systems in Co. Kildare.

#### **13.4.11 Red Bog SAC**

Red Bog SAC is located 3 km north of the village of Blessington in east Co. Kildare. It comprises a wetland complex of lake, fen and bog situated in a hollow between ridges of glacially deposited material and underlain by rocks of Ordovician age. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for Transition Mires.

Red Bog is of ornithological significance and breeding birds recorded from the site include Mute Swan, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Coot, Moorhen, Snipe and Black-headed Gull.

#### **13.4.12 East Kildare Uplands**

The Eastern Uplands are located in the east of the county and are part of the Wicklow Mountain complex. The topography rises from the lowland plains, through undulating terrain to the highest point of 379m above sea level (O.D.) at Cupidstownhill, east of Killeel. The elevated nature of this area provides a defined skyline with scenic views over the central plains of Kildare and the neighbouring Wicklow Mountains which further define the skyline and the extent of visibility. The East Kildare Uplands are rural in character with a number of scenic views from elevated vantage points. The general land use on the uplands is pasture, with some tillage, quarrying and forestry.

Along a number of roads, which cross the upper and lower slopes of the uplands, there are long-distance views towards the Kildare lowlands and the Chair of Kildare. The sloping land provides this area with its distinctive character and intensifies the visual prominence and potential adverse impact of any feature over greater distances. Public roads traversing the slope provides an increased potential for development to penetrate primary and secondary ridgelines when viewed from lower areas and in a few areas the recent pattern of ribbon development obscures views across the plains of Kildare. In the Eastern Kildare Uplands, nearly all ridgelines are secondary when viewed from the lowland areas, as the Wicklow Mountains to the east define the skyline

(i.e. form primary ridgelines). Gently undulating topography and shelter vegetation provided by conifer and woodland plantation can provide a shielding of built form. Views of the River Liffey Valley as well as of the Poulaphouca Reservoir are available from the hilltops and high points on some of the local roads.

## Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

<b>LR P2</b>	Protect High Amenity areas from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place.
--------------	--

## Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>LR O17</b>	Control development that will adversely affect the visual integrity of Areas of High Amenity by restricting the development of incongruous structures that are out of scale with the landscape within the Areas of High Amenity including advertising signs, hoardings, fencing etc. which create visual clutter and disrupt the open nature of these areas.
<b>LR O18</b>	Facilitate appropriate development in areas of high amenity that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation.
<b>LR O19</b>	Restrict the over development of the edge of the Curragh Plains and development that obtrudes on the skyline as viewed from the Plains.
<b>LR O20</b>	Co-operate with all relevant stakeholders including the Department of Defence, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the racehorse industry, those with sheep grazing rights and the various interests currently with rights to the Curragh in the implementation of the Curragh Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan, designated as a cNHA <sup>3</sup> .
<b>LR O21</b>	Restrict development which may have a negative impact on the water quality and quantity of the Pollardstown Fen, in particular groundwater sources.
<b>LR O22</b>	Co-operate with the relevant government departments and other statutory bodies in the protection and conservation of the Fen, a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
<b>LR O23</b>	Co-operate with the relevant government departments in the protection and conservation of both the Royal and Grand Canals and the River Barrow, designated as a cNHA and SAC respectively and in the sections of the River Liffey designated as a cNHA.
<b>LR O24</b>	Support and promote an extension of the proposed Special Amenity Area Order for the Liffey Valley from Lucan to Leixlip and other parts of the Valley within County Kildare.
<b>LR O25</b>	Work closely with the relevant State bodies, the International Council on

<sup>3</sup> Candidate Natural Heritage Area

	Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), UNESCO and local stakeholders to support the designation of the Dun Ailinne Royal Site as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
<b>LR O26</b>	Contribute towards the protection of waterbodies and watercourses, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains, from inappropriate development. This will include buffers free of development in riverine and wetland areas, as per chapter 12.
<b>LR O27</b>	Support the recreational amenity of wetlands.
<b>LR O28</b>	Have regard to the four major steps in the integrated watercourse protection strategy of Inland Fisheries Ireland's publication ' <i>Planning for Watercourses in an Urban Environment – 2020 Update</i> '.
<b>LR O29</b>	Ensure that the Streamside buffer zone (minimum of 10m plus) is kept free from development and existing vegetation is retained undisturbed to contribute to biodiversity and to ensure that bike paths and/or larger footpaths along rivers and streams are provided in the Middle buffer zone (15m-30m), in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland's publication ' <i>Planning for Watercourses in an Urban Environment – 2020 Update</i> '. Planting if required should be in keeping with the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
<b>LR O30</b>	Sensitively consider developments in the Upland Character Areas including East Kildare Uplands that have a functional and locational requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoirs, telecommunication masts or wind energy structures) where it can be explicitly demonstrated that residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated.
<b>LR O31</b>	Have regard to the potential for screening vegetation when evaluating proposals for development within the Upland Character Areas including East Kildare Uplands.

## Actions

It shall be an action of the Council to:

<b>LR A4</b>	Deliver a Conservation Management Plan and a Branding & Interpretation Plan, in partnership with the Department of Defence, for the Curragh Plains, in order to address the conservation, management and interpretation of the Curragh.
<b>LR A5</b>	Explore the establishment of the Barrow Valley and the Royal and Grand Canals as Areas of Special Amenity, as per section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

## **13.5 Scenic Routes and Protected Views**

Scenic routes provide views of the landscape of the county and many built and archaeological features. In addition to scenic routes there are a number of protected views throughout the county. These are located particularly along water corridors and to and from the hills in the countryside. Scenic routes and protected views consist of important and valued views and prospects within the county. These scenic routes, hilltop views and scenic viewpoints are listed in Table 13.5, 13.6 and 13.7 below and their locations can be seen on Map V1 - 13.3.

The Council recognises the need to protect the character of the county by protecting views and scenic routes. However, it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances, some development may be necessary. In this regard, appropriate location, siting and design criteria should strictly apply. All proposals will be assessed taking into account the overall character of the scenic route and the character of the landscapes through which the route passes, in accordance with the criteria outlined in section 13.3.2.

### **13.5.1 Views to and from Hills**

As the landform of the county is generally flat, with very little variation in topography and predominantly low vegetation, extensive views can be obtained from hilltops, allowing vistas over long distances, and similarly from the lowland areas the eye is drawn to the primary and secondary ridgelines that define the skyline throughout the county.

Ridgelines are conspicuous features of the natural landscape as they perform an important role as dominant landscape focal points. It is important that development does not interrupt the integrity of ridgelines. Development on steeply sloping land can be viewed over greater distances.

### **13.5.2 Views to and from Waterways**

River floodplains and canal banks are generally sensitive to development to varying degrees. Both the rivers and the canal corridors provide a contrast of form and colour on the landscape.

Urban and rural development has taken place along some sections of the canals and rivers, interrupting the integrity of these linear landscape features and in some cases significantly affecting their scenic amenity value. It is important that development does not further interrupt the integrity of river and canal corridors – with the exception of specific areas that are zoned for development (i.e. in Local Area Plans).

The protected views to and from the Royal Canal, Grand Canal, River Liffey, River Barrow and Rye River are listed in Table 13.7 below.

