SEA SCREENING REPORT
Extension to the
Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021

Kilkenny County Council

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Section 1 Introduction and Background

1. Introduction

Kilkenny County Council is extending the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan (KCCDP) 2021 under Section 68(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2024, as amended.

As Kilkenny County Council has not determined that the extended Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects, the Plan has to be screened for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the requirement for SEA of the extension to the KCCDP.

It is noted that the KCCDP was subject to a full SEA. The appropriate environmental authorities were consulted throughout that SEA process.

2. Legislative Context

In Ireland, the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation through:

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 and S.I. No. 463 of 2025 European Union (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2005.
- S.I. No. 456 of 2025 European Union (Land Use Planning - Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2025.

Under Section 68(4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2024, as amended, a planning authority shall, in relation to any proposed extension, comply with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations.

Section 2 of the SEA 456 of 2025 European Union (Land Use Planning-Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, sets out that "plan" has the meaning assigned to it in section 198(1) of the Act. Section 198(1) of the Act further defines that in relation to a development plan, "plan" means –
(f) a development plan or a variation of a development plan,
(g) an amendment to a development plan as provided for in subsection (2) of section 62, (Expedited variation of development plan)

Under Section 5 of the SEA 456 of 2025 European Union (Land Use Planning-Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for a development plan.

Section 4 sets out the types of plan that require a determination of need for environmental assessment of a plan (also known as Screening). Any plan which sets the framework for future development consent of projects requires such a determination, other than a development plan.

In this case, it is proposed to extend the existing development plan, which the Planning Authority consider falls under Section 4(1), and therefore screening will be carried out in order to make a determination.

3. Content of the Extension

The Development Plan was adopted on the 3rd September 2021, and it is due to expire in September 2027. This extension is for an additional period of 3 years, until 2030. No other provisions of the Plan are affected.

1.4 Consultation

As part of the screening process, environmental authorities were notified that a submission or observation, in relation to whether or not implementation of the extended Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, may be made (a minimum period of 4 weeks was allowed for the reply).

The comments made by the EPA (submission dated 12th October 2026) have been taken into account in the determination of this screening report.

1.5 Appropriate Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment Screening under the Habitats Directive was also undertaken on the extension to the Plan. This determined that the extension is not likely, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their conservation objectives, and it is not considered necessary to undertake any further stages of the Appropriate Assessment process.

Section 2 Determining whether SEA is required

2.1 Introduction

The following pages contain a reproduction of Schedule 2A *'Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment'* of the SEA Regulations, as amended.

These criteria have been taken into account in determining whether or not significant effects on the environment would be likely to arise.

It is only changes to the Development Plan as a result of the extension, which are considered; the existing Development Plan (2021) has undergone full SEA already[1].

2.2 Schedule 2A: Part 1

1. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:* **the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources**

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 was subject to a full SEA.

The extension is to provide for a longer lifespan, in order to align with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

Potential adverse effects arising from implementation of the Plan as extended (see table below) would be consistent with those considered by the environmental assessments already undertaken on the Plan; the extension does not propose anything that would exceed the previously considered environmental envelope of effects. There are various provisions that have been integrated into the City and County Development Plan that will ensure that any potential adverse effects arising from the extended plan, alone or in-combination with the other parts of the Plan or in-combination with other plans and programmes, will be mitigated – these are detailed on the table below and include many measures requiring the protection of surface waters and implementation of appropriate systems. All lower-tier projects are required to comply with the measures specified below.

[1] SEA Directive Article 4.3: Where plans and programmes form part of a hierarchy, Member States shall, with a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, take into account the fact that the assessment will be carried out, in accordance with this Directive, at different levels of the hierarchy.

Environmental/ Component	**Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated, of implementing the extended Plan**	**Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 Provision (Existing, already in force policy/objective/development management standard)**
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	Loss of/disturbance to biodiversity with regard to Natura 2000 Sites, including the River Barrow and River Nore candidate Special Area of Conservation and the River Nore Special Protection Area Loss of/disturbance to biodiversity with regard to ecological connectivity and non-designated biodiversity Loss of/disturbance to biodiversity with regard to listed species	*See also measures on this table under Soil, Water, Flood Risk Management and Drainage and Water* Services • Obj. 1A To implement the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive and ensure that any plan or project within the functional area of the Planning Authority is subject to appropriate assessment in accordance with the Guidance Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009, or any subsequent version, and is assessed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in order to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of the site. Section 9.2.1.5 The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU legislation and national legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts). This protection will extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may arise during the lifetime of this plan. Section 9.2.2 To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. Section 9.2.1.5 Ensure that an ecological impact assessment is carried out, by suitably qualified professional(s), for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment. Section 9.2.2 To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands, trees) which are not within designated sites. Section 9.2.2 To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development. Section 9.2.1.5 The Council will also protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI94 of 1999). 9.3.9 Floodlighting: To ensure the protection of the special character and setting of protected structures, ACAs and Recorded Monuments, and protected species when considering proposals for floodlighting.
Population and Human Health	Spatially concentrated deterioration in human health	*See also measures on this table under Soil, Water, Water Services, Air and Climatic Factors and Flood Risk Management* 5.2.4 Agriculture & Food: The Plan will facilitate and support the development of agriculture and food while ensuring the highest standards of environmental protection in the assessment of planning applications for all development proposals. 6.14 Social Capital: The Council will promote and advance social inclusion and development in the county by ensuring the co-ordinated delivery of services and facilities and will seek to build social capital by integrating the social, community and cultural requirements of the county in the future planning and sustainable development of the County in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies.

