

## SEA AMENDMENTS as put forward by the EPA

The comments below relate to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process and the Environmental Report. Comments and suggestions in this Section are put forward for consideration and mainly relate to the key stages and outputs of the SEA Process.

### 1. Consultation

Confirm the nature and extent of any consultation with the adjoining Local Authorities, Waterford City and County Councils, on the Draft Local Area Plan (the Plan).

To be inserted in Section 2.0, *Scoping* 'During the entire LAP process Waterford City Council were consulted at regular intervals. A number of meetings were held with John Andrews (Senior Planner in Waterford City Council) in attendance, ranging from internal council meetings, public presentations and workshops and meetings with the elected representatives.'

### 2. Existing Environment

The section dealing with evolution of the environment without implementation of the Plan is very brief (Section 6.0). Consideration should be given to the inclusion of a more detailed analysis of the evolution of the environment in the absence of the Plan.

To be inserted at the start of Section 6.0 'The future growth of this area has been identified and set in place through a number of previous higher level plans, namely, the *National Development Plan 2007-2013*, *National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020*, *South-East Regional Planning Guidelines 2004-2020*, *Waterford Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study 2002-2020*, *Waterford City Development Plan 2007-2013*, and *Kilkenny County Draft Development Plan 2008-2014* (refer to Section 4.0). Therefore, in the absence of a detailed landuse plan for this area development pressures would still occur. However, without any overall vision for the area, any subsequent development would take place in an ad-hoc manner resulting in an un-coordinated approach to the overall integration of development, services and facilities. This would be contradictory to the proper planning and sustainability of the area.'

### 3. Environmental Objectives

You should clearly demonstrate how each issue raised at the scoping stage has been addressed or not via the SEA. Clear justification should be provided for those issues that have not been included in the SEA process.

#### Insert table

Issues raised at Scoping Stage	Action in Draft Plan
The Plan should implement and include, as appropriate, the relevant recommendations set out in <i>The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2006-2007</i> , (Office of Environment Enforcement- EPA, 2007).	Policy ENP1.3
Promotion of water conservation measures	Policy ENP1.2
Specific provisions for the implementation of the relevant recommendations set out in <i>Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons – A Report for the Years 2004 and 2005</i> (Office of Environment Enforcement- EPA, 2007)	This publication is to be referred to and a policy put in place to ensure compliance with its recommendations.
Zoning for development should be linked to availability of treatment infrastructure. Priority should be given to provision of adequate infrastructure in advance of any development	Policy ENP2.2

A cessation of the current practice of untreated wastewater discharge to the River Suir should be sought during the life time of the Plan,	This is a policy within the County Development Plan.
Protection of surface and groundwater resources and their associated habitats and species,	Policies ENP3
Provision and promotion of adequate and appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems,	Policy ENP3.6
Management of flood risk. Appropriate zoning of lands and restriction of use should apply in areas liable to flooding to avoid increased risk of flooding of the lands either within or adjoining the zoned areas,	Any areas liable to flooding have been zoned for open space.
Promotion of energy conservation measures in buildings,	Section 2.11.5 and 3.8 specifically deal with energy conservation in buildings.
Provision of sustainable modes of transport,	Numerous policies and objectives have been stated in the Plan (Section 2.1.6 & 2.1.7) outlining the provision of sustainable modes of transport.
Development of traffic management measures to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions,	Numerous policies and objectives have been stated in the Plan (Section 2.1.6 & 2.1.7) outlining traffic management measures.
Provision of adequate and appropriate amenity to serve both existing community and likely future increases in population,	Policies TP3, TP4 and Section 2.8.
Protection of the air quality in the Plan area,	
Protection of local biodiversity features – including rivers, wetlands, hedgerows, individual trees, streams, grassland etc,	Section 2.6
Protection, management, and as appropriate, enhancement of existing wetland habitats should be considered where flood protection/management measures are necessary,	Section 2.6
Protection of sites and features of archaeological importance,	Section 2.4
Protection of structures, features and zones of architectural value,	Section 2.3
Enhancement of existing views and prospects likely to be associated with the proposed Plan.	Objective NE1

#### 4. Selection and Assessment of Alternatives

The development and assessment of Plan alternatives is considered to be brief.