No.	Description	Location
01	Views of Old Kilcullen to the east and Dún Aillinne to the west, from the R418 Motorway Interchange to the south of Moortown House.	Knockbounce, Knockaulin, Old Kilcullen, Glebe North, Moortown and Moortowncastle.
02	Views to the east of Yellowbogcommon, from the junction of R418/R448 to Halverstown crossroads.	Yellowbogcommon and Glebe South.
03	Views across Curragh Plains, north and south, along R445, from the junction of R413/R445 to Colgan's Cut.	Curragh
04	Views of the Curragh Plains: Little Curragh, a county road, the L7034, the L3006 and the L6075, from the Kildare Town boundary to Donnelly's Hollow and the R413 from Donnelly's Hollow to the Kildare Town boundary.	Curraghfarm, Strawhall, Curragh and Little Curragh.
05	Views of the Moate of Ardsclull along the R418 from Russelstown crossroads to Kilmead.	Ardsnagross, Youngstown, Kilmead, Ardsclull, Russellstown and Aghanure.
06	Views of Robertstown Countryside and views across the Canal, along the R415, L7075 and L7078.	Kilmeague, Grangeclare east & west, Mylerstown, Lowtown, Littletown, Robertstown east.
07	Views of Blessington Lake along the N81 from Poulaphuca Bridge to County Boundary at Bishopslane and from the County Boundary at Glassing to the County Boundary at Glebe East.	Bishopslane, Horsepasstown, Bishopslane, Ballymore Eustace East and Glebe east.
08	Views of Bogland Plains; the L3002 from Kilmoney crossroads to Feighcullen crossroads at Boston Hill.	Kilmoney north & south, Drinnanstown north & south, Boston common and Feighcullen.
09	Views of the River Liffey along the R411 from the Liffey Bridge at Ballymore Eustace to the junction of the R411/L5043.	Broadleas commons, Bishopslane and Ballymore Eustace west.
10	Views of the West Plains on the Oughterard Road (L2009 and L2008).	Bishopscourt lower and Boston.
11	Views of the Upland Areas on the Oughterard Road (L6018 and L6021).	Oughterard, Tuckmilltown, Blackchurch, Loyns and Pluckstown.
12	Views west of the Kildare Plains from the Redbog Area and views towards Caureen from Rathmore crossroads to Pipershall along the L6038 road.	Greenmount, Redbog, Pipershall, Wolfestown, Rathmore west and Punctestown lower.
13	Views to the River Liffey on the R413 from Brannockstown crossroads to Ballymore Eustace.	Moorhill, Grangemore, Brannockstown, Rochestown, Gaganstown, Ardenode east &

No.	Description	Location
		west, Longstown and Ballymore Eustace west.
14	Views to and from Dunmurry Hill and Red Hill and views of the Central Kildare Plains and Boglands on the R401 and adjoining roads from Thomastown crossroads to the Kildare Town Boundary.	Thomastown west, Guidenstown south, Grangeclare, Killeagh commons, Redhills, Rahilla Glebe, Kildare town, Crockanure Glebe and Southgreen.
15	Views of the Plains of Kildare and West Central Boglands, to and from Newtown Hills (including county roads L5027, L50281, L5028, L1007).	Newtown, Grange, Nicholastown, Cappagh, Corocoranstown, Ballynakill, Ballyvoneen and Cloncurry.
16	Views of the Chair of Kildare and views of the Central Kildare Plains and Boglands from the L7004 and L70061.	Punchersgrange, Blakestown, Conlanstown and Canonstown.
17	Views of the Chair of Kildare and views of the Central Kildare Plains and Boglands along the R415, from the junction of the R415/Mill lane for 1.5km towards the north.	Dunbyrne, Barnacrow, Milltown, Barnacrow, and Baronstown west.
18	Views of the Grand Canal, River Slate and surrounding countryside along the R414 from Rathangan Bridge to Spencer Bridge.	Rathangan demesne.
19	Views to and from the Corballis Hills: Along county roads, the L8097, the L8095 and the L8053, from Carrigeen to Sheriffhill crossroads.	Tankardstown, Corbalis, Ballynacarrick Upper, Ballynacarrick Lower, Aylmerstown and Sheriffhill.
20	Views to the north-west of the open countryside, from Killeel Village to Rathmore Village.	Furryhill, Killeel upper & lower, Rathmore east & west and Segravescastle.
21	Views east at Brewel, along the L6096 from Kingsland Castle Ruins to Ballintaggart.	Brewel East, Brewel West, Ballintaggart and Usk.
22	Views across the Barrow valley, along the L8017 from Pinhill crossroads to Burton crossroads (N78).	Burton Big, Ballinadrum, Glassely, Ballyadams and Lynamsgarden.
23	Views to the north-west of the Kildare Plains along the R418, south of Moortown House to Tippeen Lower.	Moortown, Thomastown, Ballyshannon and Tippeen Lower.
24	Views to and from Hughestown Hill (L8052).	Hughestown, Carrigeen Hill, Ballynacarrick lower and Davidstown.
25	Views to the south of the open countryside from the L7081 Kilmeague crossroad to the junction of the L7081/L7078.	Kilmeague, Coolaght and Mylerstown.

No.	Description	Location
26	Views from the county roads (L1005, L5019, L5018, L1006, L5017 and L5011) of Carbury Castle and Hill – Teelough road junction with the R402 and upland area at Mylerstown.	Haggard, Calfstown, Mylerstown, Knockcor, Carbury, Coolcor, Ardkill, Balrinnet, Ballinderry, Nurney, Williamstown, Windmill and Freagh.
27	Views of the countryside and the East Kildare Uplands along the L6056 from Bishopshill Commons to Ballymore Eustace.	Ballymore Eustace east and Bishopshill commons.
28	Views within the Carton Demesne Walls, to and from Carton House, the Lake and Woodland Areas.	Carton demesne.
29	Views of the River Liffey from the Main Avenue of Castletown House.	Castletown demesne.
30	Views to and from the Ridgeline of the East Kildare Uplands and views of the Central Plains along the L6030.	Oldtown, Kilteel upper, Rathbane, Punchestown upper & lower, Furryhill, Caureen, Slatequarries, Hempstown common and Pipershall.
31	Views towards Lyons Hill, Liffey Valley, Clonaghilis and Oughterard, along the R403 from Barberstown crossroads to Saint Patrick's Hill.	Barberstown lower and Barberstown.
32	Views of Ballynafagh Lake along the L7095 from junction with L1021 to junction with L5072.	Ballynafagh and Curryhills.
33	Views of Pollardstown Fen along the L7032 from Father Moore's Well to the Pollardstown Fen carpark.	Rathbride and Pollardstown.
34	Views of the Bog of Allen and the Hills of Allen, Grange and Dunmurry along the R403 and R414 from Allenwood to Rathangan.	Allenwood middle, Allenwood south, Lullymore East, Lullymore West, Barnaran, Drumsru, Capanargid, Killyguire and Newtown.

