

**SCREENING for APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT Report**  
**For Proposed Variation No. 5 to the**  
**Kilkenny City and County Development Plan**  
**2021**  
**Castlecomer Settlement Plan and Incorporation of**  
*Compact Settlement Guidelines*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This is the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for Variation No. 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 (KCCDP) in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive<sup>1</sup>.

Proposed Variation 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan is proposed:

- To incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the KCCDP, as part of a new Volume 3, Settlement Plans,
- To make associated changes to Volume 1 to reflect this, and
- To incorporate the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* as relevant.

## 1.2 Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites).

AA is required by the Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). AA is an assessment of the potential for adverse effects of a plan or project, in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site. These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

## 1.3 Guidance

This Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010.
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission Notice, Journal of the European Union, 2021;
- *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 92/43/EEC

- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission, 2018.

## 1.4 Approach

There are four main stages in the AA process; the requirement for each stage depends on the likely impacts on European sites. The four main stages are as follows:

### **Stage One: Screening**

The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a European Site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

### **Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment**

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European Site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the Site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

### **Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**

The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European Site.

### **Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain**

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan making process and avoiding such impacts. Second, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential impacts on European sites remain, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan/project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect(s).

The assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted by following a standard source-pathway-receptor<sup>2</sup> model, where, in order for an effect to be established all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the model is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

In the interest of this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the Draft Plan provision that is known to interest with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information

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<sup>2</sup> Source(s) – e.g., pollutant run-off from proposed works; Pathway(s) – e.g., groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and Receptor(s) – qualifying aquatic habitats and species of European sites.

on whether direct, indirect and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the Draft Plan.

This AA exercise is conducted in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species, for which the relevant European sites have been designated.

## 2 Description of the Proposed Variation

### 2.1.1 The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021

The Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021 was prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to develop and improve the City & County in a sustainable manner. Volume 1 of the KCCDP covers Kilkenny County and wider policy, and Volume 2 addresses the City specifically. The plan presents Kilkenny County Council's outlook for future development of its administrative area up to 2027. It sets out the longer-term vision for the development of the County, while protecting and enhancing its environment through employing the principles of sustainable development in the policies and objectives set out therein. Local Area Plans have been prepared for the towns/areas with a population of over 1,500; however, the City & County Development Plan remains the overarching plan for the County. The proposed variation would result in an additional Volume, Volume 3 of the City and County Development Plan, consisting of Settlement Plans. Volume 3, for the moment, would include only a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer. The Proposed Variation is also intended to incorporate the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* as relevant.

The Plan contents are best described through a list of the chapter headings:

#### Volume 1:

1. Introduction
2. Climate Change
3. Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends
4. Core Strategy
5. Economic Development
6. Housing and Community
7. Rural development
8. Open Space and Recreation
9. Heritage, Culture and the Arts
10. Infrastructure and Environment
11. Renewable Energy Strategy
12. Movement and mobility
13. Requirements for Developments

#### Volume 2: City Plan

1. Introduction
2. Core Strategy
3. Economic and Retail Strategy
4. Heritage strategy
5. Movement and mobility strategy
6. Kilkenny City Place-making
7. Infrastructure and Environment

The Plan provides a land use framework for the sustainable development of Kilkenny. The Plan sets the strategic context for any lower-tier plans, such as Local Area Plans to be prepared. In its making, the Plan had regard to all relevant planning and environmental policy and legislation including European Union directives, Ministerial guidelines and other national, regional and county plans and policies.

### 2.1.2 Variation to the Plan

Proposed Variation 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan is proposed:

- To incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the KCCDP, as part of a new Volume 3, Settlement Plans,
- To make associated changes to Volume 1 to reflect this, and
- To incorporate the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* as relevant.

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan has already undergone Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

The KCCDP has been subject to AA during its preparation and adoption/approval. The Appropriate Assessment process has informed the contents of the Development Plan during its development. The relevant provisions of the KCCDP in relation to biodiversity are presented in Appendix V of this report.

## 3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction to Screening

This stage of the process identifies any potential significant effects to European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the “Conservation Objectives”, “Qualifying Interests” (QIs) and/or “Special Conservation Interests” (SCIs) of European Sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological/environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

The following NPWS First Order Site-Specific Conservation Objectives have been considered in the screening:

- For SACs, to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected; and
- For SPAs, to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

Where available, Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat<sup>3</sup> or species<sup>4</sup> at that site have been considered.

### 3.2 Identification of Relevant European Sites

The Department of the Environment (2009) Guidance on AA recommends a 15km pathway consideration zone. A review of all sites within this zone, in the context of the nature and scope of the Proposed Variation, has allowed a determination to be made that in the absence of significant hydrological links the characteristics of the Variation will not impose effects beyond the 15 km.

Since the proposed Variation relates to various aspects of the entire KCCDP, the plan area is taken as the wider area covered under both Volume 1 and 2, of the KCCDP. This section of the screening process describes the European sites within 15 km of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan area and those that are also hydrologically linked to the Plan area.

