Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan

Table of Objectives and Actions

KILKENNY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Objective 1: Provide Biodiversity Leadership at Local Level

The establishment of the Biodiversity Working Group provides a platform for stakeholders to share best practice and inform participants of their projects and developments within their areas of interest. It will also provide opportunities to identify collaboration projects and drive the biodiversity agenda throughout the county. They will be the county champions. Kilkenny County Council will highlight positive actions for biodiversity and advocate for the recording of species as well as conservation and restoration of habitats to support a vibrant eco-system. A leadership role must be taken by council officials and stakeholders to place biodiversity at the top of the agenda across all sectors.

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
1.1		A Biodiversity Working Group established to champion biodiversity.	Meet 3 times a year and one joint meeting with the Heritage Forum. The Chief Executive and elected members invited to a special meeting to inform them of issues and opportunities present in Kilkenny	Number of Meetings Retention of Biodiversity Officer over the life time of the plan	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 1B9
1.2	Capacity Building	A better understanding of biodiversity created across the organisation.	Create biodiversity learning opportunities for staff	No. of staff trained No. of training events	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 1B3
1.3		Funding and opportunities for biodiversity themed projects promoted across sectors in Kilkenny	Create a directory for funding sources and promote opportunities locally	Creation of Biodiversity Themed Funding Directory	Biodiversity Working Group	The Citizen Assembly Report on Biodiversity Loss – Recommendation on Supporting Communities

NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
1.4	Capacity Building	Transparent reporting of biodiversity complaints captured by Kilkenny County Council	Devise and activate a system to capture data on biodiversity-based complaints

Report published annually | System activated | Biodiversity Officer | NBAP Action No. 1A8 |
| 1.5 | Nature Based solutions (NBS) | NBS best practice integrated into all Council design projects. | Showcase Council's NBS projects as best practice | No. of NBS integrated into Council Projects | Kilkenny Coco | NBAP Action No. 2C7 |
| 1.6 | | A criterion to prioritise Kilkenny County Council owned sites for biodiversity enhancement | Devise a Criteria Audit of Council properties to determine site suitability for biodiversity enhancement | No. of sites audited | Biodiversity Officer | NBAP Action No. 1D5 |
| 1.7 | Academic Networks | Local training and education providers providing biodiversity training opportunities locally | Assess opportunities with local training and education providers to support biodiversity education and boost biodiversity recording capacity. | No. of meeting with educational stakeholders

No. of new courses provided | Biodiversity Working Group | NBAP Action No. 4C4 |

NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
1.8	Participatory Processes	A biodiversity online-platform signposting locations of data resources and provide a depository for county studies	Audit resources on Kilkenny Heritage.ie Develop a strategy to improve access to biodiversity mapping and studies. Launch New Platform	Platform Launched	Kk Coco Heritage Team	NBAP Action No. 4B7
1.9	Participatory Processes	Public organisations with properties increasing actions for biodiversity enhancement	Identify potential public body projects. Offer support and advice to ensure successful delivery.	No. of projects completed	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 1D5

Objective 2: Strengthen Local Biodiversity Policy and Integrate Biodiversity Procedures into Council Operations

Objective 2 and 3 are intertwined and must be considered collectively as Council operations directly impacts on public amenity space. Kilkenny County Council formalised their commitment to support pollinators by becoming the first formal Local Authority partner of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan in 2019. Ecological connectivity and habitat enrichments is key to further safeguard biodiversity. Council lands may assist in connecting habitats and opportunities may present for habitat restoration under the Nature Restoration Law.

