



**Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann**  
Tipperary County Council

# **Draft Carrick-on-Suir & Environs Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031**

**Appendix 8a: SEA Non-Technical Summary**



DESIGNING AND DELIVERING  
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

# CARRICK-ON-SUIR LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Non-Technical Summary

Prepared for:  
Tipperary County Council



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council

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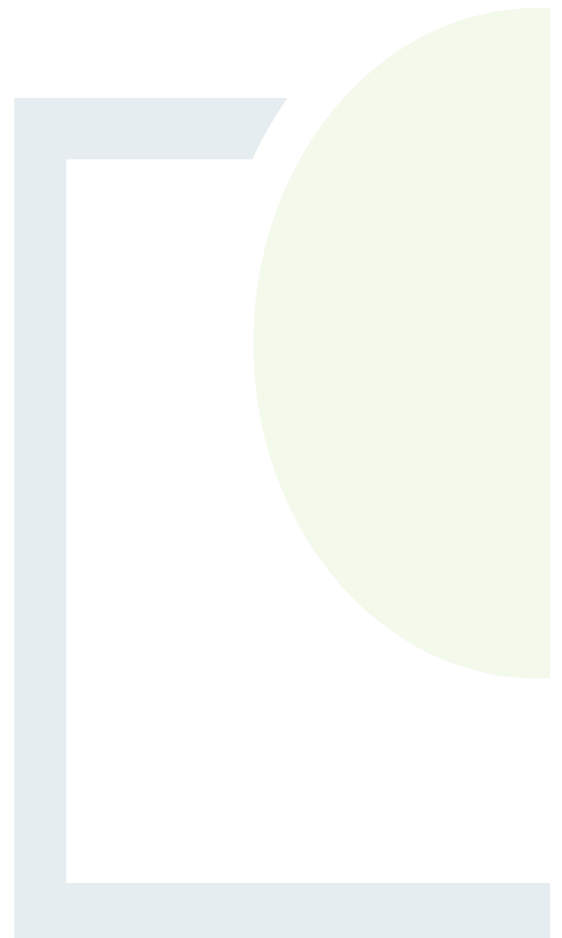
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# Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Non-Technical Summary

## REVISION CONTROL TABLE, CLIENT, KEYWORDS AND ABSTRACT

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**Abstract:** Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this Non-Technical Summary of the SEA Environmental Report to Tipperary County Council for the Carrick-On-Suir Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY .....	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Approach to SEA.....	1
1.3	The Draft Plan.....	1
1.4	The Environmental Baseline.....	2
1.5	Evolution of the Baseline Environment.....	5
1.6	Strategic Environmental Objectives .....	7
1.7	Description and Evaluation of Plan Alternatives.....	10
1.8	Evaluation of the Environmental Effects of Plan Implementation.....	13
1.9	Mitigation Measures .....	16
2.	CONCLUSIONS .....	17
3.	MONITORING MEASURES.....	18



## 1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

### 1.1 Introduction

Tipperary County Council has prepared the Draft Carrick-on-Suir Local Area Plan 2025 - 2031 (herein referred to as the 'Plan' or 'LAP'). Given the LAP is being prepared for a town and environs area with a population of greater than 5,000 persons, it was determined that the LAP should be subject to mandatory Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the [S.I. No. 436 of 2004](#) (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended by [S.I. No. 201 of 2011](#) (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

An SEA has been undertaken for the Draft Plan. The purpose of the SEA is to identify and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementation of the Draft LAP.

This is the non-technical summary of the Environmental Report for the SEA of the Draft Plan.

### 1.2 Approach to SEA

The SEA process can be defined by four stages, all of which include some level of consultation with stakeholders and the public. These stages are defined as:

- Stage 1 – Screening: deciding whether an SEA is required, or not.
- Stage 2 – Scoping: establishing the spatial and temporal scope of the SEA and a decision-making framework that can be used to evaluate impacts.
- Stage 3 – Identification, Prediction, Considerations of Alternatives, Evaluation and Mitigation of Potential Impacts.
- Stage 4 – Consultation, Revision and Post-Adoption. This includes the implementation of statutory SEA monitoring.

The SEA process runs in parallel with the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process, which is an assessment process focusing on the potential effects of a plan or project on sites designated for nature protection known as 'European Sites.'

### 1.3 The Draft Plan

The Carrick-on-Suir Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031 (LAP) has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. LAPs are required for towns with a population over 5,000. Therefore, a new LAP is mandatory for Carrick-on-Suir. This LAP replaces the Carrick-on-Suir Town Development Plan 2013 (as varied and extended).