Details of European sites that occur within the 15 km Pathway Consideration Zone of the Plan area are listed in Table 3.1 and mapped on Figure 3.1. The potential for surface hydrological connectivity

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<sup>3</sup> The favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing; the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

<sup>4</sup> The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats; the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

with, and/or occurrence within the same groundwater body<sup>5</sup> as the Plan area<sup>6</sup> (these can occur beyond the 15 km Pathway Consideration Zone), was also considered; in this case European sites with hydrological links are all captured in within the 15km Pathway consideration zone, which extends out into the Irish Sea.

In order to determine the potential for impacts from the Proposed Variation, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats to site integrity pertaining to any potentially affected European sites was reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that was used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland’s Article 17 Report to the European Commission “Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland” (NPWS, 2019)
- Site Synopses
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms

Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests of each site, the screening process concentrated on assessing the potential implications of the Plan against the qualifying interests of each site.

### 3.2.1 Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs)

Relevant cSAC sites are selected for a range of different habitats and species listed on Annex I and Annex II of the habitats directive, known as Qualifying Interests (QIs).

Relevant SPA sites listed have been selected for the protection of endangered species of wild birds. Each SPA has been selected for one or a combination of the following:

- Listed rare and vulnerable species (as listed on Annex I of EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC);
- Regularly occurring migratory species, such as ducks, geese, and waders;
- Wetlands, especially those of international importance, which attract large numbers of migratory birds each year.

The features for which SPAs have been selected are referred to as Special Conservation Interests (SCIs).

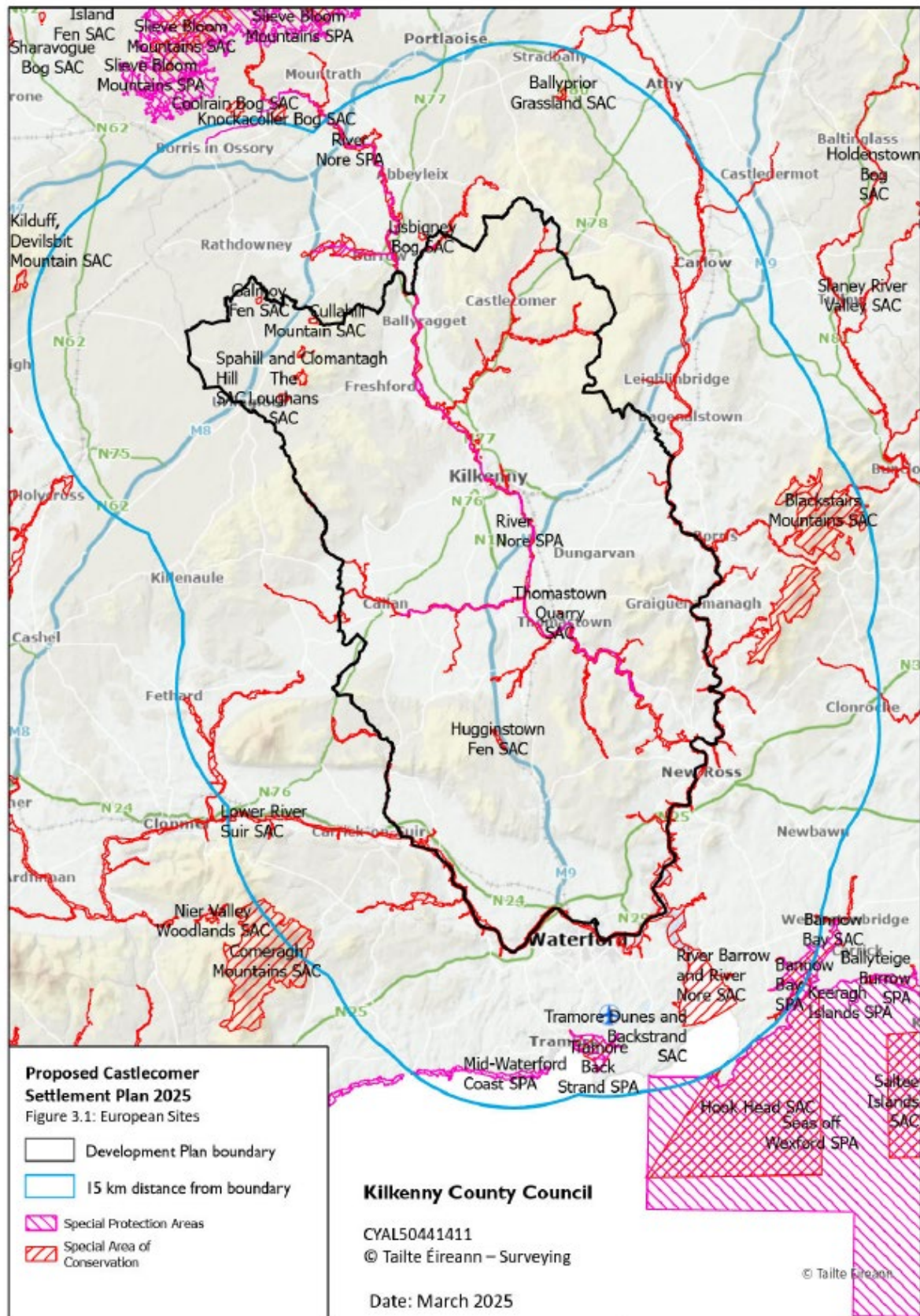
Those QIs and SCIs for which sites are selected are presented in Table 3.1.