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
2.1	Affecting system level change	Reduce glyphosate-based chemicals used by Kilkenny County Council	Calculate usage annually Determine reduction pathway	Annual litres used No. of pilots to determine alternative management control	KKCoco Parks	NBAP Action No. 2B6/2B13
2.2		Alien Invasive Species on public land mapped	Co-ordinate an internal mapping function to identify and prioritise sites for treatment	Launch of staff mapping system	KKCoco Parks	NBAP Action No. 2H2
2.3	Research & Training	Protection of hedgerows	Implement training and build capacity in hedgerow maintenance, retention and translocation Develop a viable approach to hedgerow and tree maintenance regimes, that prevents no unnecessary or undue damage to biodiversity, whilst ensuring adequate road safety that is integrated and integral to the tendering process for such services. Provide guidance to staff and landowners on retention, translocation methods and cutting maintenance of hedgerows.	No. of training events and promotions	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 1B3

2.4	Policy	Policies, informed by ecological research to retain and restore ecological corridors in place	Draft policies based on advancing ecological surveys and studies to inform future planning and development.	No. of policies brought to the SPC for consideration per annum No. of meetings with planning.	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 3C1
2.5	Bridge Maintenance	County Council bridge maintenance projects provide biodiversity enhancements	Audit bridges for sensitive species. Identify biodiversity opportunities during bridge maintenance works with appropriate stakeholders, including IFI, BCI and BWI.	No. of actions	Coco Bridge Maintenance Team	NBAP Action No. 2D21

Objective 3: Manage Public Open Spaces for Biodiversity

Objective 2 and 3 are intertwined. Mapping of landscape features and auditing and public space is critical to determine suitability and also to prioritise action areas for biodiversity enhancement. Some actions may involve a change in council operations to make positive changes for biodiversity.

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
3.1	Procedures & Protocols	Enhancement of green and blue corridors connectivity including the protection of riparian vegetation, instream connectivity and habitat networks	Determine a procedure to prioritise the blue/green corridors for mapping the connectivity of public green and blue corridors Identify gaps and restore ecological connectivity. Map pollinator foraging network in urban areas.	No of projects completed.	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 3A3
3.2		Pollinator-friendly mowing practices formalised	Map areas of semi natural grasslands on public grounds Increase % of short flowering meadows by completing pilot trials and expand where suitable. Complete an audit of % land in public meadow.	No. of pilot areas returned to short cut meadow Map of semi natural grasslands completed	Parks Department KK Coco	NBAP Action No. 5A5
3.3	Research & Policy	Protection of Urban Trees in Kilkenny City	Develop a tree strategy to include a baseline of tree canopy cover, identify species diversity and tree health.	Strategy Launched	Parks Department KK Coco	NBAP Action No. 2B11

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
3.4	Research & Policy	Adoption of dark sky biodiversity friendly lighting policy for public spaces whilst maintaining standards for safety and security concerns	Integrate dark sky protocols into Council developments. Audit Council properties to determine if artificial light reduction is possible	No. of developments with dark sky protocol integrated No. of properties audited	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 2B13
3.5		Public parks and amenity trails managed to maximise biodiversity enhancement	Audit number of parks and amenity trails Prioritise and complete biodiversity management plans for each location	No. of management plans	Parks Department KK Coco	NBAP Action No. 5A5

Objective 4: Conduct Habitat Mapping and Monitoring to Support Data-Driven Management Decisions

The use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) will be a critical component of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Mapping habitats and identifying ecological corridors will assist in deciding on prioritising projects in specific areas. The display of information by mapping will make information easier to interpret. Kilkenny County Council completes environmental monitoring annually, actions are listed to promote monitoring findings and make data more accessible to the public.