**Table 13.5 - Scenic Routes in County Kildare**

No.	Hilltop Views
01	Red Hill
02	Dunmurry Hill
03	Grange Hill
04	Allen Hill
05	Hill at Ovidstown
06	Hill at Killickaweeny
07	Kilteel Hill



No.	Hilltop Views
08	Caurcen Hill
09	Slieveroe Hill
10	Carrigeen Hill
11	Brevel Hill
12	Hughstown Hill
13	Corballis Hill
14	Boston Hill
15	Dún Ailinne
16	Crosspatrick Hill
17	Carbury Hill

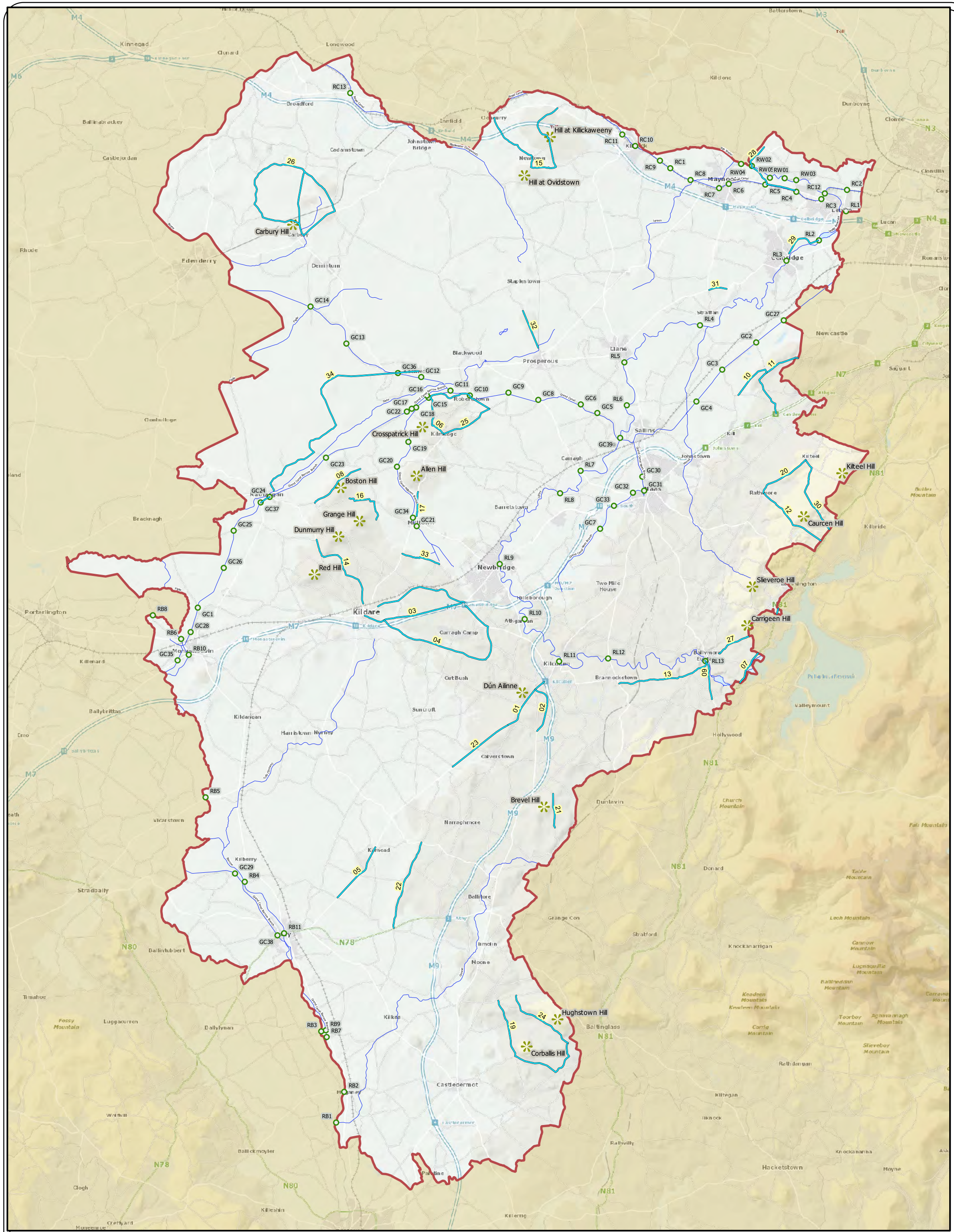
**Table 13.6 - Hilltop Views in County Kildare**

View Reference	Bridge	Location
<b>Views of the River Liffey from Bridges</b>		
RL01	Leixlip Bridge	Leixlip
RL02	New Bridge	Coneyburrow
RL03	Celbridge Bridge	Celbridge
RL04	Straffan Bridge	Lodgepark, Straffan
RL05	Alexandra Bridge	Abbeyland
RL06	Millicent Bridge	Castlesize
RL07	Caragh Bridge	Halverstown/ Gingerstown
RL08	Victoria Bridge	Moortown/ Yeomanstown
RL09	New Bridge	Droichead Nua (Newbridge)
RL10	Athgarvan Bridge	Rosetown/Athgarvan
RL11	Kilcullen Bridge	Kilcullen
RL12	New Bridge	Cramersvalley/Carnalway
RL13	Ballymore Bridge	Ballymore Eustace
<b>Views of the Rye Water River from Bridges</b>		
RW01	Black Bridge	Kellystown / Blakestown
RW02	Carton Bridge	Carton Demesne
RW03	Sandfords Bridge	Carton Demesne (L1014)
RW04	Kildare Bridge	Carton Demesne
RW05	Carton Bridge	Carton Demesne
<b>Views of the River Barrow from bridges, adjacent lands and roads</b>		
RB01	Greese Bridge	Jerusalem Newtownpilsworth
RB02	Maganey Bridge	Maganey Lower
RB03	Tankardstown Bridge	Grangemellon
RB04	Bert Bridge	Tyrellstown

<b>View Reference</b>	<b>Bridge</b>	<b>Location</b>
RB05	Dunrally Bridge	Lowtown
RB06	Pass Bridge	Passlands
RB07	Mill Bridge	Levitstown
RB08	Baylough Bridge	Monasterevin (R424)
RB09	Bunberry Bridge	Athy
RB10	Monasterevin Bridge	Monasterevin (R445)
RB11	Crom Abu Bridge	Athy
<b>Views to and from bridges on the Grand Canal</b>		
GC1	Macartney's Bridge	Coolsickin or Quinsborough
GC2	Henry Bridge	Clonaghtris
GC3	Ponsonby Bridge	Barrowrath
GC4	Devonshire Bridge	Sherlockstown Common
GC5	Digby Bridge	Aghpaudeen
GC6	Landenstown Bridge	Landenstown
GC7	Connaught Bridge	Newtown
GC8	Cock Bridge	Goatstown
GC9	Bonynge Bridge	Mouds
GC10	Binn's Bridge	Robertstown
GC11	Fenton Bridge	Lowtown
GC12	Bond Bridge	Derrymullen
GC13	Hamilton's Bridge	Killinagh
GC14	Ticknevin Bridge	Ticknevin
GC15	Harberton Bridge	Littletown
GC16	New Bridge	Littletown
GC17	Skew Bridge	Ballyteige North
GC18	Huband Bridge	Grangeclare West
GC19	Pim Bridge	Newpark
GC20	Pluckerstown Bridge	Pluckerstown
GC21	Milltown Bridge	Milltown
GC22	Ballyteige Bridge	Ballyteige
GC23	Glenaree Bridge	Glenaree
GC24	Rathangan Bridge	Rathangan
GC25	Wilson's Bridge	Kiltaghan North
GC26	Ummeras Bridge	Ummeras More
GC27	Aylmer Bridge	Kearneystown Upper
GC28	High Bridge	Old Grange
GC29	Milltown Bridge	Moatstown
GC30	Tandy Bridge	Naas