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<sup>5</sup> Special Areas of Conservation with groundwater sensitive Qualifying Interests

<sup>6</sup> Source: EPA datasets (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>). Accessed: February 2024

Figure 3.1 European sites in the vicinity of the Plan area, including those with hydrological connectivity



**Table 3.1 List of European sites within 15kms and/or hydrologically connected to Kilkenny County- Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs)**

Site Code	European site	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interest and Special Conservation Interests)
<b>SPAs</b>			
004033	Bannow Bay SPA	12km	Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046] Shelduck ( <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ) [A048] Pintail ( <i>Anas acuta</i> ) [A054] Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130] Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140] Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141] Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> ) [A142] Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus</i> ) [A143] Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157] Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ) [A160] Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
004193	Mid-Waterford Coast SPA	11km	Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ) [A017] Peregrine ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) [A103] Herring Gull ( <i>Larus argentatus</i> ) [A184] Chough ( <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> ) [A346]
004233	River Nore SPA	Within	Kingfisher ( <i>Alcedo atthis</i> ) [A229]
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA	12km	Fulmar ( <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> ) [A009], Red-throated Diver ( <i>Gavia stellata</i> ) [A001], Common Tern ( <i>Sterna hirundo</i> ) [A193], Manx Shearwater ( <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> ) [A013], Gannet ( <i>Morus bassanus</i> ) [A016], Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ) [A017], Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> ) [A018], Common Scoter ( <i>Melanitta nigra</i> ) [A065], Mediterranean Gull ( <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> ) [A176], Black-headed Gull ( <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> ) [A179], Lesser Black-backed Gull ( <i>Larus fuscus</i> ) [A183], Herring Gull ( <i>Larus argentatus</i> ) [A184], Kittiwake ( <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> ) [A188], Sandwich Tern ( <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> ) [A191], Roseate Tern ( <i>Sterna dougallii</i> ) [A192], Razorbill ( <i>Alca torda</i> ) [A200], Arctic Tern ( <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> ) [A194], Little Tern ( <i>Sterna albifrons</i> ) [A195], Guillemot ( <i>Uria aalge</i> ) [A199], Puffin ( <i>Fratercula arctica</i> ) [A204]
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	9km	Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046] Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140] Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141] Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> ) [A142] Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149]

<b>SACs</b>			
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC	10km	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco-Brometalia</i> ) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
000697	Bannow Bay SAC	15km	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330], Estuaries [1130], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs ( <i>Sarcocornetea fruticosi</i> ) [1420], Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]
000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC	3	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], European dry heaths [4030]
001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC	12km	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains ( <i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i> ) [3110], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], European dry heaths [4030], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels ( <i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i> ) [8110], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> [1393]
000831	Cullahill Mountain SAC	Within	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco-Brometalia</i> ) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
001858	Galmoy Fen SAC	Within	Alkaline fens [7230]
000764	Hook Head SAC	14km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Reefs [1170], Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]
000404	Hugginstown Fen SAC	Within	Alkaline fens [7230]
000869	Lisbigney Bog SAC	0.15	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210], <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> [1016]

002137	Lower River Suir SAC	Within	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i> ) [1330], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [91J0], <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> [1029], <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092], <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> [1095], <i>Lampetra planeri</i> [1096], <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> [1099], <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> [1103], <i>Salmo salar</i> [1106], <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355]
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	Within Settlement Plan area	Atlantic salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) [1106], Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355], Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0], Estuaries [1130], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i> ) [1330], Brook lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> ) [1096], Desmoulin's whorl snail ( <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> ) [1016], Killarney fern ( <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> ) [1421], European dry heaths [4030], Freshwater pearl mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> ) [1029], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Sea lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> ) [1095], Reefs [1170], River lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) [1099], White-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ) [1092], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Twaite shad ( <i>Alosa fallax</i> ) [1103], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Nore Pearl Mussel ( <i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i> ) [1990]

000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	9km	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91EO], Estuaries [1130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> [1029], <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> [1095], <i>Lampetra planeri</i> [1096], <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> [1099], <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> [1103], <i>Salmo salar</i> [1106], <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355], <i>Phoca vitulina</i> [1365]
000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC	Within	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco-Brometalia</i> ) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
000407	The Loughans SAC	Within	Turloughs [3180]
002252	Thomastown Quarry SAC	Within	Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220]
000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC	9km	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]

Of the European sites listed above, one, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site code 002162) runs directly through the Castlecomer Settlement Plan area.

### 3.3 Assessment Criteria

All provisions of the Proposed Variation are considered in this report with respect to the ecological sensitivities of each of the European sites identified. The sensitivities, threats and pressures of the QIs in relation to all potential sources for effects identified, and potential pathways for such effects identified above are then examined by the Screening for AA in Table 3.2. If/where sources within the Proposed Variation and pathways for potential significant effects are identified, the European sites concerned will proceed to Stage 2 AA (where a Natura Impact Statement is then required).