The LAP outlines the local spatial planning framework for Carrick-on-Suir with planning policies and objectives unique to the town set out at the end of each chapter. Planning policies will inform private and public sector local development proposals, and planning objectives represent the key local objectives of the Council to be achieved over the lifetime of the LAP.



The LAP has been prepared having consideration to Local Area Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2013), and the accompanying best-practice manual and the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022).

The LAP sets out a strategic vision for Carrick-on-Suir and has been informed by collaboration and consultation with stakeholders and the general public. This LAP has been prepared to underpin the Core Strategy of the Tipperary County Development Plan (CDP) and its Core Ambition to deliver 'Vibrant, Living Towns driving the Regional and Local Economy'. The 10 Strategic Objectives of the Tipperary CDP each comply with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and are reflected in the local spatial planning framework outlined.

The LAP sits at the 'local' tier of planning policy and is consistent with the objectives of national and regional level planning policies, as well as the Tipperary CDP. The LAP is comprised of the following documents:

- A Written Statement with specific policies and objectives laid out across 10 sections
- Maps including land-use zoning with flood risk areas, and built and natural heritage
- Appendices as follows:
  1. Serviced Land Assessment
  2. Sustainable Travel Plan
  3. Regeneration Sites
  4. Social Infrastructure Audit
  5. Monitoring and Implementation Strategy
  6. Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character
  7. Town Centre First Plan

The LAP is focused on a renewed and targeted approach to compact growth and regeneration, with the town centre as the heart and focal point of Carrick-on-Suir, and with clear consideration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and modal shift change in terms of how we get around. At the centre of this LAP is consideration of quality of life for the community in the form of housing, jobs, education and amenities.

The LAP includes policies and objectives at the end of each Chapter. The policies of the Plan seek to manage and guide new development of the town in a sustainable way. The objectives of the Plan are included to provide clarity on the active role of the Council in managing, supporting, and implementing the vision for the Plan. The policies and objectives of this LAP have been framed in a manner to ensure consistency with the provisions of the NPF, RSES and Tipperary CDP 2022-2028. This provides for a compact approach to growth with the aim of facilitating the delivery of climate resilient and sustainable communities in the town.

## **1.4 The Environmental Baseline**

An evaluation and a characterisation of the current state of the environment likely to be affected by the Draft Plan has been undertaken to inform the SEA process. The receiving environment within the plan area has been considered during this evaluation.

The following Environmental Components were considered during this evaluation:

- Population and Human Health
- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna



- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural
- Soils
- Land Use
- Air Quality & Noise
- Water
- Material Assets
- Tourism and Recreation
- Climate Change

A non-technical and high-level summary of the baseline environment is provided in the table below. This table provides an overview of the baseline environmental features present in the Plan area.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the 2022 Census, the total population in Carrick-on-Suir was estimated to be 5,752 persons, an increase of 2.3% from the 2016 Census. The total population in County Tipperary was 167, 895.</li> <li>• The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 designates Carrick-on-Suir as a District Town.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is 1 designated SAC within the Plan area; Lower River Suir SAC and this is hydrologically connected to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. Other SACs within the 15km radius include River Barrow and River Nore SAC, Comeragh Mountains SAC, Hugginstown Fen SAC and Nier Valley Woodlands SAC.</li> <li>• There is one NHA within the 15km Zol; Slievenamon Bog NHA (002388).</li> <li>• The River Suir Below Carrick-on-Suir pNHA is within the Plan area. The 15km Zol includes an additional 14 pNHA.</li> <li>• There are 7 designated Flora Protection Order Sites within 15km of the Plan area located at the Comeragh Mountains.</li> <li>• There is 1 Wildfowl Sanctuary within 15km of the Plan area, including Coolfin Marshes in Co. Waterford (WFS-50).</li> <li>• CORINE 2018 landcover for the Plan area includes Urban Fabric, Agricultural Pastures, and Coniferous forests.</li> </ul>
Landscape and Visual Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ormond Castle area offers a strong heritage resource and a key site on the Butler Trail.</li> </ul>
Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 40 entries recorded in the Record of Protected Structures of the Carrick-on-Suir Town Development Plan 2013.</li> <li>• There are currently 46 registered Monuments within the Plan area, as recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places of the Carrick-on-Suir Town Development Plan 2013.</li> <li>• An ACA has been designated in the centre of Carrick-on-Suir and includes Main Street, West Gate, Sean Kelly Square and parts of Bridge Street, New Street and Castle Street.</li> </ul>



Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominant soil types in the Plan area include Urban Soils and Acid Brown Earths/Brown Earths.</li> <li>• Other soil types in the Plan area include Gleys, Grey Brown Podzolics and Alluvial soils.</li> </ul>
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use mapping for Tipperary is shown in Figure 4-8 of the main body of the report. This mapping shows the extent of all land use present in the Plan area (e.g., urban fabric, continuous urban fabric, stream courses, and non-irrigated arable land etc.).</li> </ul>
Air Quality and Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Air Quality in Ireland 2022 report prepared by the EPA identifies that air quality in Ireland is generally good, however, there are concerning localised issues that are negatively impacting the air we breathe.</li> <li>• Air quality monitoring results in 2022 show that the main pollutants are fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) from solid fuel combustion and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) from vehicle emissions. People’s health and the health of our environment is impacted by these pollutants.</li> <li>• Ireland’s ambition in the Clean Air Strategy is to move towards the World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality guidelines<sup>1</sup>, this will be challenging but will have a significantly positive impact on health.</li> <li>• Under the Clean Air for Europe Directive [Directive 2008/50/EC], Tipperary is within ‘Zone D’ of the four zones in Ireland.</li> <li>• There are no air quality monitoring stations within the Plan area. However, the nearest air quality monitoring stations to the Plan area are located in Clonmel, Paddy Browne's Road in Waterford and Merchants Quay in Waterford City. The current air quality at the time of reporting at all locations is of Good<sup>2</sup> status.</li> <li>• Existing noise related impacts can be seen in Figure 4-9 of the main body of the report.</li> </ul>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Plan area is located within the Suir catchment.</li> <li>• The WFD Status 2016-2021 for the Suir, Tinhalla and Glenbrook Streams are recorded as 'Moderate' and for the Lingaun Stream it is recorded as 'Good'. There is no status recorded for the River Suir, however, it should be noted that all four streams identified above feed into the main River Suir riverbody.</li> <li>• The WFD groundwater status (2016-2021) underlying the Plan area has been projected to be 'At Risk' of not meeting its WFD objectives. However, the overall groundwater status of the area is designated to be 'good'.</li> <li>• The WFD risk status of the Lingaun Stream has been defined as 'Not at risk', Tinhalla Stream as under 'Review', and Suir and Glenbrook as 'At risk'.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. 2021.WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. World Health Organization.

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/345329>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

<sup>2</sup> Air Quality Index for Health <https://airquality.ie/information/air-quality-index-for-health> - 14/06.2024.





Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrick-on-Suir is traversed by the N24 and a number of regional roads, namely R696, R697, R885, R676, and R680. The town is served by the intercity Waterford - Clonmel - Limerick Junction rail line and local connections to metropolitan commuter towns. Further to this, Bus Éireann - Expressway provides several routes through Carrick-on-Suir. There are also private bus operators that service the town.</li> </ul>
Tourism and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and recreation are influenced by a range of factors in Ireland. International tourism has increased in recent years. Failte Ireland has recently published their four brand strategies which will define the spatial scope and spread of future tourism developments within Ireland.</li> <li>Tipperary hosts the Ireland's Ancient East and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands tourism brands.</li> </ul>
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tipperary is affected by climate change policy and issues broadly.</li> <li>The recent Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland's Climate Action Plans 2023 and 2024 set out Ireland's national and sectoral targets in this regard.</li> <li>Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the Regional Planning Guidelines are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland.</li> </ul>

Section 4 of the Draft SEA Environmental Report contains further detail on baseline environmental characteristics, including a variety of detailed environmental mapping, for those who wish to develop a more in-depth understanding of the environmental baseline. Section 7 of the Draft SEA Environmental Report contains a summary of the evaluation of the environmental effects of the implementation of the Draft Plan, including a summary of the various positive impacts, negative impacts, and cumulative impacts associated with Draft Plan implementation.

### 1.5 Evolution of the Baseline Environment

The SEA Directive requires that consideration is given to the likely evolution of the baseline environment in the event the Draft Plan is not adopted and implemented.