There is a number of ways of fulfilling the Plans objectives and at the same time protecting the environment. The following is recommended:

- Assess each alternative in terms of its potential to deliver sustainable development. The use of a matrix is recommended.
- Describe the methodology applied in the assessment of alternatives along with any assumptions made.
- Describe the preferred alternative in some detail. Clear justification should be provided for the selection of the preferred alternative/combination of alternatives. While the objectives of the

preferred alternative have been outlined in the Environmental Report, the basis for the choice of alternative is not explored or explained in any great detail.

Insert in Section 9.1

- 1) **Re-balancing Model** which would see growth to the west of the area primarily concentrated around the golf course and the Newrath area. This model would allow for the rebalancing of existing residential development which has been traditionally centred on the N25 entrance into Waterford City.
- 2) A **Concentric Model** would allow for development in all directions from existing development. The concentric model would allow for residential development on lands adjoining existing development and would include the golf course.
- 3) The **Compact Urban Centre** was also considered which would allow for a compact urban form concentrating on the existing developed areas and allowing for the development of the golf course for residential development.
- 4) A **Polycentric Model** of development was also considered for the area with development concentrated in nodes at the existing developed areas, Belview Port, Slieverue, Cloone, Newrath, N/M9 interchange and Grannagh Business Park.
- 5) A **Strategic Rail Model** was also taken into consideration. Development would be concentrated to the east of existing development along the old Waterford-New Ross line. This would allow for high density sustainable development based on the reintroduction of a train passenger service.
- 6) A series of **Neighbourhood Centres** were also considered, these centres would be located on the boundaries of the existing developed areas of Christendom, Rathculliheen, Belmont, Rockshire and Newrath. Neighbourhood centres would be located at least 500 metres of walking distance and provide essential local services.

P = Positive  
 N = Negative  
 Nu = Neutral

Plan Objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Natural Environment</b>						
Protection of Ecological Features: The proposed LAP (pLAP) seeks the protection of the unique environmental setting of the Waterford Environs area, and in particular, its relationship with the River Suir.	Nu	N	Nu	N	N	Nu
Creation of a Riverside Amenity: The pLAP promotes the creation of a riverside walkway stretching from Rockland Woods in Christendom to Belview Port.	N	N	P	N	N	Nu
Protect, maintain, improve and enhance the quality of watercourses throughout the plan area, through the promotion of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).	N	N	P	N	N	P
Retain, where possible, significant hedgerows and tree groupings and incorporate into future development layouts within the area.	Nu	Nu	Nu	N	N	Nu
Require future planning applications for development in the vicinity of the proposed NHA (Grannyferry) and the SAC (Lower River Suir) to include a report on the likely potential impacts and any necessary mitigation impacts. This report should be carried out by a professional ecologist or other suitably qualified professional.	N	N	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu
Planning applications within 30 metres of designated wetland/peatland ecological sites must be accompanied by an eco-hydrological assessment: which complies with Section 18 of the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 and must also be accompanied by evidence of consultation between the applicant and the National Parks and Wildlife Service with regard to the findings of this assessment.	N	N	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu

<b>Residential and Mixed Use</b>						
Compact Residential Model: The pLAP proposes a residential strategy of consolidation and infill, whereby new residential development will occur along side existing. This will enable the development of a compact residential model in the plan area, in preference to a pattern of dispersed housing and peripheral sprawl.	N	N	P	N	P	P
Network of Neighbourhood Centres: The pLAP proposes a number of neighbourhood centres at strategic locations in the plan area. These will serve the needs of both new and existing residential areas, enabling them to become more sustainable living environments.	N	N	P	N	N	P
New Mixed Use Zones: The pLAP proposes mixed-use zones at Newrath and Christendom, which have been given a zoning of C2: Commercial and Mixed Use. These zones will combine retail, commercial and service uses with higher density residential development. There will also be a strong focus on the creation of enterprise zones and community facilities in these areas.	P	N	P	N	N	P
Arcadian Residential Development: The pLAP proposes an Arcadian Residential zoning (R0) at a number of locations in the plan area. Arcadian Development is based on the principle of low density housing which is hidden in the landscape, and generally developed on sites which already include mature trees and hedges. These zonings are proposed in visually sensitive areas, and in areas which already feature low density residential development.	Nu	Nu	N	Nu	N	Nu
<b>Industry &amp; Employment</b>						
Rejuvenation of existing and former industrial lands: The pLAP aims to strengthen the Waterford Environs' potential to attract inward investment. At present, the area suffers from an over reliance on meat processing and related industries. Thus, the proposed Waterford Environs LAP aims to facilitate the diversification of the area's industrial base into one which is more reflective of industry today; particularly service and knowledge based industries, as well as more specialised industries such as pharmaceuticals. In this regard, key sites include the former site of Newrath Mills and the AIBP plant in Christendom.	N	N	P	N	Nu	Nu
Belview Port: The pLAP recognises that the performance of Belview Port is of central importance to the economic development of the Waterford Environs. The continued growth of port activities will enable the development of employment opportunities in the wider Belview area.	N	N	P	N	N	Nu
<b>Transport</b>						
Potential of Existing Railway Lines: The pLAP proposes to preserve the Waterford to New Ross railway line, which is currently disused. In addition, a number of buffer zones have been identified along this line. These zones will be kept free from development in order to accommodate potential rail transit stops in the future. A key element of this strategy is to encourage high density development adjacent to, and along, this railway line in the future.	N	N	P	N	P	Nu
Making Connections: The pLAP recognises that enhanced connectivity between the plan area and Waterford City is vital for long-term development of both areas. It is acknowledged that there is a need for a third river crossing over the Suir, incorporating a pedestrian connection. Therefore, this pLAP has identified optimal locations for these connections.	N	N	P	N	N	P
Facilitate the delivery of the proposed Green Route Link to include bus stops and pick up points throughout the proposed urban village and facilitate the introduction of Park and Ride facilities in tandem with the Green Route.	N	N	P	N	N	P
Increase the provision of cycle paths in the plan area, particularly through the open space links.	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu

<b>Urban Village</b>						
Facilitate the development of a “main street” as part of the urban village concept at Ferrybank-Abbeylands	N	N	P	N	N	Nu
<b>Built Heritage</b>						
Ensure the protection of all structures identified in the Built Heritage Map.	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu
<b>Archaeology</b>						
Preserve and protect the archaeological heritage of the Waterford Environs and safeguard the integrity and setting of recorded sites	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu
<b>Energy</b>						
Establish a Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ) for undeveloped lands identified at Christendom and Newtown, including lands proposed for redevelopment. All future development in these areas will be required to ensure the supply of 20 per cent heat and electricity from renewable sources over the period of the plan.	N	N	P	Nu	Nu	Nu
<b>Waste Management</b>						
Implement the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region 2006-2011	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu
<b>Implementation</b>						
Prepare a schedule for the implementation of Development Objectives, which will identify each objective, an implementation strategy, primary responsibility (i.e., LA department, private developers, etc.) and proposed timeline.	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu	Nu

Option	Positive	Negative	Neutral
1	1	13	8
2	0	15	7
3	<b>12</b>	1	9
4	0	13	9
5	2	11	9
6	<b>6</b>	0	16

Option 3 **The Compact Urban Centre** and option 6 A series of **Neighbourhood Centres** resulted in the most positive outcomes when compared against the Plan Objectives therefore it was felt appropriate to incorporate these two options as the preferred alternative. The compact urban centre and neighbourhood centres will allow for the infilling of appropriately located land adjacent to existing developed areas where services and facilities are either already in place or can be developed in tandem with residential development. Appropriate densities will also be able to be accommodated, which will provide the area with a critical mass from which to provide sustainable transport modes, travel patterns and the sustainable use of land.

## 5. Full Range of Environmental Effects

With regard to Table 8 *Environmental Matrix*, the following should be carried out:

- Assess each Plan Objective and Policy individually against the SEA Objectives. It is not clear from the Environmental report as to which of the Plans Objectives or Policies is likely to have a significant effect (or not, as the case may be), which makes the development of suitable mitigation and monitoring measures more difficult.

Each Plan policy and objective has been assessed against the SEA objectives and any significant effects or not have been outlined in the comments section of Table 8. (no change to SEA)

- Provide an explanation of the meaning of the scoring marks used in the matrix (i.e. 0, +, x etc.)

An explanatory legend should be used. A explanatory legend is to be included within Table 8 stating:

+ Positive  
0 Neutral  
X Negative

In addition, the use of a table to present and summarize the assessment of likely significant environmental effects should be considered.

A table summarizing the assessment of likely significant effects has been included within the Non-Technical Summary (Titled Mitigation & Monitoring Measures). This table is to be inserted into Section 10.0 also.