#### 3.3.1 Is the Plan Necessary to the Management of European Sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require AA. The primary purpose of the Variation to the KCCDP 2021 is not the nature conservation management of the sites. Therefore, the Variation to the KCCDP is not considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

#### 3.3.2 Elements of the Variation with Potential to Give Rise to Effects

The first part of the Proposed Variation is primarily intended to provide a land use zoning and development framework for the town of Castlecomer. There is no additional land designated for development in Castlecomer, over that zoned in the previous LAP. There has been a reconfiguration of land zoned for New Residential, but no greenfield land has been added. Site Code 002162, the River Barrow and Nore SAC, runs through the plan area. The 2018 LAP had designated the area of the SAC as a specific SAC zone. For the most part the SAC follows the River Dinin. The nature of this zone was restrictive, allowing only for very limited uses. The Settlement Plan continues this designation, and the full area of the SAC is covered by the SAC zone.

The second part of the Proposed Variation is to incorporate the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* as relevant. This includes changes to standards for car-parking provision, separation distances between houses and public open space. The original standards for these elements were all assessed as part of the AA during the preparation and adoption/approval of the Plan. The Guidelines were subject to AA and a Natura Impact Statement was published for the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities*<sup>7</sup>, which concluded that “implementation of the Guidelines will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Sites, alone or in combination, and taking into consideration transboundary effects”.

Implementing the Plan will involve Kilkenny County Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans/programmes/strategies setting out public policy for sustainable development, including that relating to the economy, communities, infrastructure, land use tourism and environmental protection and environmental management.

The Plan is situated alongside this hierarchy of statutory documents that has been subject to environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment, as appropriate, and forms the decision-making and consent-granting framework. The Development Plan has been subject to Appropriate Assessment.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including

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<sup>7</sup> Post-Consultation Issue of the Natura Impact Statement was published for the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2023

requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

Considering the above, the Conservation Objectives, and the known threats and pressures relating to European sites (refer also to Appendices), there is no additional source for an effect on any European site that has a pathway with a likelihood for a potential significant effect on any European site that was not already considered by the existing planning framework, the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied), and associated AA processes.

### 3.4 Screening of Sites

Table 3.1 examines whether there is a likelihood of potential for significant effects on European sites, considering: information on potential effects provided above; the Conservation Objectives for each site; each site's QIs; and their threats and pressures – as provided in Appendix I. Sites are screened based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- The existence of potential for pathways for likely significant effects, such as hydrological links between the Plan area and the site to be screened;
- The distance of the relevant site from the Plan boundary; and
- The existence of a link between identified threats or vulnerabilities at a site to potential impacts that may arise from the Plan.

The European Commission Environment DG document *“Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC”* outlines the types of effects that may affect European Sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource Requirements (Drinking Water Abstraction etc.)
- Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air)
- Excavation Requirements
- Transportation Requirements
- Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning

In addition, the guidance document outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the integrity and function of that site:

- Loss/reduction of habitat area;
- Habitat or species fragmentation;
- Disturbance to key species;
- Reduction in species density;
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.); and
- Climate change.

Assessment of potential impacts on European sites is conducted utilising a standard source-pathway model.

#### 3.4.1 Identification of Potential Likely Effects

This section documents the final stage of the screening process and determines the likelihood of impacts to arise on individual European sites. It has used the information collected on the sensitivity of each European site and describes any effects of the implementation of the Variation with respect to this

site.

In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been taken into account. Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to the European site. Secondly, the individual elements of the Variation and other plans and programmes and the potential effect they may cause on the site were considered.

The outcome of this screening is presented in Table 3.2 below. In summary, taking into consideration the provisions of the variation together with the overarching provisions contained in the KCCDP, there is no potential for effects on any European site and therefore there is no need to advance to Stage II Appropriate Assessment.

**Table 3.2 Screening of European sites with ecological pathways to the Plan's boundary**

Site Code	Site Name	Analysis for Likely Significant Effects	Likelihood of Significant Effects	Likelihood for Significant In-Combination Effects	
000404	Hugginstown Fen SAC	The Variation relates to the development and usage of land and infrastructure in the Castlecomer area, which is already provided for by the wider planning framework, including the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 and Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.	No	No	
000407	The Loughans SAC		No	No	
000831	Cullahill Mountain SAC	Implementing the Variation will involve Kilkenny County Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans/programmes/strategies setting out public policy for sustainable development, including that relating to the economy, communities, infrastructure, land use tourism and environmental protection and environmental management.	No	No	
000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC		No	No	
001858	Galmoy Fen SAC		No	No	
002137	Lower River Suir SAC		No	No	
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	The Variation is situated alongside this hierarchy of statutory documents that has been subject to environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment, as appropriate.	No	No	
004233	River Nore SPA		No	No	
002252	Thomastown Quarry SAC	The Variation fully aligns with the provisions of the existing National Planning Framework, and the NPF First Revision, National Climate Action Plan 2023 and emerging Climate Action Plan 2024, the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 and the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied), all of which have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment. As such, the Variation is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents, encompassing measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes, and does not introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.	No	No	
000869	Lisbigney Bog SAC		No	No	
000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC		No	No	
000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC		No	No	
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA		No	No	
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC		No	No	
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC		No	No	
004193	Mid-Waterford Coast SPA		No	No	
000697	Bannow Bay SAC		No	No	
004033	Bannow Bay SPA		No	No	
001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC		Considering the above, the Conservation Objectives, and the known threats and pressures relating to this European site, there is no additional source for an effect on any European site that has a pathway with a likelihood for a potential significant effect on any European site that was not already considered by the existing planning framework and associated AA processes. Consequently, no further assessment is required.	No	No
000764	Hook Head SAC			No	No
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA			No	No