<b>View Reference</b>	<b>Bridge</b>	<b>Location</b>
GC31	Abbey Bridge	Naas
GC32	Ploopluck Bridge	Naas
GC33	Limerick Bridge	Naas
GC34	Milltown Old Bridge	Milltown
GC35	Clogheen Bridge	Monasterevin
GC36	Shee Bridge	Allenwood
GC37	Spencer Bridge	Rathangan
GC38	27th Lock Bridge	Monasterevin
GC39	Leinster Aquaduct	Sallins
<b>Views to and from bridges on the Royal Canal</b>		
RC1	Bailey's Bridge	Maws
RC2	Cope Bridge	Newtown/Leixlip
RC3	Louisa Bridge	Easton/Leixlip
RC4	Deey Bridge	Collinstown
RC5	Pike Bridge	Railpark/Donaghmore
RC6	Mullen Bridge	Railpark/Maynooth
RC7	Bond Bridge	Maynooth
RC8	Jackson's Bridge	Laraghbryan East
RC9	Chambers Bridge	Maws
RC10	Shaw Bridge	Kilcock
RC11	Allen Bridge	Boycetown
RC12	Rye Water Aqueduct	Leixlip
RC13	Moyvally Bridge	Moyvally

**Table 13.7 - Views to and from bridges**



**Legend**

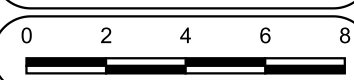
- Scenic Routes
- Kildare County Boundary
- Scenic Viewpoints
- Rivers and Canals
- ★ Hilltop Views



Kildare County Council  
 Planning & Strategic  
 Development Department  
 Aras Chill Dara,  
 Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare.

**County Development  
 Plan 2023-2029**

**Scenic Routes and  
 Viewpoints**



Stage	Date	Description
County Development Plan	28/01/2023	Date the Plan comes into effect
County Development Plan	09/12/2022	Plan adopted by Elected Members

Ordnance Survey Ireland data reproduced under OSI Licence number CYAL50250173 © Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland/Kildare County Council

Scale: N.T.S. Map Ref: V1-13.3

Date: January 2023 Drawing No.: 200/22/1355

Drawn By: M O'Loughlin  
 Date 28/01/2023

Checked By: L Crawford  
 Date 28/01/2023

Approved By: C O'Donnell  
 Date 28/01/2023

**This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the written statement**

### 13.5.3 Advertising in the Countryside

The proliferation of signs and hoardings in the countryside detracts from the visual amenity of the Kildare rural landscape. This signage is a distraction to road users and may constitute a traffic hazard.

#### Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

<b>LR P3</b>	Protect, sustain and enhance the established appearance and character of all important views and prospects.
--------------	---

#### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>LR O32</b>	Avoid any development that could disrupt the vistas or have a disproportionate impact on the landscape character of the area, particularly upland views, river views, canal views, views across the Curragh, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes), views of natural beauty and specifically those views listed in Tables 13.5 – 13.7 of this plan.
<b>LR O33</b>	Ensure developments (due to excessive bulk, scale, inappropriate siting or siting on steep slopes i.e. >10%) do not have a disproportionate visual impact or significantly interfere with or detract from scenic upland vistas when viewed from nearby areas, scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements.
<b>LR O34</b>	Control development that will adversely affect the visual integrity of distinctive linear sections of water corridors and river valleys and open floodplains.
<b>LR O35</b>	Encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes. Where scenic routes run through settlements, street trees and ornamental landscaping may be required.
<b>LR O36</b>	Strictly prohibit advertising structures and hoardings in the open countryside. The Council will use its enforcement powers under the Planning Acts to secure the removal of unauthorised advertising signs and hoardings including those that are affixed to trailers, wheeled vehicles etc.
<b>LR O37</b>	Fencing, particularly in commonage, upland, highly scenic or amenity areas, will not be permitted unless such fencing is essential to the viability of farmland. The nature of the material to be used, the height of the fence, and in the case of a wire fence the type of wire to be used, will be taken into account. Stiles or gates may be required at appropriate locations.
<b>LR O38</b>	Ensure unenclosed land which has not been fenced in the last 10 years remains not fenced as per the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Art 9 (l)(a)(x) - Restrictions on exemption.

## Action

It shall be an action of the Council to:

<b>LR A6</b>	Review and update all Scenic Routes and Views in the county within two years of the adoption of this Plan (Tables 13.5 - 13.7 refer).
<b>LR A7</b>	Prepare further detailed guidance in relation to views and prospects available along scenic routes occurring within the boundaries of Local Area Plans.

## 13.6 Recreation and Amenities

Recreation and amenity areas within the county include natural, recreational and sporting amenities as well as social and community infrastructure. These facilities provide many cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits and provide a positive contribution towards quality of life. The provision of a range of amenities which can cater for the demands of an increasing population, and which will be accessible for all sectors and age groups of the population is a central element in the delivery of sustainable communities.

The strategies for the provision of recreation and amenity resources in the county seeks;

- To provide an opportunity for all sectors of Kildare's population and visitors to the county, to avail of good quality recreational, sports and open space facilities, suitable to their needs while not compromising the ecosystem services provided by the natural environment;
- To ensure that the natural resources which form the basis for countryside recreation are protected and effectively managed; and
- To provide and maintain facilities in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.

Kildare Sports Partnership prepared a Strategic Plan 2017-2021 to promote participation in sport and physical activity in the county in a planned and co-ordinated way.

### 13.6.1 Countryside Recreation

Countryside recreation includes a wide range of activities including horse riding, cycling, walking, picnicking, country drives, off-road biking, nature trails, bird watching, painting, photography, field studies, orienteering, para- and hang-gliding, rock climbing, adventure sports, camping, archaeological guided walks and water related activities which include swimming, boating, canoeing and kayaking.

It is recognised that the countryside of Kildare provides an important resource in outdoor recreational facilities not only for the population of Kildare but also for those visiting the county. The Council recognises the significance of natural amenities as a major resource for visitors and local people.

Commonage and other rough grazing land are important in terms of the agricultural, environmental and recreational resources they offer.

### 13.6.2 Forest Parks, Woodlands & Boglands

Approximately 9,200 ha of land in Kildare is under forest cover. Forests and woodlands provide benefits over and above the revenue yielded from timber and other wood-based products. These include recreational and tourism amenities for local communities. Table 13.8 outlines recreational woodlands in the county.

Name	Location	Owner
Donadea Forest Park	Donadea	Coillte
Moore Abbey	Monasterevin	Coillte
Mullaghreelan Wood	Kilkea	Coillte
Rahin	Edenderry	Coillte
Killinthomas Wood	Rathangan	Coillte

**Table 13.8 - Recreational Woodlands in County Kildare**

County Kildare is favoured with extensive peatlands which are no longer used for peat extraction. These peatlands provide an opportunity for nature-based solutions on a grand scale to our twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change mitigation. Peatlands, including restored peatlands and recently rewilded peatlands can be enjoyed as a special new amenity of unique and enduring value for the local people and economy. In addition, these peatlands present an opportunity to increase the percentage of designated land in the County for nature in order to reach Target LR T1 in Section 13.3.2 of this Plan.

### 13.6.3 Waterways

Three great rivers traverse the County, the Liffey, Barrow and Boyne rivers. The River Barrow forms much of the border along western Kildare and is the main river flowing through Athy and Monasterevin. The river Boyne rises near Carbury and traverses the north-eastern corner of county Kildare. Most of the river Liffey flows through the county including through the towns of Blessington, Ballymore Eustace, Kilcullen, Athgarvan, Newbridge, Celbridge and Leixlip.