Soil	Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of soil	*See also measures on this table under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Water, Water Services and Flood Risk Management* 9.2.4 Geological Heritage: The Council will consult the Geological Survey of Ireland when considering undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to affect County Geological Sites. In some locations, in consultation with landowners, it may be possible to access geological and geo-morphological features of interest, and the Council will support and facilitate this where appropriate.
Water	Potential interactions with the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas[1], arising from: - Changes in quality, flow and/or morphology; and - Increases in outflow at waste water treatment plant as a result of increases in population.	*See also measures on this table under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Soil, Water Services and Flood Risk Management* Objective 10B: To implement the measures of the River Basin Management Plan, including continuing to work with communities through the Local Authority Waters Programme to restore and improve water quality in the identified areas of action. 10.1.8.5 Water Quality Development Management Requirements: To have regard to the Groundwater Protection Scheme and to comply with the Water Services Acts 2007 as amended in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. 10.1.8.4 Water Quality: The Council will promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009; • for groundwater, and groundwater by European Union Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.
Flood Risk	Increase in flood risk	*See also measures on this table under Human Health* 10.2.6.1 Flood Management: To adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk. 10.2.6.1 Flood Management: The Council will ensure that new developments do not reduce the effectiveness or integrity of any existing or new flood defence infrastructure, and will facilitate the provision of new, or the reinforcement of existing, flood defences and protection measures where necessary. 10.2.6.2 Development Management Requirements: Where flood risk may be an issue for any proposed development, a detailed flood risk assessment should be carried out appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks arising. In particular, any area within or adjoining flood zone A or B, or flood risk area, shall be the subject of a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed. This shall be undertaken in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanying this Plan.
Water Services	The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Uisce Eireann to provide for such needs)	*See also measures on this table under Human Health* 10.1.4 Water Supply and Treatment: The Council will work with Uisce Éireann to protect existing water and wastewater infrastructure in the City and County and facilitate the development of new infrastructure aligned with the Core strategies.
Air and Climatic Factors and Sustainable Transport	Failure to contribute towards sustainable transport and associated impacts (energy usage and emissions to air including noise and greenhouse gases)	*See also measures on this table under Human Health* 1.6.1.2 The Climate Action Plan 2019: The Council have integrated and will continue to integrate both mitigation and adaptation measures into the City & County Development Plan as required by National and Regional policies and objectives. Strategic Objective 2A: To support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrate land use and transportation, and maximise opportunities through development form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions. Objective 12A: To plan for and progressively implement a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of road, bus , rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities and interfacing difference modes as the

[1] The River Nore is a designated Salmonid water under SI 293 of 1988 and groundwater under the area is listed on the Register for groundwater that is used for drinking water.

		opportunity arises. Objective 12B: To plan for a transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and 'walkable communities' together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement in all settlements. To plan for a transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and 'walkable communities' together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement in all settlements.
Waste Management	Increases in waste levels	Objective 10G: To implement the Southern Region Waste Management Plan. 10.2.9.1 Waste Management Development Management Requirements: To have regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount of waste produced and proposed method of disposal. • Proposed apartment and housing developments in urban areas must be appropriately laid out to enable the implementation of three bin collection systems. • Proposed apartment, housing and commercial developments must be either serviced by existing infrastructure or make appropriate provision for bring sites in their layout. The sites shall be made available to the Council at the developer's own expense and will be maintained by the Council or its agents. Adequate access must be provided in developments to service proposed bring sites. 10.2.9.1 Waste Management Development Management Requirements: For all significant construction/demolition projects, the developer shall include an Environmental Management Plan. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities, and shall provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes.
Archaeological and Architectural Heritage	Effects on archaeological heritage and architectural heritage.	*See also measures on this table under Landscape* 9.3.1.4 Industrial Heritage: To endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on archaeological heritage. • To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains. • To ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential. Where upstanding remains of a Recorded Monument exist a visual impact assessment may be required to fully determine the effect of any proposed development. • To require the retention of surviving medieval plots and street patterns and to facilitate the recording of evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts etc. in the course of development. To safeguard the importance of significant archaeological landscapes from developments that would unduly sever or disrupt the relationship, connectivity and/or inter-visibility between sites. Objective 9F: To provide assistance to owners of protected structures in undertaking essential repairs and maintenance by the provision of relevant information. Objective 9I: To ensure all digital mapping for the Record of Protected Structures is up to date and current, and readily accessible to the public. 9.3.2.2 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage To have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines when assessing proposals for development affecting a protected structure and buildings listed in the NIAH. •To encourage the sympathetic retention, reuse and rehabilitation of protected structures and their setting, while ensuring the involvement of suitably qualified professionals •To ensure proposed service upgrades undertake an initial assessment of current services, to ensure the internal environment and fabric is not impacted on by such works. Energy assessments and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessments may be required where energy and service upgrades are proposed.