The Variation does not introduce any additional sources for effects that were not considered by the existing KCCDP which was subject to its own Appropriate Assessment.

### 3.5 In combination effects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the likelihood for potential significant effects to European sites.

The existing City & County Development Plan 2021 to which the Proposed Variation relates, was subject to its own Appropriate Assessment process that determined *“Having incorporated mitigation measures, it is concluded that the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 is not foreseen to give rise to any significant effects on the integrity of European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects”*<sup>8</sup>. There are no provisions in the Variation that introduce any additional source for an effect on any European site that was not already considered by the existing planning framework and associated AA processes (refer also to the detail provided under Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

Therefore, there are no in combination effects identified resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Variation. A list of other plans and programmes considered is provided in Appendix IV. Interaction with national level Plans were considered in the NIR for the City and County Development Plan<sup>9</sup>, and those plans remain as stated in the NIR, except where updates are provided below.

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<sup>8</sup> Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027- Consolidated Natura Impact Report

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

## 4 Screening for AA Conclusion

This Screening for AA report informs the competent authority carrying out the AA Screening determination for the Proposed Variation, and demonstrates that the implementation of the Variation does not have a likelihood to result in potential significant effects to any European site.

Following the source-pathway-receptor model, and considering the potential effects of the Proposed Variation, the Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives of each European site were assessed. The Proposed Variation does not introduce any additional sources for effects that were not already considered by the existing planning framework and associated AA processes.

The risks to the safeguarding of the qualifying interests, special conservation interests and conservation objectives of the European sites have been addressed through existing, already in-force policies and objectives of the wider planning framework, including the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 and the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 as varied (both of which were subject to Stage 2 AA), with which all lower tier plans/projects must comply. In addition, any future projects, plans etc. that may arise will themselves be subject to AA/screening for AA when further details of design and location are known.

Therefore, it is concluded in this Screening for AA to inform the competent authority carrying out the AA Screening, that the Proposed Variation is not foreseen to have any likelihood for significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects – and therefore any potential for a significant effect to any European site as a result of implementing the Proposed Variation can be ruled out.

This evaluation is made in view of the Conservation Objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, Stage Two AA (including the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement) is not required.

**Appendix I Supporting information on European sites**

European sites with functional connectivity (ecological pathways) to the Variation area including their Qualifying Interests, known threats and pressures

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature	Pressure Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210]	D01.01, A04, A08, A10.01, A03, B02.01, A10	Paths, tracks, cycling tracks, grazing, fertilisation, removal of hedges and copses or scrub, mowing or cutting of grassland, forest replanting, restructuring agricultural land holding
000697	Bannow Bay SAC	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330], Estuaries [1130], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (Sarcocornetea fruticosi) [1420], Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	C01.01.02, K01.01, J02.02, B01, E03.01, E03, J02.11.01, G01.03.02, F01.01, I01, D01.01, F02.03.01, X	Removal of beach materials, erosion, removal of sediments (mud...), forest planting on open ground, disposal of household or recreational facility waste, discharges, dumping, depositing of dredged deposits, off-road motorized driving, intensive fish farming, intensification, invasive non-native species, paths, tracks, cycling tracks, bait digging or collection, no threats or pressures
000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], European dry heaths [4030]	E03, J01.01, B02, G01.02, A04.02, K02.01, K01.01, G01.03.02, A04.01.02	Discharges, burning down, forest and plantation management & use, walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles, non-intensive grazing, species composition change (succession), erosion, off-road motorized driving, intensive sheep grazing
001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels ( <i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i> ) [8110], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic	B, G01.02, E02, A04, D01.02, J01, I01, K01.01, C01.03, E06	Sylviculture, forestry, walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles, industrial or commercial areas, grazing, roads, motorways, fire and fire suppression, invasive non-native species, erosion, peat extraction, other urbanisation, industrial and similar activities