Both the Royal and Grand canals traverse the county. The Royal Canal along the northern boundary of the county passes through the towns of Leixlip, Maynooth and Kilcock. The Grand Canal consists of the main line, Naas branch, Corbally branch, Milltown feeder and Barrow line and flows through a number of settlements of varying sizes including Ardclough, Sallins, Naas, Robertstown, Milltown, Rathangan, Monasterevin and Athy.

These waterways play a critical role in the social, economic and cultural life of the county and in particular the development of the towns and villages along its length. Water and land-based recreation along waterways is increasingly valued as a source of amenity. The Council acknowledges the opportunities to enhance and further develop waterway related recreation and amenities.

In 2006 the strategy document '*Towards a Liffey Valley Park*' was published. It represents the first comprehensive strategy for that section of the river between Chapelizod in Dublin and Celbridge.

#### **13.6.4 Greenways, Blueways, Peatways, Trails and Peatland Railways**

Cycling and walking as a means of recreational activity have increased in popularity over the past number of years. The Council acknowledges that provision for cyclists and walkers should be prioritised as resources permit and where appropriate. The Council also recognises its duty to protect the biodiversity resources and the ecosystem services they provide in the development of additional greenways, blueways, peatways and trails and therefore supports the provision of a detailed ecological impact assessment of all new greenways.

The long-distance Royal Canal Greenway has been recently completed. This trail begins in Maynooth and ends in County Longford and goes through Kilcock. The development of the Grand Canal Towpath to the Greenway standard<sup>4</sup> is ongoing, with sections of the Grand Canal at various stages of development. Once completed the Grand Canal Greenway will start in County Dublin and end in County Offaly, traversing County Kildare and the towns and villages of Ardclough, Sallins, Robertstown and Allenwood. Work has also commenced on the Barrow Blueway which will run from Lowtown in Kildare, through the towns of Rathangan, Monasterevin and Vicarstown to Athy.

Various other short and long-distance walking and cycling routes exist in the county including forest walks, heritage trails and Slí na Sláinte routes. There are also a number of demesne lands within the county which are open to the public for passive recreation, for example Castletown in Celbridge.

It is acknowledged that Kildare's strong tradition associated with the peatlands has resulted in some attractive industrial rail lines which cross some of the county's local roads and afford scenic qualities and remnants of our past. Some continue to be utilised by Bord na Móna. Consideration should be given to reserving the line of such railways / rights of way for possible future re-use. The national rail network which traverses the county also provides an opportunity for individuals to attain an overall perspective of the quality of the landscape of Kildare.

In the Western boglands, the peatlands and disused railway lines coupled with a rich natural, architectural and built heritage provide excellent opportunities to develop further long-distance routes (cycling/walking) and connecting existing canal-side routes together.

County Kildare Walking Routes Project<sup>5</sup> conducted an audit of walking routes in the county in 2005. It evaluated existing walking routes and made recommendations for their future management and promotion.

<sup>4</sup> "Routes of satisfactory standards of width, gradient and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low-risk for users of all abilities." (Lille Declaration, European Greenways Association, 12 September 2000)

<sup>5</sup> Kildare County Council, in co-operation with the Heritage Council, INTO Kildare and Kildare Sports Partnership, conducted a study in 2005 of recreational walking routes in County Kildare with a focus on heritage.



### 13.6.5 Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way (PROW) have existed over the centuries and now constitute an important recreational amenity. They enable the enjoyment of high-quality landscape, natural and archaeological heritage and provide links to valuable amenities such as rivers, lakes, bogs, forests and places of natural beauty.

A PROW is a physically defined route over which the public have a right of passage even if the route is not in public ownership. It's an unrestricted right of the general public to pass and repass at all times of the day or night and at all seasons without notice to, or permission from the landowner. The most common characteristic of a PROW is that it follows a defined route which may be sub-divided amongst different branches.

Existing public rights of way constitute an important amenity and the Council recognises the importance of maintaining established rights of way and supporting initiatives for establishing walking routes and general accessibility.

#### Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

<b>LR P4</b>	Protect and maintain the existing recreation infrastructure in County Kildare and support the diversification of the rural economy through the development of the recreational potential of the countryside in accordance with the forthcoming National Outdoor Recreation Strategy, subject to all relevant and cumulative environmental assessments and planning conditions.
--------------	--

#### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>LR O39</b>	Promote and enhance public access for all <sup>6</sup> to the upland areas, rivers, lakes and other natural amenities of County Kildare, in conjunction with the relevant landowners and agencies, while protecting environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors and built heritage.
<b>LR O40</b>	Ensure the biodiversity value of all sites are considered and protected in the development of outdoor recreational facilities including greenways through the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment, to include the impacts of recreational disturbance to ground-nesting birds, particularly within cutover and cutaway bogs which shall guide the location and design of such facilities.
<b>LR O41</b>	Support Coillte, Bord na Mona, Waterways Ireland and other state agencies to explore the provision of more recreational infrastructure at appropriate locations to include access ways and nature trails with a view to opening up state lands for recreational use.

<sup>6</sup> Regardless of age, physical mobility, disability or social disadvantage.

<b>LR O42</b>	Support and facilitate Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders with the provision of additional mooring and berthing facilities at appropriate locations throughout the County.
<b>LR O43</b>	Normally only permit development proposals associated with water sports adjacent to waterways (including lakes) where the proposed facilities are compatible with the existing use of water including non-recreational uses, which will not result in damage to important features of archaeological heritage or Natura 2000 sites and where they can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape so that they will not have an unacceptable impact on visual or environmental amenities especially in areas of high amenity or scenic importance.
<b>LR O44</b>	Support and facilitate the development of a National Peatlands Park in consultation with Offaly and Laois County Councils, Bord na Móna, Coillte, NPWS, local landowners and all other relevant stakeholders to include areas of (inter alia) high nature value, amenity, education/science and eco-tourism potential.
<b>LR O45</b>	Support the proposed Umeras Peatlands Park development of Umeras Community Development and explore links between the bog and nearby blueways and greenways, whilst ensuring nearby properties would not be negatively affected, in consultation with Offaly County Council, Waterways Ireland and all other relevant stakeholders. The proposed development shall be subject to an AA Screening Report, and where applicable, Stage 2 AA. They shall have regard for any hydrological connection shared with a European Site and their qualifying interest species. The project shall account for any potential likely significant effects and provide mitigation and monitoring where appropriate.
<b>LR O46</b>	Lead and support the extension and interconnection of Greenways, Blueways, Peatways and trails within and outside County Kildare in consultation with Coillte, Bord na Móna and all other relevant stakeholders, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA so as to ensure and protect the favourable status of European sites and their hydrological connections. Such developments will have regard for protected species and provide mitigation where applicable.
<b>LR O47</b>	Investigate the feasibility of connecting the Barrow Blueway with Portarlinton, Co. Laois along the Mountmellick Grand Canal and Peatways, and, where considered feasible, to undertake all necessary works, subject to all appropriate consents, in consultation with Laois County Council and Waterways Ireland.
<b>LR O48</b>	Promote the expansion of cycle facilities throughout the county and to liaise with Fáilte Ireland, the Sports Council, the National Transport Authority and other bodies in the development of cycling touring routes throughout the county and adjoining counties, in particular in areas of high amenity.