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
4.1		Sites of Local biodiversity importance mapped and protected.	Identify and map non-designated sites of Local Biodiversity Importance sites, in line with Heritage Council Guidance, to aid the implementation of County Development Plan biodiversity policies.	No. of meeting with forward planning	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 1D5
4.2	Research and Development	Communities champion ecological connectivity when considering town regeneration/' village renewal proposals	Promote the development of Community Biodiversity Action Plans that include habitat mapping of urban areas that highlight the importance of ecological connectivity. This is particularly important to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features in the landscape which are a major importance for flora and fauna as required under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.	No. of Community Biodiversity Action Plans developed	Biodiversity Officer	National Biodiversity Action Plan

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4.3		A visual storyboard to present biodiversity hotspots in the county to highlight project opportunities	Create a county storyboard that identifies all the statutory protected sites, ancient woodlands and known biodiversity hotspots and include biodiversity projects to inform and track biodiversity rich sites and biodiversity projects.	Delivery of an evolving county storyboard	Biodiversity Action Group	NBAP Action No 2B7
4.4	Research and Development	Protection of wetland sites	Review the County Kilkenny Wetland Survey and prioritise recommended actions.	No. of actions completed	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No 2B7
4.5		Protection of Hedgerows	Complete audit of Kilkenny hedgerows and prioritise future projects on enhancing ecological connectivity between biodiversity rich sites.	Audit Completed	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No 2B7
4.6		Protection of Ancient Woodlands	Identify, map and determine a pathway to secure the conservation and restoration of Kilkenny's Ancient Woodland habitat.	Ancient Woodlands mapped and pathway identified for conservation and restoration.	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No 2B7
4.7	Affecting system level change	Water Quality Exceeds Water Framework Directive Requirements	Farm inspection team to collaborate with agricultural sector, Nore Vision, IFI, Teagasc and LAWPRO to complete water quality assessments and communicate issues impacting water quality and promote actions to improve water quality.	No. of promotions	Environment Department KK Coco	National Water Action Plan 2024 Agri Actions 1-5

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
4.8	Affecting system level change	Water quality data easy to source and understand	Promote annual data from the EPA RMCEI Plan that illustrates the work completed by the Environment Section. Communicate the findings of the EPA Annual Water Quality Reports to raise awareness of water quality issues.	No. of promotions	Environment Department KK Coco	National Water Action Plan 2024

Objective 5: Record and Monitor Protected Species or Species of Conservation Concern

By the restoration of habitats, water quality improvements and restoring ecological connectivity will bring benefits to a wide variety of species. The recording of species will provide information on habitat quality, connectivity, species abundance and distribution. Data recording is required to track changes over long periods and citizen science can contribute significantly if adequate training is provided.

Action No.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
5.1	Capacity Building	Strong synergies existing between Kilkenny County Council and the National Biodiversity Data Centre and other NGO's	Promote national monitoring schemes locally to encourage participation.	No of participants annually

Increase rate of participation | Biodiversity Working Group | NBAP Action No 4B7 |
| 5.2 | Academic Networking/ Education | Students have strong interest in biodiversity and species recording | Promote the Heritage Council's "Heritage in Schools Programme"

Support biodiversity programs under Kilkenny County Council's Green School Programme.

Promote/develop school supports to engage students in species identification | No. of students engaged | Biodiversity Working Group | The Citizen Assembly Report on Biodiversity Loss – Recommendation Public Engagement, Education and Awareness |
| 5.3 | Outreach | Strong citizen science participation rate in Kilkenny | Support and promote local NGOs such as the Kilkenny Naturalist Field Club and Kilkenny Birdwatch Ireland Branch | No. of supports provided | Biodiversity Working Group | The Citizen Assembly Report on Biodiversity Loss – Recommendation Public Engagement, Education and Awareness |

Action No.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
5.4	Research and Development	Kilkenny County Council informed on national surveys relating to Annex I, II and IV species of the Habitats Directive and Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive	Kilkenny County Council to stay informed of national surveys, collaborate with agencies if further research or monitoring required on a local level. Kilkenny County Council promote findings to safeguard habitats and species.	No. of Promotions to raise awareness of national survey findings Integration of survey findings on Biodiversity internal GIS Mapping Layer and public Biodiversity Storyboard (Action 4.3).	Biodiversity Officer	NBAP Action No. 1D5

Objective 6: Foster Engagement, Education and Promotion of Best Practice Biodiversity Action

Fostering engagement and promoting best practise for biodiversity action is critical. Lifestyle choices can impact biodiversity locally and internationally. Environmental campaigns to highlight personal responsibility is a way to show the interconnectivity of lifestyle choices and its impact on biodiversity and the wider environment. The variety of engagement and education opportunities will ensure equitable access to natural spaces and opportunities to engage will foster an inclusive approach to environmental stewardship.