It is predicted that the following would occur in the event the Carrick-On-Suir Local Area Plan 2025-2031 is not adopted and implemented:



- Planning and development in the Carrick-on-Suir Plan area would be governed by higher-order planning policy defined in the Tipperary CDP.
- There would be absence of an appropriately focused strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Carrick-on-Suir.
- There would be an absence of appropriately focused planning and development related environmental protection policies/objectives for Carrick-on-Suir.
- Environmental protection requirements defined in legislation and higher order plans would still apply to Carrick-on Suir.
- The baseline environment at Carrick-on Suir would still be influenced by the Tipperary CDP, the Tipperary Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) 2024-2029 and the Carrick-on-Suir Town Development Plan 2013 (as varied and extended).
- Development in Carrick-on-Suir would not be subject to an appropriately focussed local area framework of planning control – which is necessary for a town of its size and the levels of development and change predicted for the area. There would be a greater risk of improper planning and unsustainable development occurring in and around the town. This scenario increases the risk of significant adverse environmental effects occurring due to the carrying out of inappropriate development, including effects on:
  - Population and Human Health – e.g., through reductions in residential amenity, noise, dust.
  - Biodiversity – e.g., loss of valuable habitat, habitat fragmentation, impacts on protected species, impacts on the Lower River Suir SAC.
  - Landscape Character and Visual Amenity – e.g., loss of scenic value (e.g., at The Butler Trail, visual amenity etc.
  - Cultural Heritage – e.g., diminishment of built heritage including protected structures and historic fabric.
  - Soils – e.g., ground contamination, impacts on soil structure and function.
  - Land use – e.g., promotion of unsustainable and incoherent land use.
  - Air Quality and Noise – e.g., generation of air and noise emissions resulting in significant negative effects on people.
  - Water – e.g., the carrying out development that contributes to polluting emissions to waters or increased flood risk.
  - Material Assets – e.g., the failure to provide appropriate services to the development carried out in the town (e.g., water supply, wastewater services).
  - Tourism and recreation – e.g., the failure to create sustainable tourism in the town, the diminishment of tourism and recreation assets in the town.
  - Climate Change – e.g., failure to provide a suitable framework for compact growth and sustainable transport – resulting in a failure to reduce Energy and Residential sector Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.
- The multitude of positive environmental effects across all environmental components associated with Draft Plan policies and objectives pertaining to sustainable development and environmental protection and enhancement would not be realised, such as positive effects on:
  - Population and Human Health – e.g., achieved through proper planning and protection and enhancement of residential amenity and community infrastructure.



- Biodiversity – e.g., through the implementation of policies/objectives that afford an appropriate level of protection to biodiversity, including designated sites, non-designated sites of local importance, ecological connections and protected species, and through the implementation of policies/objectives that promote Nature Based Solutions.
- Landscape Character and Visual Amenity – e.g., through the implementation of policies/objectives that control the scale of built development and serve to protect and enhance scenic value and visual amenity.
- Cultural Heritage – e.g., through policies/objectives that ensure appropriate consideration is given to built and archaeological heritage impacts during the carrying out of development, and through policies/objectives promoting sensitive town regeneration.
- Soils – e.g., through policies/objectives that promote good soil management during development projects.
- Land use – e.g., achieved through the promotion of sustainable, well-balanced land use planning.
- Air Quality and Noise – e.g., through promotion of active travel measures supporting modal shift resulting in local air quality improvements, policies/objectives supporting noise minimisation and control.
- Water – e.g., through pollution prevention and the application of good and proper flood risk management during the planning process.
- Material Assets – e.g., through the appropriate delivery of services in the town (e.g., water supply, wastewater services) in collaboration with relevant statutory bodies (e.g., Uisce Eireann).
- Tourism and recreation – e.g., through the application of environmental protection measures that result in the protection and enhancement of tourism and recreation assets.
- Climate Change – e.g., via the provision of a robust framework for compact, regenerative and interconnected development.

## 1.6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive states that an SEA should also look at *'the environmental protection objectives, established at International, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.'* The identification of environmental protection objectives relevant to a plan provides the basis for evaluating the significance of impacts during the SEA process. All environmental protection objectives relevant to the Draft Plan have been identified.

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures which facilitate the development of targets against which the environmental effects of the Draft Plan can be tested. SEOs are based on wider environmental protection objectives on local, regional, national, European and international level that are relevant to TCC's Draft Plan. They are high-level in nature and set strategic goals for environmental protection and improvement.

All SEOs applicable to the Draft Plan are presented in the table below.



Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Overall	O1	Ensure, where appropriate, alignment with higher-level plans and that projects contribute to overall environmental monitoring processes within the Plan area.
Population and Human Health	PHH1	Avoid or minimise impacts to population and human health.
	PHH2	Promote economic activity and growth
	PHH3	Ensure supporting infrastructure and services in the area are developed in a manner commensurate with population growth.
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	Ensure supported development is in alignment with biodiversity protection, restoration, and rehabilitation goals.
	B2	Ensure compliance with Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species.
	B3	Support Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal, and genetic exchange of wild species.
	B4	Avoid or minimise significant impacts on semi-natural habitats, species, environmental features, or other sustaining resources in designated national sites, non-designated locally important sites, and sites proposed for designation; and to comply with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2012 with regard to listed species
	B5	Aim for no net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration in response to the biodiversity emergency.
Landscape & Visual Amenity	L1	Avoid or minimise impacts on statutory landscape designations defined in the CDP.
	L2	Avoid or minimise adverse visual effects on residential receptors or other sensitive visual receptors.
	L3	Protect and enhance landscape character.
	L4	Protect, as appropriate, create and improve streetscape character.
Cultural Heritage - Archaeological & Architectural	CH1	Avoid impacts upon archaeological heritage (including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)), architectural heritage (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)), industrial heritage and ACAs.



Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Soils	S1	Avoid or minimise effects on mineral resources or soils.
	S2	Ensure appropriate management of all soil and excavation material. Promote sustainable material reuse wherever appropriate.
	S3	Re-use of brownfield lands, where appropriate, together with the appropriate and sustainable development of greenfield lands.
Land Use	LU1	Avoid or minimise effects on existing land use.
	LU2	Compliance with existing land use policy in the CDP
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	Increase the number of people travelling to work or school via sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling.
	AQN2	Avoid or minimise effects on local air quality.
	AQN3	Avoid or minimise adverse noise impacts on existing or proposed sensitive receptors.
Water	W1	Maintain and/or improve, the quality and status of surface water bodies.
	W2	Maintain and/or improve, the chemical and quantitative status of groundwaters.
	W3	Prevent impact upon the WFD status of surface waters and groundwater in line with the requirements of the WFD.
	W4	Comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009).
	W5	Promote sustainable drainage practices to improve water quality and flow.
	W6	Prevent impact upon drinking water quality.
Material Assets	MA1	Avoid or minimise effects on built/amenity assets and infrastructure.
	MA2	Avoid or minimise effects upon existing and (where known) planned infrastructure.
	MA3	Promote sustainable transportation and deliver enhanced traffic and transport conditions, where possible.
	MA4	Promote sustainable waste/material management and the circular economy.
	MA5	Promote sustainable water use and drainage management.
Tourism and Recreation	TR1	Avoid or minimise effects upon tourism and recreation amenities, and enhance tourism and recreation, where possible.



Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Climate Change	CC1	Support in the achievement of the 2030 target of a 51% reduction in carbon emissions.
	CC2	Actively support the delivery of all national climate policy with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures.
	CC3	Assist in the delivery of the climate neutrality objective at local level.
	CC4	Promote the carrying out of climate resilient development.
	CC5	Promote low carbon and net zero development.
	CC6	Promote the carrying out of development that incorporates nature-based solutions.
	CC7	Promote active travel and reduce reliance on the use of private vehicles for transport.
	CC8	Support the transition to zero or low carbon Electric Vehicles.
Inter-relationships	IR1	Maintain and improve the health of people, ecosystems and natural processes. Actively seek to integrate opportunities for environmental enhancement during adaptation to climate change.

## 1.7 Description and Evaluation of Plan Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternative means of achieving the strategic goals of the Draft Plan (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of a plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. Such reasonable alternatives must be realistic and capable of implementation. Reasonable alternatives were assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which are likely to be significantly affected by the Draft Plan.

The underpinning goal of the reasonable alternative evaluation process was to ensure that the selection of preferred alternatives by the local authority is informed by environmental considerations.

Reasonable alternatives to the Draft Plan were identified as the Plan-making process evolved. Details on all Reasonable Alternatives considered during Plan-making and a brief summary of reasoning for selecting preferred alternatives are presented below.