<b>LR O49</b>	Explore the feasibility of developing the route of the Slí Mór and Slí Dála as long-distance walking routes in co-operation with the Irish Sports Council, Fáilte Ireland and other Local Authorities.
<b>LR O50</b>	Support the development of the Turas Columbanus walking trail in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders and neighbouring Local Authorities, subject to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents.
<b>LR O51</b>	Facilitate the development of a walking route between Ballymore Eustace, Golden Falls, Poulaphouca/Blessington Greenway, Russborough and Barrettstown, in cooperation with landowners and government agencies, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA so as to ensure and protect the favourable status of European sites and their hydrological connections. Such developments will have regard for protected species and provide mitigation where applicable.
<b>LR O52</b>	Explore the feasibility of developing a walking route around the Ballynafagh Lake, in cooperation with landowners and government agencies.
<b>LR O53</b>	Identify and assess the impact of the development of cycle and walkways on built and archaeological heritage in the location and design of all cycleways and greenways.
<b>LR O54</b>	Ensure any proposed walking or cycling route does not significantly impact the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)</li> <li>- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)</li> <li>- Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)</li> <li>- Other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna.</li> <li>- Known sites of Flora Protection Order species</li> <li>- Zones of Archaeological Potential.</li> <li>- The vicinity of a recorded monument.</li> <li>- Sensitive landscape areas as identified in Chapter 13 of this Plan.</li> <li>- Scenic views and prospects.</li> <li>- Protected Structures.</li> <li>- Established rights of way and walking routes.</li> </ul>
<b>LR O55</b>	Allow for narrower cycleways and greenways when located within highly sensitive ecological areas along the length of the route, as appropriate.
<b>LR O56</b>	Require that applications or proposals for recreational / amenity activities involving natural areas such as watercourses, bogs, etc. be accompanied by a management plan which shall indicate projected numbers of users, hours of operation and seasons of operation. There shall also be an undertaking to protect the natural environment in the form of a risk assessment with proposed amelioration measures in respect of flora, fauna, hydrology, geology and soils.

<b>LR O57</b>	Require the undertaking of a feasibility assessment with respect to new cycling trails and pedestrian routes in the first instance. Where feasibility is established, a Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new infrastructure in two stages, Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.
<b>LR O58</b>	Support the development of ancillary infrastructure for Greenways and cycle routes (i.e. trailheads, signage, rest areas, parking, lighting, toilets, etc.) in line with the Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines (2018) of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in co-operation with landowners, Waterways Ireland, Government Departments and other Local Authorities. For the provision of larger infrastructure, regard will be given to European sites, their hydrological connections and qualifying interest species where potential likely significant effects may occur.
<b>LR O59</b>	Facilitate the delivery of the (i) Naas to Sallins Greenway and (ii) Naas to Corbally Harbour Greenway, in co-operation with landowners, Waterways Ireland and Government Departments.
<b>LR O60</b>	Explore the feasibility of developing a greenway/cycle for amenity purposes, in cooperation with Waterways Ireland and Government Departments. (a) Naas to Corbally harbour (b) Corbally Harbour to Newbridge.
<b>LR O61</b>	Explore, in conjunction with Waterways Ireland, the feasibility of re-opening the canal between Naas and Corbally Harbour for navigation, mooring and launching vessels, to encourage its use for recreational water sports.
<b>LR O62</b>	Explore the feasibility of restoring the dry dock in Athy, in consultation with Waterways Ireland.
<b>LR O63</b>	Encourage and support the development of water safety awareness initiatives in association with Kildare Water Safety and related statutory bodies.
<b>LR O64</b>	Ensure that any increase in visitor numbers to countryside recreational facilities are managed to avoid significant negative effects including loss of habitat and disturbance.
<b>LR O65</b>	Facilitate and support the development of a Liffey Valley Linear Park in collaboration with Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, relevant government departments, existing landowners, and other relevant stakeholders.
<b>LR O66</b>	Progress the implementation of the following flagship projects identified in the report 'Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy' (2006) or any superseding plan, while ensuring that environmental and built heritage sensitivities are not negatively impacted upon. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement work of the Celbridge Town Centre, specifically the refurbishment of the pedestrian bridge over the River Liffey</li> </ul>

	<p>adjacent to The Mill building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The acquisition and development of the Donaghcumper land into a public park with the opportunity to create a linkage with Castletown estate in co-operation with the OPW and all other relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Preparation of a Masterplan for the Donaghcumper land.</li> <li>• The development and installation of high-quality interpretative boards in each of the towns and villages along the Liffey from Leixlip to Ballymore Eustace.</li> </ul>
<b>LR O67</b>	<p>Investigate the feasibility of;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) creating a pedestrian link between the Liffey Valley, the Wicklow Mountains and the Wicklow Way, in consultation with Wicklow County Council, as recommended in the report <i>'Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy'</i>.</li> <li>(ii) The possible expansion of recreational open space at other locations along the River Liffey, all subject to environmental considerations.</li> </ol>
<b>LR O68</b>	<p>Preserve the pedestrian and cycle link between the River Liffey and the Grand Canal at the Leinster Aqueduct and to explore making the existing underpass fully accessible as recommended in the report <i>'Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy.'</i></p>
<b>LR O69</b>	<p>Preserve, protect, promote and improve for the common good, existing rights of way which contribute to general amenity, particularly those which provide access to archaeological sites and National Monuments and amenities, including upland areas and water corridors, and to create new ones or extend existing ones where appropriate either by agreement with landowners or through the use of compulsory powers, without adversely affecting landscape conservation interests, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA so as to ensure and protect the favourable status of European sites and their hydrological connections. Such developments will have regard for protected species and provide mitigation where applicable.</p>
<b>LR O70</b>	<p>Identify existing rights of way and walking routes prior to any new forestry planting, infrastructural development and any energy/telecommunications or golf course developments and ensure that new development does not have a negative impact on established walking routes/public rights of way.</p>
<b>LR O71</b>	<p>Take the potential impact of proposed development into account when considering/assessing applications for permission in the vicinity of established walking routes that might impinge on walking routes (including long distance or potential walking routes).</p>
<b>LR O72</b>	<p>Protect, enhance and improve existing public rights of way and where possible, provide additional access to inland waterways through agreement, permissive access and/or the acquisition of land for public rights of way and parking and lay-by facilities.</p>

<b>LR 073</b>	Seek to identify, list and map public rights of way in County Kildare that gives access to riverbanks, canal banks or other places of natural beauty or recreational value over the lifetime of this Plan and to provide for the preservation of such public rights of way.
<b>LR 074</b>	Protect and enhance existing biodiversity rich areas within state and publicly owned land, peatlands, river, canal and railway corridors, grass verges along public roads and existing and future greenways, public parks and public open spaces in towns and villages.
<b>LR 075</b>	All developments that would be visible from the canal network shall be required to submit a visual assessment of the proposal relative to the canal in order to determine any negative impacts on the visual amenity and environmental quality of the canal.
<b>LR 076</b>	Promote the role of parks and open spaces in conserving and restoring biodiversity, ecosystems and the ecosystem services they provide in accordance with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017-2021), the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021- 2025), the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan (2009-2014) and Heritage Plan (2019-2025) or any superseding plans. In the development of individual management plans for parks the requirements of the aforementioned biodiversity and pollinator plans will be taken into consideration and will form part of the management requirements for the park. The development of individual management plans for parks will include consultation with local stakeholders.
<b>LR 077</b>	Encourage the planting of pollinator friendly trees and plants, where appropriate, to improve pollinator populations within state and publicly owned land, public parks and public open spaces in towns and villages, including as part of mixed use and residential developments, in accordance with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015- 2020.
<b>LR 078</b>	Liase with Bord na Móna to investigate the feasibility of providing access for a local amenity/heritage site at Prosperous Bog.
<b>LR 079</b>	Support the protection and retention of peatland railway lines including narrow gauge railway lines and rolling stock where possible to support amenity use of the peatlands.