## **6. Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures are proposed in the Environmental Report. However, as outlined above, interpretation of Table 8 is difficult, as an explanatory legend has not been provided. A clear link between any significant effects identified in the Matrix (Table 8) and any proposed mitigation measures should be provided. A table similar to that produced in the Non-Technical Summary could be used.

As stated above: An explanatory legend should be used. A explanatory legend is to be included within Table 8 stating:

+ Positive  
0 Neutral  
X Negative

A table summarizing the assessment of likely significant effects has been included within the Non-Technical Summary (Titled Mitigation & Monitoring Measures). This table is to be inserted into Section 10.0 also and referred to in Section 11.

### **6.1 Habitats and Biodiversity**

Under 'Residential and Mixed Use' (Table 8), it is stated that the Plan will result in loss of habitats and biodiversity. It is also stated that, by of mitigation, development will be supplemented with additional open space and green networks. It is not clear how this will mitigate against habitat and biodiversity loss. The retention and provision of significant amounts of passive open space is to be commended. However, the opening up of natural areas as 'open space' will not of itself lead to protection of biodiversity or compensation for loss elsewhere. It may in fact have a negative impact on biodiversity through increased disturbance etc. The Appropriate Assessment report states that the impact of 'passive open space' represents a potentially major negative threat to important conservation areas. From this it can be inferred that, unless carefully managed, the use of increased 'passive open space' may represent a threat to biodiversity and habitats across the whole Plan area. Clear mitigation and/or compensatory measures should be considered to address this potential effect. The Appropriate Assessment report recommended that rezoning of 'passive open space' be replaced with zoning as 'biodiversity conservation'. However, this has not been clearly reflected as regards a particular Policy or Objective in Chapter 2 of the Plan (*Open Space and Public Amenity*). Neither is this case in Map 8 *Development Objectives* even though such additional zoning has been proposed in the table on *Mitigation and Monitoring Measures* in the Non-Technical Summary.

Map 9 Land Use Zoning Map identifies and zones land for biodiversity conservation. No change to Plan.

You should note that the first Mitigation Proposal in the table on *Mitigation and Monitoring Measures* in the Non-Technical Summary represents more of an environmental Target than a

mitigation measure (i.e. no direct loss of habitat...etc). In addition, this Mitigation Proposal refers to an SPA. Should this read SAC? The area could well be an SPA and SAC but this should be clearly set out.

Page 3 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures Table, it is proposed to replace text SPA with text SAC

Mitigation measures should be clearly set out to address all of the ecological impacts listed in Section 7.1.2 (Page 47) of the Environmental Report.

Mitigation measures have been set out to address all of the ecological impacts listed in section 7.1.2 within the Non-Technical Summary (Titled Mitigation & Monitoring Measures). This table is to be inserted into Section 10.0 also and referred to in Section 11.

Many of the mitigation measures proposed for ecology (biodiversity) are derived from the accompanying Appropriate Assessment report. However, the role of the Appropriate Assessment in the overall SEA process has not been clearly set out in the Environmental Report. Are the effects predicted in the Appropriate Assessment also predicted in Table 8 of the Environmental Report? It is not clear.

A paragraph is to be inserted into Section 4.0 setting the context of the appropriate assessment.

### **6.2 Belview Port**

With regard to the proposed development of Belview Port, one of the mitigation proposals states that the relevant LAP Objective (NE7) will require an 'Ecological Impact Assessment' for any future development project in the area. However, LAP Objective NE7 itself sets out a requirement for an 'Environmental Impact Assessment'. Are these assessments the same as each other? In addition, it appears that an EIA has already been carried out for development of the Port. This matter should be clarified.

Overall, where mitigation measures are proposed, confirm that the Plan includes relevant commitments to implement the necessary proposed mitigation measures.

Page 4 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures Table; it is proposed to remove the following text from the table

'It is an objective of the LAP to request at planning application stage an Ecological Impact Assessment for any future built development project that may take place in this area'

### **7. Monitoring Measures**

The Table (*Mitigation and Monitoring Measures*) in the Non-Technical Summary should be reproduced in Section 12.0 *Monitoring*.

The Table (*Mitigation and Monitoring Measures*) in the Non-Technical Summary will be reproduced in Section 12.0 *Monitoring*.