		vegetation [8220], European dry heaths [4030], Slender green feather-moss ( <i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> ) [6216], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains ( <i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i> ) [3110]		
000831	Cullahill Mountain SAC	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco-Brometalia</i> ) * important orchid sites [6210]	A04.03, A10.01, A03.02	Abandonment of pastoral systems lack of grazing, removal of hedges and copses or scrub, non-intensive mowing
001858	Galmoy Fen SAC	Alkaline fens [7230]	X, B, C01.04.02, A04	No threats or pressures, silviculture, forestry, underground mining, grazing
000764	Hook Head SAC	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts [1230], Reefs [1170]	J02.11.01, F02, X, K01.01, G01.07	Dumping, depositing of dredged deposits, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, no threats or pressures, erosion, scuba diving, snorkelling
000404	Hugginstown Fen SAC	Alkaline fens [7230]	B02, A04, A08	Forest and plantation management & use, grazing, fertilisation
000869	Lisbigney Bog SAC	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210], Desmoulin's whorl snail ( <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> ) [1016]	J01.01, K02.01, J02.01, X, E03.03, A04.03, E03.01	Burning down, species composition change (succession), landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general, no threats or pressures, disposal of inert materials, abandonment of pastoral systems lack of grazing, disposal of household or recreational facility waste
002137	Lower River Suir SAC	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0], Sea lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> ) [1095], White-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ) [1092], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], Brook lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> ) [1096], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330], Twaite shad ( <i>Alosa fallax</i> ) [1103], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], Atlantic salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) [1106], Freshwater pearl mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> ) [1029], Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355], River lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) [1099], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260],	A01, E03, J02.12.02, J02.01.02, I01, B, A08, D03.01, E01, H01, J02.01, X	Cultivation, discharges, dykes and flooding defence in inland water systems, reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh, invasive non-native species, silviculture, forestry, fertilisation, port areas, urbanised areas, human habitation, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general, no threats or pressures

		Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0]		
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	Brook lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> ) [1096], Estuaries [1130], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0], White-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ) [1092], Freshwater pearl mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> ) [1029], Nore Pearl Mussel ( <i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i> ) [1990], Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Reefs [1170], Twaite shad ( <i>Alosa fallax</i> ) [1103], Sea lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> ) [1095], Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220], Atlantic salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) [1106], European dry heaths [4030], River lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) [1099], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Killarney fern ( <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> ) [1421], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Desmoulin's whorl snail ( <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> ) [1016], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]	A10.01, A02.01, C01.01.01, E02, B05, D03.01, M01, F02.03, B02.01.01, J02.12.02, A04.01.01, I01, F02, F02.01.02, C01.03, B02, J03.02.01, J02.02.01, J02.05.02, B07, H01, K01.01, J02, F01.01, J02.06	Removal of hedges and copses or scrub, agricultural intensification, sand and gravel quarries, industrial or commercial areas, use of fertilizers (forestry), port areas, changes in abiotic conditions, leisure fishing, forest replanting (native trees), dykes and flooding defence in inland water systems, intensive cattle grazing, invasive nonnative species, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, netting, peat extraction, forest and plantation management & use, reduction in migration or migration barriers, dredging or removal of limnic sediments, modifying structures of inland water courses, forestry activities not referred to above, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), erosion, human induced changes in hydraulic conditions, intensive fish farming, intensification, water abstractions from surface waters
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], River lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) [1099], Atlantic salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) [1106], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Freshwater pearl mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> ) [1029], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-	H01.01, E05, C01.01, J02.11, B02, F02.03.01, J02.05.02, A01, A09, F03.02.04,	Pollution to surface waters by industrial plants, storage of materials, sand and gravel extraction, siltation rate changes, dumping, depositing of dredged deposits, forest and plantation management & use, bait digging or collection, modifying structures of inland water courses, cultivation, irrigation, predator control, water abstractions from surface waters, fertilisation, diffuse pollution to

		Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Estuaries [1130], Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) [1095], Harbour seal (Phoca vitulina) [1365], Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355], Twaite shad (Alosa fallax) [1103], Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) [1096], Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]	J02.06, A08, H01.05, J02.12.02, H01.08, D03.01.03, A10.01, I01, K01.01, E03, H01, F01.03, J02.06.01, D01.05, D01.01, J02	surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities, dykes and flooding defence in inland water systems, diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters, fishing harbours, removal of hedges and copses or scrub, invasive non-native species, erosion, discharges, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), bottom culture, surface water abstractions for agriculture, bridge, viaduct, paths, tracks, cycling tracks, human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
000849	Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) * important orchid sites [6210]	X, A10.01, A08, A04.01	No threats or pressures, removal of hedges and copses or scrub, fertilisation, intensive grazing
000407	The Loughans SAC	Turloughs [3180]	A04.01.01, A08, A04	Intensive cattle grazing, fertilisation, grazing
002252	Thomastown Quarry SAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220]	E01, A04.03, X, K04.01	Urbanised areas, human habitation, abandonment of pastoral systems lack of grazing, no threats or pressures, competition (flora)
000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410], Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i> ) [1330], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]	A04, E01, G02.08, C01.01.02, F02.03.01, I01, F02.03, G01.02, E03, F03.01	Grazing, urbanised areas, human habitation, camping and caravans, removal of beach materials, bait digging or collection, invasive non-native species, leisure fishing, walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles, discharges, hunting
<b>SPAs</b>				
004033	Bannow Bay SPA	Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ) [A160], Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> ) [A142], Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> )	F01, A04, D01.02, G01, E01.03,	Marine and freshwater aquaculture, grazing, roads, motorways, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, dispersed