		•To ensure proposed development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure respects the protected structure and its setting, •To require an architectural impact assessment where appropriate for developments within the grounds of country house estates which are Protected Structures. •To promote principles of best practice in conservation in terms of use of appropriate materials, repair techniques, and thermal upgrades by adhering to the guidelines as set out in Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Advice Series publications •To promote best conservation principles and practice when assessing proposals for Kilkenny's architectural heritage •To ensure that energy upgrades for buildings constructed from traditional materials are respectful of architectural features, form, and environmental requirements necessary to maintain breathability in the structure. Objective 9J: To ensure the preservation of the special character of each ACA listed in this Plan (See Table 9.2 and Volume 2 Heritage Strategy) with particular regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, fenestration, signage, and other appendages such as electrical wiring, building materials, historic street furniture, paving and shopfronts. Objective 9K: To designate ACAs where appropriate and provide a local policy framework for the preservation of the character of these areas. Objective 9L:To prepare and introduce a set of Shopfront Guidelines.
Landscape	Occurrence of adverse visual impacts especially with respect to protected views and prospects	*See also measures on this table under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Archaeological Heritage and Architectural Heritage* 9.2.12.6 Views and Prospects: The Council will preserve and support the improvement of places or areas from which views or prospects of special amenity value exist, as identified in Appendix H and on Figure 9.2. 9.3.1.7 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes: To seek the protection and sustainable management of historic gardens, parklands and designed landscapes in Kilkenny County and City, their setting and their visual amenity.

Arising from the degree to which the extended Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities the Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

2. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:* the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

The Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021 (as varied) sits at the Local Government level, of the spatial planning hierarchy in Ireland, below the Regional Assembly and Government level. The Plan sits at the top of the local Government level and influences Local Area Plans (LAP). The extension will not alter this hierarchy and will not change the influence with which the County Development Plan has on other plans in the hierarchy, instead it will be led by those higher up in the process as is the current scenario.

Arising from the degree to which the KCCDP influences other plans, the extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

3. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:* the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

The KCCDP has undergone SEA. This process integrated environmental considerations into the Plan and concluded that the Plan is based on the broad principles of sustainable development.

Arising from the relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, the extended Plan would not be likely to

result in significant environmental effects.

4. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:* **environmental problems relevant to the plan**

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.

Through its provisions relating to environmental protection and management, the existing KCCDP contributes towards ensuring that environmental problems do not get worse and, where possible, it contributes towards amelioration.

Taking the above into account, arising from environmental problems relevant to the Plan, the extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

5. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:* **the relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection)**

The KCCDP relates to the land use sector and does not directly relate to other sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications or tourism.

The SEA process for the KCCDP integrated considerations with regard to EU and national legislation on the environment into the Plan, including those relating to the waste management and the Water Framework Directive.

Taking the above into account, arising from the relevance of the Plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment, the extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

2.3 Schedule 2A: Part 2

1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

No additional area is subject to zoning for more intensive development, over that identified in the Development Plan (as varied). The characteristics of the area have not altered. The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was prepared as part of the Development Plan in 2021 and will still be valid with any extension to the Plan.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the cumulative nature of the effects

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see Section 2.2).

3. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the transboundary nature of the effects

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects, and there are no

transboundary effects[2] (see Section 2.2).

4. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see Section 2.2). There are three Seveso sites in the county, none of which are affected by the extension of the Plan.

5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects as the framework will not change over that included in the existing Plan (see Section 2.2). The population of Co. Kilkenny, as enumerated in the 2022 Census, was 104,160.

6. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage. A separate AA process will be carried out on the extended Plan, to ensure no effect on European sites.

b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects with respect to exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values (see also Section 2.2).

c) intensive land-use.

The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see also Section 2.2).

7. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

A separate AA process will be carried out on this Proposed Variation, to ensure no effect on European sites. The extended Plan would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status (see also Section 2.2).

2.4 Conclusion

This extension to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 has been examined against Schedule 2A *'Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment'* of the SEA Regulations, as amended. This extension will provide for the continued implementation of policies and standards as already set out in the County Development Plan 2021 (as varied).

In terms of the provisions of Article 4(6) of the Regulations[3], following the appropriate consultation period the Planning Authority shall determine whether or not implementation of the extended Plan would be

[2] Transboundary in this context refers to national borders

[3] S.I. No. 456 of 2025

likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Regulations and any submission or observation received from the environmental authorities.

In this regard, a decision was taken on the 23rd October 2026 to not carry out an SEA and in accordance with Article 4(7)(b) the environmental authorities were notified of this decision on the 4th November 2026.