Theme	Description of Reasonable Alternatives	Preferred Alternative	Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative
<p>Planning for development at the landbank of 'New Residential' zoned land on the northern side of the Coolnamuck Road.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Using the Local Area Plan land use planning framework to provide for and control planning and development at the landbank of 'New Residential' zoned land on the northern side of the Coolnamuck Road.</p> <p>Alternative 2: Preparing and utilising a focused Masterplan and Development Framework, which would sit under the LAP, to provide for and control planning and development at the landbank of 'New Residential' zoned land on the northern side of the Coolnamuck Road.</p>	<p>Alternative 2</p>	<p>A Masterplan will set clear and area specific policy and objectives to address any development in a sustainable, appropriately managed and balanced manner.</p> <p>Preparing and utilising a focused Masterplan and Development Framework, which would sit under the LAP, to provide for and control planning and development at the landbank of 'New Residential' zoned land on the northern side of the Coolnamuck Road has greater potential to ensure positive environmental outcomes – across a number of environmental components</p>
<p>Approach to the protection of the Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation.</p>	<p>Alternative 1: Rely on environmental protection related policies and objectives for European sites defined in the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 to avoid, prevent and minimize effects on the Lower River Suir SAC due to the carrying out of development supported by the LAP.</p> <p>Alternative 2: Rely on both 1) Environmental protection related policies and objectives for European sites defined in the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, and; 2) Focused, and more specific environmental protection related policies and objectives defined in the Local Area Plan for the Lower River Suir SAC specifically, to avoid, prevent and minimize effects on the Lower River Suir SAC due to the carrying out of development supported by the LAP.</p>	<p>Alternative 2</p>	<p>It was determined that it would be more beneficial to integrate more focused environmental mitigation for the protection of this SAC into the LAP (Alternative 2) given that the LAP supports more specific development proposals and measures that have the potential to result in direct, adverse effects on the Lower River Suir SAC specifically. These focused mitigation measures will ensure a stronger, more robust level of protection for the SAC in the context of the LAP, and would better safeguard the conservation objectives and qualifying interests of the SAC. This would result in a range of positive effects on environmental components, including biodiversity, land use, water, material assets, tourism and recreation and climate change.</p>



Theme	Description of Reasonable Alternatives	Preferred Alternative	Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative
Consolidation of Open Space Amenity in Established Residential Areas.	Alternative 1: Retain the 'Existing Residential' zoning for open space amenity areas present in established residential areas in the Plan area.  Alternative 2: Change the 'Existing Residential' zoning for open space amenity areas present in established residential areas in the Plan area to 'Amenity' zoning.	Alternative 2	Alternative 2 will provide clear, express, and unambiguous support for the preservation of these open space amenity areas in existing neighbourhoods, resulting in positive effects on population and human health, biodiversity, landscape character and visual amenity, land use, material assets and tourism and recreation.





## 1.8 Evaluation of the Environmental Effects of Plan Implementation

A detailed evaluation of the potential effects of the Preferred Draft Plan on the baseline environment was carried out in accordance with the SEA Directive and best practice guidelines. A concise and non-technical summary of the key environmental effects associated with Draft Plan implementation is presented below. The potential negative effects presented assume the absence of the appropriate mitigation defined in this Non-technical Summary and in Section 8 of the Draft SEA Environmental Report.

### Potential Negative Environmental Effects (in the absence of environmental mitigation)

- The Draft Plan supports the carrying out of infrastructural development (e.g., housing, social, economic, transport etc.). The construction phases of this development has the potential to result in environmental impacts, such as dust, noise, or traffic disruption, that may affect various environmental components, including population and human health, the air quality environment, the noise environment, the water environment, biodiversity or traffic and transport conditions. The operational phases of this development has the potential to result in environmental effects on various environmental components, such as population and human health, traffic and transport conditions, landscape character and visual amenity.
- The Plan supports the development of a third river crossing in the town. This development has the potential to result in a range of adverse environmental impacts, including effects on landscape character and visual amenity, water quality and hydrology, biodiversity, and the conservation objectives and qualifying interest of the Lower River Suir SAC.
- Development construction activities, generally, may generate dust emissions, vibration or noise that may impact residential amenity, human health and well-being, and biodiversity.
- The Draft Plan provides a land use framework for development that has the potential to generate environmental impacts (e.g. land-take, dust, noise, light, polluting aqueous discharges) that directly or indirectly cause effects on European sites present or connected to the plan area, such as loss/reduction of habitat, habitat or species fragmentation, disturbance to key species (i.e. through human activity/movement, noise, light), reduction in species density, impact on non-designated sites or habitat that support European sites, or changes on indicators of conservation value (i.e. water quality, air quality, habitat quality).
- Development may lead to adverse impacts on biodiversity, including loss, disturbance or damage to biodiversity, flora and fauna; impacts on the Lower River Suir SAC, impacts on ecological connectivity and impacts on important non-designated habitats.
- Development may generate an increase in the quantum of light transmitted to sensitive ecological receptors, resulting in increased vulnerability and sensitivity of light-sensitive species.
- The Draft Plan supports development construction at greenfield locations where invasive species may exist. Construction and waste management activities may increase the risk of the spread of invasive species.
- Greenfield development may impact and damage unknown archaeological remains.
- The Draft Plan is supportive of the carrying out of development at sensitive locations (such as areas in proximity to the River Suir) which could potentially impact sensitive aspects of the environment, including biodiversity, water quality, landscape character and visual amenity, built and archaeological heritage and important habitats and species.
- Development, including town centre regeneration related development may generate negative impacts on built heritage (e.g., protected structures) and historic fabric, including historic structures present in town centres. Development supported by the Draft Plan may impact on the setting of heritage assets and sense of place, generally.