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
6.1	Outreach	Kilkenny Citizens Informed about biodiversity	Assist in the dissemination of Biodiversity promotional material, promoting funding streams, training opportunities, field days and workshops. Build a portfolio of talks, workshops Promote Biodiversity Week (May) and Heritage Week (August) annually.	No. of events per annum No. of materials distributed per annum No. of events annually for Heritage and Biodiversity Week Annually.	Biodiversity Officer	The Citizen Assembly Report on Biodiversity Loss – Recommendation Public Engagement, Education and Awareness
6.2		Leverage creative, cultural and artistic initiatives to enhance engagement on biodiversity	Encourage and support artists whose work promotes ecological awareness and biodiversity and enables individuals to connect with nature	Level of promotion and supports	Arts Office	Kilkenny Cultural and Creativity Strategy 2023-2028. Local Authority Creative Ireland Culture and Creativity Strategies 2023-2027.

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
6.3		Pollinator Friendly Actions Widespread throughout communities	Support local initiatives that engage the public using the sectoral themed resources from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.	No. of initiatives supported

Programme per annum | Biodiversity Officer | NBAP Action No. 2B13 |
| 6.4 | | Agricultural biodiversity enhancement projects widespread | Promote field days, demonstration walks, workshops and field days that educate farmers on biodiversity practices.

Distribute biodiversity farm packs as part of the Council's Farm Survey visits.

Collaborate with LAWPRO to highlight the uptake, successes and outcomes of their EIP programme | No. of promotions per annum

No. of biodiversity farm packs distributed

No. of collaborations with LAWPRO per annum | Biodiversity Officer | NBAP Action No. 2D1 |
| 6.5 | Participatory Processes | Private landholdings biodiversity enhancement projects widespread | Support and promote demonstration events that lead to a better understanding of options for landowners to increase the biodiversity value of landholdings. | No. of Events | Biodiversity Officer | NBAP Action No. 1B10 |
| 6.6 | | Community tree nurseries promoting local provenance widespread | Determine the methodology for set up.
Identify interested parties.
Identify training requirements.
Identify possible funding avenues. | No. of community tree nurseries established | Biodiversity Officer | The Citizen Assembly Report on Biodiversity Loss – Recommendation Public Engagement, Education and Awareness |

ACTION NO.	THEME	TARGETS	ACTIONS	KEY PERFORMACE INDICATOR	LEAD	POLICY LINKAGES
6.7	Participatory Processes	Biodiversity education and engagement activities having equitable access	The education programme will be designed to be diverse to cater to a wide audience. The education programme will incorporate staff training, biodiversity courses, library talks and walk and talks. An annual educational schedule will be devised.	No. of events No. of participants	Biodiversity Officer	
6.8	Engagement	Wide appreciation of soil health, and benefits known of home compost and leaf mould	Promote soil science Promote compost free gardening, Promote leaf mould as an alternative source to compost	No. of promotions	Environmental Awareness Officer	NBAP Action No. 2D1
6.9		A greater understanding of actions the general public can take to take to assist biodiversity	Complete awareness campaigns highlighting how households can lower nutrient loading in river catchments e.g Greener Cleaning, Septic Tank Maintenance.	No. of campaigns	Environmental Awareness Officer	NBAP Action No. 2D1
6.10	Engagement	Water conservation widespread across all sectors	Promote water conservation across sectors, providing the linkage to importance to biodiversity protection. Promote rain water harvesting across different sectors.	No. of promotions	Environmental Awareness Officer	NBAP Action No. 2D1