		[A141], Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus</i> ) [A143], Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162], Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130], Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149], Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046], Pintail ( <i>Anas acuta</i> ) [A054], Shelduck ( <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ) [A048], Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156], Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140]	F03.01, A08		habitation, hunting, fertilisation
004193	Mid-Waterford Coast SPA	Chough ( <i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> ) [A346], Peregrine falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) [A103], Herring Gull ( <i>Larus argentatus</i> ) [A184], Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ) [A017]	A04, A02, A04.03, E05	E04.01,	Grazing, agricultural structures, buildings in the landscape, modification of cultivation practices, abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing, storage of materials
004233	River Nore SPA	Kingfisher ( <i>Alcedo atthis</i> ) [A229]	J02.01, D03.01	X,	Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general, no threats or pressures, port areas
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA	Manx Shearwater ( <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> ) [A013], Herring Gull ( <i>Larus argentatus</i> ) [A184], Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ) [A017], Kittiwake ( <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> ) [A188], Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> ) [A018], Gannet ( <i>Morus bassanus</i> ) [A016], Fulmar ( <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> ) [A009], Razorbill ( <i>Alca torda</i> ) [A200], Mediterranean Gull ( <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> ) [A176], Black-headed Gull ( <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> ) [A179], Sandwich Tern ( <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> ) [A191], Red-throated Diver ( <i>Gavia stellata</i> ) [A001], Roseate Tern ( <i>Sterna dougallii</i> ) [A192], Lesser Black-backed Gull ( <i>Larus fuscus</i> ) [A183], Common Scoter ( <i>Melanitta nigra</i> ) [A065], Common Tern ( <i>Sterna hirundo</i> ) [A193], Arctic Tern ( <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> ) [A194], Little Tern ( <i>Sterna albifrons</i> ) [A195], Puffin ( <i>Fratercula arctica</i> ) [A204], Guillemot ( <i>Uria aalge</i> ) [A199]	D01.05, D01.02, F02.03.01, G02.01, G01.01, G01.02, G03, F02.03.01, E01, E03, J02.01.02, F02.03, K02.03, A08	E01.04, E03,	Bridge, viaduct, other patterns of habitation, discharges, roads, motorways, shipping lanes, bait digging or collection, golf course, nautical sports, walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles, interpretative centres, continuous urbanisation, industrial or commercial areas, bait digging or collection, urbanised areas, human habitation, discharges, reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh, leisure fishing, eutrophication (natural), fertilisation

004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140], Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046], Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141], Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> ) [A142], Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149], Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157], Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ) [A160]	I01, A08, G01.02, A04, E03, H, E01	Invasive non-native species, fertilisation, walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles, grazing, discharges, pollution, urbanised areas, human habitation
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## Appendix II Supporting information on the Qualifying Interests of SACs

## Qualifying Interests of SACs including summaries of current threats and sensitivities

EU Code	Qualifying Interests	Article 17 Report Summary - Threats and Pressures	Threats and Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
[1016]	Desmoulin's Whorl Snail ( <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> )	The main pressures are associated with natural succession resulting in species composition change and drying out of the habitat.	A07, A10, L01, L02	Abandonment of management/use of other agricultural and agroforestry systems (all except grassland), extensive grazing or under grazing by livestock, abiotic natural processes (e.g., erosion, silting up, drying out, submersion, salinization), natural succession resulting in species composition change (other than by direct changes of agricultural or forestry practices)	Changes to ground vegetation condition, groundwater dependent and is highly sensitive to hydrological changes.
[1029]	Freshwater Pearl Mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> )	The pressures facing this species come from a wide variety of sources (e.g. pollution from urban wastewater, development activities, farming and forestry), often quite removed from the species' habitat. Flow changes, caused by land drainage are also a significant pressure facing the species.	A26, A31, B23, B27, C05, D02, F12, F28, F31, F33	Agricultural activities generating diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters, drainage for use as agricultural land, forestry activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters, modification of hydrological conditions, or physical alteration of water bodies and drainage for forestry (including dams), peat extraction, hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure, discharge of urban waste water (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water, modification of flooding regimes, flood protection for residential or recreational development, other modification of hydrological conditions for residential or recreational development, abstraction of ground and surface waters (including marine) for public water supply and recreational use	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological change. Very highly sensitive to pollution.
[1092]	White-clawed Crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> )	The main pressures facing this species is related to the non-indigenous crayfish species (NICS) and Crayfish Plaque, a waterborne disease specific to freshwater crayfish.	I01, I05	Invasive alien species of union concern, plant and animal diseases, pathogens and pests	Invasive species, disease, surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological change. Very highly sensitive to pollution.
[1095]	Sea Lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> )	Most of the pressures on Sea Lampreys are associated with hydropower infrastructure, reduction of prey populations due to overharvesting, drainage and the use of both natural and synthetic fertilisers. Changes in rainfall due to climate change is also considered a significant pressure on the species.	A19, A20, A31, D02, G01, N01, N02, N03, Xo	Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land, application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land, drainage for use as agricultural land, hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure, marine fishing and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species, temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change, increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change, threats and pressures from outside the member state	Marine water dependent. Low sensitivity to hydrological changes. Coastal development, trampling from recreational activity.
[1096]	Brook Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> )	Most of the pressures on Brook Lampreys are associated with drainage for agriculture, the use of both natural and synthetic fertilisers, tree removal. Infrastructure related to hydropower along with pollution to ground and surface water and the discharge of waste water are also considered pressures.	A19, A20, A31, B09, D02, F11, F12, N01, N02	Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land, application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land, drainage for use as agricultural land, clear-cutting, removal of all trees, hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure, pollution to surface or ground water due to urban runoffs, discharge of urban waste water (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water, temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological change. Availability of suitable spawning ground is a considerable issue for the species.
[1099]	River Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> )	The main pressures on River Lampreys are associated with hydropower infrastructure and changes in rainfall due to climate change. The use of synthetic and natural fertilisers, drainage and also infrastructure related to shipping are also considered to be pressures on the species.	A19, A20, A31, D02, E03, N01, N02, N03	Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land, application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land, drainage for use as agricultural land, hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure, shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g., canalisation, dredging), temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change, increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological change. Availability of suitable spawning ground is a considerable issue for the species.