- Significantly scaled residential and commercial development may impact visual amenity in the vicinity of these developments, streetscape character and wider landscape character.
- Transport related development supported by the Draft Plan may generate significant levels traffic noise resulting in negative noise impacts on noise sensitive locations that are in close proximity to transport routes.
- Inappropriate or improperly designed greenfield development may contribute to significant hydrological changes and increases in flood risk.
- Development may generate adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology.
- Development will increase the quantum of water supply, wastewater and energy provisions and infrastructure required in the plan area, in contravention of aims and objectives defined in the Water Framework Directive and the Water Action Plan 2022 – 2027.
- Major development in the Plan area may generate an increase in traffic levels and effects on existing traffic and transportation conditions and dynamics.
- Development related excavation at greenfield and brownfield has the potential to result in the generation of substantial levels of material and waste, including potentially contaminated material that will need to be appropriate and sustainably managed in accordance with Waste Hierarchy principles.
- Development occurring in the Plan area may affect local heritage, archaeology or visual amenity and, in turn, local tourism or recreational features and activity in the area.
- Infrastructure development may have the potential to restrict or reduce the quality of resources important for recreation and/or tourism.
- The promotion or development of blueways and greenways (e.g., Suir Blueway) could add additional loading pressures in terms of visitor interactions at sensitive areas such as trampling, disturbance, erosion, littering etc.
- Linear transport development (including active travel development) has the potential to negatively affect biodiversity and ecological connectivity (through habitat loss/fragmentation).

#### Potential Positive Environmental Effects

- The strategic objectives, as defined, have the potential to contribute to sustainable development and proper planning in accordance with the land use planning framework and higher order planning policy and other inter-related policy, resulting in positive effects across all environmental components. The implementation of the Draft Plan strategic objectives has the potential to support balanced, integrated and socially beneficial development and environmental protection and enhancement in the Plan area.
- Settlement consolidation promoted by Draft Plan policies/objectives will support to compact growth, sustainable land use, sustainable transportation, and the sustainable provision and optimised utilisation of Material Assets.
- The promotion of sustainable urban development (including residential development) in accordance with compact growth principles has the potential to generate positive effects on population and human health (through the provision of much-needed housing), material assets, lands, soils and geology (through the avoidance of building on greenfield sites, promotion of compact development and prevention of sprawl) and air and climate (by promoting compact development, reducing the need to travel by private car).



- The Plan supports the development of a third river crossing in the town. This development has the potential to result in a range of positive environmental impacts, including positive effects on traffic and transport conditions in and around the town. This development has the potential to support interconnectivity within the town and alleviate traffic conditions in other parts of the town..
- The delivery of housing and community infrastructure has the potential to generate positive effects on population and human health (people and communities).
- Town regeneration related development has the potential to facilitate the sustainable development of town centres. The regeneration and enhancement of town centres may contribute to positive effects on communities, businesses, tourism and recreation amenities and cultural heritage.
- The promotion of sustainable land use, sustainable transportation and public transport may support modal shift and the use of public transportation, resulting in potential positive effects on population and human health, local air quality and climate.
- The Draft Plan supports the development, expansion and management of safe active travel networks. The delivery of an expanded safe active travel network has the potential to promote the use of sustainable and active travel modes in the community, encourage modal shift, reduce traffic related risks and support the reduction of vehicle related emissions - thereby positively impacting population and human health, local air quality and the climate environment.
- The plan supports the enhancement and interconnectivity of tourism and recreation assets in and around the town (e.g., through the development of the Ormond Castle Quarter). This has the potential to generate positive effects for tourism and recreation features in the town and enhance amenity value in the town generally.
- The promotion of economic development will support people, businesses and the local economy, through the generation of business activities and employment.
- The plan is supportive of community and local area based renewable energy/energy efficient development, which will have a positive effect on the climate environment.
- The plan is supportive of flood alleviation and the minimisation of flood risk in the Plan area (via the Carrick-on-Suir Flood Relief Scheme). This will generate positive environmental effects on water quality, hydrology and biodiversity. The delivery of flood alleviation has the potential to reduce flood risk and prevent flood events. Reducing flood risk can generate significant, positive effects for a variety of environmental receptors that could be negatively impacted by flood events; including human receptors, ecological receptors and cultural heritage assets.
- The Draft Plan supports measures promoting and enhancing circularity and resource efficiency in line with the principles of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030 (e.g., through education and awareness programmes). These measures have the potential to generate positive effects for material assets (through the promotion of waste prevention, minimisation and recycling at local level).
- The plan supports the development nature based solutions - in response to flood and climate related risk - which are supportive of biodiversity protection and enhancement. The promotion of NBS has the potential to create positive effects for biodiversity, flora and fauna, water quality and hydrology.
- The Draft Plan promotes protection of utility assets (including the Carrick-on-Suir Wastewater Treatment Plant) and collaboration with utility providers on utility infrastructure delivery and maintenance. This will support the sustainable provision of appropriately integrated material asset infrastructure (e.g., water supply, wastewater infrastructure etc.), and promotes a high standard of environmental protection in the area of wastewater management and treatment in and around the town.