## Action

It shall be an action of the Council to:

<b>LR A8</b>	Review all public rights of way, having regard to the Office of the Planning Regulators recent Case Study Paper titled " <i>Public Rights of Way and the Local Authority Development Plan</i> " June 2021 (Survey Report on the Operation of Section 10(2)(o) of the Planning Act), during the lifetime of this Plan.
--------------	---

<b>LR A9</b>	Prepare and implement a County Walking Strategy, within the lifetime of the Plan, in consultation with statutory bodies and landowners and in accordance with the recommendations of the County Kildare Walking Routes Project, 2005. This strategy will seek to identify established and proposed walking routes in the county, evaluate these routes and make recommendations for their promotion.
<b>LR A10</b>	Develop a strategy for the Barrow & Rye Valleys to enhance and protect their historical, ecological, and amenity value, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.
<b>LR A11</b>	Investigate the feasibility of developing long distance walking and cycling routes along disused sections of railway lines (e.g. Tullow line, Edenderry to Enfield (former Midland Great Western) line, Harristown Railway line) and canals (Corbally Line, Blackwood Feeder, and Mountmellick Line) or through boglands, possibly using the bog railway routes, during the lifetime of the Plan, in conjunction with the Irish Sports Council and adjoining Local Authorities. These walking and cycling routes will be segregated where possible.
<b>LR A12</b>	Develop, in conjunction with local communities, short walking routes, such as looped walks, heritage/historic trails, famine trails, historical trails, and Slí Na Sláinte routes.
<b>LR A13</b>	Develop Monitoring and Management Plans for Greenways, Blueways, Peatways and Trails, in their ownership, with the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at their core, to ensure the success of these routes and environmental sustainability.
<b>LR A14</b>	Liase with Waterways Ireland and other agencies to investigate the feasibility of creating inland Marinas / mooring facilities on canals at Lullymore / Lodge, Ummeras, and Ticknevin Bogs.
<b>LR A15</b>	To progress the implementation of the Liffey Valley Linear Park. A map showing the full extent of the routes shall be prepared and policies shall be identified that support the development of the linear park which shall then be included in relevant Local Area Plans.

### **13.7 Urban Recreation and Amenity**

Access to opportunities for recreation and amenity is an important consideration in improving quality of life. This is likely to become more significant as the population increases, and land becomes more valuable and pressure from competing land uses becomes more intense.

Local networks of high quality, well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help to enhance the urban environment and should be planned to be easily accessible to all.

### **13.7.1 Open Space**

New development of housing and / or commercial development influences the need for new sports and outdoor community facilities. The zoning of land for “open space” is an important element of land-use planning and should be provided within Development Plans and Local Area Plans as appropriate.

*The Kildare Open Space Strategy (2021)*, identified a hierarchy of open space within the county, including three categories of open space types, which will influence future open space provision in County Kildare (Appendix 3 refers).

This strategy includes an audit of facilities currently available and an assessment of current and future needs within the county. Recommendations are outlined for the current and future open space requirements for villages and towns in the county and will form an important input into the preparation of future Local Area Plans.

The provision of accessible open space is an integral part of the provision of high-quality green infrastructure for communities. Overall, the Council will seek the provision of open space at a standard of 2.5 ha per 1000 population in accordance with the Kildare Open Space Strategy (2021).

### **13.7.2 Allotments, Community Gardens and Farms**

Allotments and community gardens are becoming increasingly popular. Allotment gardens allow a number of people to cultivate their own vegetables in individual plots/land parcels on lands owned by another private individual or body. Both types of facilities can have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper local and sustainable source of food. There are currently 55 no. allotments at the Wonderful Barn in Leixlip.

Derrybeg Farm, in Celbridge, operates under the model of a Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) and is part of a national and international network that serves residents in the Celbridge, Leixlip and Maynooth Area. The farmers work the land and the consumers/members commit to pay a sum of money in advance to cover the day to day running of the farm in return for a box of seasonal vegetables each week over a nine-month season. The model could be extended to other communities in County Kildare.

### **13.7.3 Green Infrastructure**

Green infrastructure refers to the network of linked high quality green spaces and other environmental features within an urban setting. This strategically planned and delivered network should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource, capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. This includes climate change adaptation, waste and water management, food production, recreation and health benefits, biodiversity enhancement linkages and economic benefits.



In developing green infrastructure, opportunities should be taken to develop and enhance networks for cycling, walking and other non-motorised transport. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.

### 13.7.4 Sports and Recreational Facilities

The development of sport and recreation is important in encouraging a sense of wellbeing and social contact. Kildare County Council acknowledges the very important roles that open space and sporting, and social clubs play in enhancing the social and recreational life of Kildare’s communities. Facilities for both formal and informal recreation catering for the entire community of all abilities, are required. It is an objective of KCC to encourage the dual use of amenity facilities (See objectives in Section 10.12).

### 13.7.5 Children’s Play Facilities

Children’s play is important to their development. It is through play that they learn to socialise and interact with the world. In supporting play, residential areas, parks and open spaces should be available and be safe and enjoyable for children of different ages.

The vision of the ‘*Kildare Play Strategy (2018-2028)*’ is ‘to have Kildare recognised as a child-friendly county and a leader in public play & recreation provision” with the values of inclusiveness, Best Practice, Collaboration and Partnership and Integrity.

New playgrounds have been provided in Kill, Sallins, Eadestown, Caragh, Timahoe and Castledermot. A new skatepark was provided in Newbridge in 2019 and a pilot scheme is underway in Celbridge for the development of an outdoor youth facility. This pilot scheme will inform the development of other play facilities in County Kildare.

### Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

<b>LR P5</b>	Preserve, manage and maintain to a high standard the existing public parks, open spaces, amenities and recreation facilities throughout the county.
--------------	---

### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>LR O80</b>	Provide or facilitate the development of suitable sites of appropriate scale for recreational and amenity use, through this Plan and the Development Management process in accordance with the forthcoming National Outdoor Recreation Strategy, the Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy (2004) and the TeenSpace: National Recreation Policy for Young People (2007). Such land shall be easily accessible to the public and located in or adjacent to areas of existing or proposed residential use, or close to centres of rural communities.
---------------	--

<b>LR O81</b>	Ensure that new developments are compatible with the availability and size of passive and active open space and recreational facilities, i) within 10 minutes' walk from people's homes; ii) accessible to all, regardless of age, physical mobility, disability or social disadvantage; iii) are in line with the Settlement Strategy and the 'Sustainable Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities,' (DEHLG, 2009); iv) include disabled parking bays, and v) include accessible play recreational facilities/equipment.
<b>LR O82</b>	Require the provision of good quality, well located and functional open space in new residential developments, including landscaping with native species and scale appropriate natural play areas to cater for all age groups.
<b>LR O83</b>	Ensure development proposals provide for hedgerow and woodland creation and augmentation within developments <sup>7</sup> at the start of the construction phase and encourage the block planting of woodland and the joining up of hedgerows and woodlands between developments in order to support habitat creation, in so far as possible.
<b>LR O84</b>	Ensure that all development proposals include comprehensive landscaping schemes including trees, suitable to their environment and to require that the planting of same should either be carried out in full as part of Phase 1 for larger phased schemes or prior to the occupation of any units on the overall development site on all other schemes.
<b>LR O85</b>	Facilitate additional non-mainstream facilities for the youth and sport facilities that lend themselves to lifelong participation for older persons through the provision of suitable facilities in all towns and villages.
<b>LR O86</b>	Provide play facilities adjacent to other community and childcare facilities, in so far as is possible, and to ensure their proper management and maintenance.
<b>LR O87</b>	Implement the Kildare Play Strategy (2018-2028) to address the play and recreational needs of children and young people growing up in County Kildare.
<b>LR O88</b>	Avoid the loss of an existing amenity or recreational facility through any development proposal, unless: (i) The facility or amenity was established as an interim use pending the completion of an improved or satisfactory replacement facility; or (ii) The applicant can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that there is an insufficient local demand for the existing facility; or (iii) Satisfactory alternative provision can be made by the applicant that will be fully operational either prior to the commencement of development or prior to the occupation of any residential units

<sup>7</sup> Including residential, industrial and retail developments.

	directly associated with the subject recreational facility.
<b>LR O89</b>	Liaise with sporting organisations to ensure that where possible the needs of sports clubs and the communities are met in the provision of quality facilities in line with the vision and objectives of the National Sports Policy, 2018-2027.
<b>LR O90</b>	Work with other government, non-government, sporting organisations and other relevant organisations to develop synergies in relation to the provision of recreational and amenity facilities.
<b>LR O91</b>	Consider future needs in the provision of new or in the expansion of existing sport and recreational facilities, by encouraging the clustering of facilities, improving the range, quality, access and capacity of facilities and catering for all age-groups and abilities through initiatives in partnership with community groups and sporting organisations.
<b>LR O92</b>	Support the Sports and Recreation Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 (or any subsequent updates) for the county, in co-operation with Kildare Sports Partnership, during the lifetime of this Plan.
<b>LR O93</b>	Prevent the development of areas zoned open space/amenity or areas which have been indicated in a previous planning application as being open space for uses other than open space and recreation related.
<b>LR O94</b>	Identify potential sites for regional type parks in the Naas-Newbridge Allenwood, Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip and Athy areas, and to commence the process of delivery of same, as outlined in the Council's Kildare Open Space Strategy, 2021.
<b>LR O95</b>	Implement the recommendations of the Kildare Open Space Strategy 2021 and make provision for a hierarchy of public parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within towns and villages so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work.
<b>LR O96</b>	Support and facilitate the provision of a network of high quality, well connected and well located multifunctional public parks and open spaces throughout the county, while protecting and enhancing the environmental capacity and ecological function of these spaces, in order to aid the movement of biodiversity and people and to strengthen the overall Green Infrastructure network.
<b>LR O97</b>	Investigate the feasibility of increasing linkages between the Park at Kerdiffstown, the proposed Sallins Amenity Lands and the Grand Canal Greenway in co-operation with Waterways Ireland.
<b>LR O98</b>	Explore the feasibility of developing an Urban Neighbourhood Park by integrating the existing local park at Abbeyland and undeveloped strategic open space as a River Liffey Park in Clane.
<b>LR O99</b>	Retain, where appropriate, areas adjacent to waterways as a linear park, particularly where these link into the wider open space network.
<b>LR O100</b>	Support and facilitate, the establishment of a community run nursery to grow native plants, at an appropriate location.

<b>LR O101</b>	Ensure that residual land in developments can be used for the provision of green infrastructure including for community food programmes/ allotments and pollination.
<b>LR O102</b>	Support and facilitate allotments/ community gardens on roofs of buildings where they do not pose a safety risk to the users of such spaces. Each proposal shall be assessed on its own merits.
<b>LR O103</b>	Support and facilitate allotments/ community gardens on vacant, underutilised and derelict sites throughout the county.
<b>LR O104</b>	Support and facilitate the development of allotments/community gardens that's accessible to all and meet the following criteria: (i) The lands are of appropriate scale and at appropriate locations, situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/ villages; (ii) Proximate to public transport links and walking/cycling infrastructure; and (iii) Adequate water supply and adequate parking facilities can be provided.
<b>LR O105</b>	Minimise the environmental impact of external lighting at sensitive locations within the Green Infrastructure network to mitigate adverse impacts on sensitive fauna and protected species, and to achieve a sustainable balance between the recreational needs of an area, the safety of walking and cycling routes and the protection of light sensitive species such as bats.

## Action

It shall be an action of the Council to:

<b>LR A16</b>	Identify public land for the planting of woodlands under the Woodland Creation on Public Lands scheme, as well as public land for community gardens, and other measures to improve biodiversity (including bee and insect houses), and parkland meadows within the county's open spaces and parks to promote the development of multifunctional amenity areas with enhanced biodiversity value in every urban settlement, where possible.
<b>LR A17</b>	Investigate the feasibility of developing the Donaghcumper lands as an amenity for local people and link the lands with Castletown, in cooperation with the National Historic Properties unit of the Office of Public Works and all other relevant stakeholders.
<b>LR A18</b>	Refurbish the existing playground in the Leixlip Amenities Centre and all other playgrounds around the county as necessary.
<b>LR A19</b>	Develop an outdoor youth facility in Celbridge as a pilot scheme to inform the development of other play facilities in County Kildare.
<b>LR A20</b>	a) Develop a new playground at Allenwood during the lifetime of this Plan b) Support new and additional playgrounds/play facilities for communities in Brannockstown, Kildangan, Cutbush, Straffan,

	<p>Johnstownbridge, Carbury, Derrinturn, Donadea, Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge, Robertstown, Kilmeague, Two Mile House, Newbridge, Athgarvan, Kildare, The Curragh, Calverstown, Kilberry, Ballitore, Kilkea, Maganey and Ardclough and to deliver same, if deemed appropriate, during the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>c) Support the community to deliver a playground in Ballymore Eustace during the lifetime of this Plan.</p>
<b>LR A21</b>	Progress plans for the delivery of recreational and amenity facilities on the Sallins Amenity Lands in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.
<b>LR A22</b>	Progress plans for the development of Sports, Recreational & Water Hub facilities in Monasterevin in partnership with the Monasterevin Development Association, Waterways Ireland, the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary and all other relevant stakeholders.
<b>LR A23</b>	Support sustainable management of our parks and residential areas which will include areas of reduced mowing.
<b>LR A24</b>	Deliver Cherry Avenue Park in Kildare Town as a recreation and amenity centre to include (inter alia) dedicated facilities for the youth.
<b>LR A25</b>	Prepare an integrated public amenity park and tourism destination at the Wonderful Barn and associated lands, to be informed by a detailed conservation and management plan.
<b>LR A26</b>	Investigate the feasibility of an Allotment Pilot Programme to consider matters relating to site identification, administration, leases/rental and resources required to deliver an allotment in each Municipal District in association with District Engineers and the Parks Department.