- The framework of locally focussed, environmental protection and enhancement related policies and objectives support the carrying out of considered, appropriate development sensitive to the receiving environment. Generally, this has the potential to generate positive impacts on all environmental components.

## 1.9 Mitigation Measures

Potential negative environmental effects that may occur as a result of the implementation of the Draft Plan (without considering any mitigation) were identified.

The SEA Directive requires that mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any potential significant negative environmental effects due to the implementation of a plan are defined.

The mitigation of the potential negative effects of the Draft Plan was achieved through the following:

- The consideration of Plan Alternatives throughout the Plan-making process, having regard to environmental considerations.
- Environmental protection policies/objectives defined in the CDP.
- The integration of environmental considerations into the Draft Plan.

The Plan development process was carried out in parallel with the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Regular communication and interaction took place between the environmental assessment team and the plan development team. Environmental considerations that came to light during the SEA, AA and SFRA processes, including consultation processes, were regularly communicated to the plan making team during the plan development process.

A strong level of embedded environmental mitigation was found to be present in early drafts of the Plan. Environmental mitigation measures were also already defined in the Tipperary County Development Plan (CDP) which mitigate significant negative environmental effects, and maximise potential environmental benefits and co-benefits of the Draft Plan.

As necessary, additional environmental mitigation measures to ameliorate the potential negative environmental effects of implementing the Draft Plan were developed and then integrated into the Draft Plan. This process was carried out in an iterative manner to ensure optimal plan making and environmental outcomes. Environmental considerations were also integrated into the plan so as to facilitate maximising identified positive environmental effects of the Draft Plan.

Additional text clarifying environmental protection related obligations and environmental enhancement opportunities has been attached to policies/objectives in the Draft Plan also. This text has been shaped to ensure that environmental considerations are appropriately taken into account during Plan implementation.

Due to the inter-relationship between various environmental components, environmental mitigation measures defined for one component can also serve to benefit other environmental components.



## 2. CONCLUSIONS

The reasonable alternatives evaluation presented earlier in this document has resulted in the development of a Draft Plan that achieves the best environmental outcomes in comparison to other reasonable alternatives considered.

Environmental protection related policies/objectives defined in the CDP, which apply to the Plan area, will mitigate a wide range of potential negative effects associated with the Draft Plan.

The adoption of the environmental mitigation measures integrated into the Draft Plan will prevent, reduce and fully offset potential negative environmental effects due to the implementation of the Draft Plan.

No further mitigation measures are required for the Draft Plan.



### 3. MONITORING MEASURES

The SEA Directive requires that the environmental effects of the implementation of a plan are monitored in order *'to identify at an early stage unforeseen effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.'*

A series of indicators and targets were established for identified SEOs to enable ongoing monitoring and measurement of Plan implementation performance, the environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan and the efficacy of environmental mitigation measures. Such monitoring will be carried out periodically to support Plan implementation.

SEO indicators are simple and effective quantifiable indicators used to measure the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and the progress of SEOs and related targets. SEO targets set focused, measurable aims and thresholds that the Plan can support the achievement of.

TCC are responsible for implementation of the SEA monitoring programme. Given the position of the Local Area Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022- 2028, the measures identified in that County Development Plan SEA have been used as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring. A monitoring report will be prepared to document monitoring outcomes. This report shall be made available for public inspection.

Where monitoring identifies that the implementation of the Plan is having a significant negative environmental effect, an in-depth review of the Plan should take place and the Plan should be updated in a manner that satisfactorily mitigates these environmental effects (i.e., through the adoption of additional environmental mitigation measures). Similarly, where monitoring indicates that potential positive environmental effects associated with Plan implementation are not being adequately realised, the Plan should be reviewed and updated in a manner that supports the realisation of all potential positive environmental effects, having regard to the overall vision and high-level objectives of the Plan.



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