[1103]	Twaite Shad ( <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> )	There are a number of pressures related to this species, mainly relating to pollution, alteration of flow patterns, and habitat disturbance/	A19, A20, D02, E03, G01, G06, G12, I02, N01, N03	Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land, application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land, hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure, shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g., canalisation, dredging), marine fishing and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species, freshwater fish and shellfish harvesting (recreational), bycatch and incidental killing (due to fishing and hunting activities), other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change, increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.
[1106]	Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )	Known pressures include exploitation at sea in commercial fisheries, interceptor fisheries in coastal waters, aquaculture and predation. In addition, the negative influence of climate change on prey structure as well as alterations in habitat and water quality are also pressures on the species.	A25, A26, B23, D02, F12, F28, G11, G19, G20, I02, J01, K05, L06, N01	Agricultural activities generating point source pollution to surface or ground waters, agricultural activities generating diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters, forestry activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters, hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure, discharge of urban waste water (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water, modification of flooding regimes, flood protection for residential or recreational development, illegal harvesting, collecting and taking, other impacts from marine aquaculture, including infrastructure, abstraction of water, flow diversion, dams and other modifications of hydrological conditions for freshwater aquaculture, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), mixed source pollution to surface and ground waters (limnic and terrestrial), physical alteration of water bodies, interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens), temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change	Disease, parasites and barriers to movement.
[1130]	Estuaries	Most of the pressures on estuaries come from various sources of pollution, including domestic wastewater, agriculture and marine aquaculture. Alien invasive species such as the naturalised Pacific oyster ( <i>Magallana gigas</i> ) are also recognised as a significant pressure	A28, F20, G16, I02, XU	Agricultural activities generating marine pollution, residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine pollution (excl. marine macro- and micro-particular pollution, marine aquaculture generating marine pollution, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), unknown pressure	Inappropriate development, changes in turbidity
[1140]	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	Pressures on mudflats and sandflats are partly caused by pollution from agricultural, forestry and wastewater sources, as well as impacts associated with marine aquaculture, particularly the Pacific oyster ( <i>Magallana gigas</i> ).	A28, F20, G16	Agricultural activities generating marine pollution, residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine pollution (excl. marine macro- and micro-particular pollution, marine aquaculture generating marine pollution	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Moderate sensitivity to pollution. Changes to salinity and tidal regime. Coastal development.
[1170]	Reefs	The main pressures on reefs come from fishing methods that damage the seafloor.	G01, G03	Marine fishing and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species, marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) activities causing physical loss and disturbance of seafloor habitats	Sensitive to disturbance and pollution.
[1310]	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand	Pressures on Salicornia mud are caused by alien species and overgrazing by livestock	A09, I02	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern)	Marine water dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Infilling, reclamation, invasive species.
[1330]	Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> )	The main pressures on Atlantic salt meadows are from agriculture, including ecologically unstable grazing regimes and land reclamation, and the invasive non-native species common cord-grass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ).	A09, A33, A36, F07, F08, I02	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, modification of hydrological flow or physical alternation of water bodies for agriculture (excluding development and operation of dams), agriculture activities not referred to above, sports, tourism and leisure activities, modification of coastline, estuary and coastal conditions for development, use and protection of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas (including sea defence or coast protection works and infrastructures), other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern)	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Overgrazing, erosion and accretion.

[1355]	Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	There are no pressures facing this species	Xxp, Xxt	No pressures, no threats	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Sensitivity to pollution.
[1410]	Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> )	Most of the pressures on Mediterranean salt meadows are associated with agriculture, including overgrazing, under-grazing and land reclamation.	A09, A10, A33, A36	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, extensive grazing or under grazing by livestock, modification of hydrological flow or physical alteration of water bodies for agriculture (excluding development and operation of dams), agriculture activities not referred to above	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Coastal development and reclamation.
[1421]	Killarney Fern ( <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> )	There are no pressures facing this species.	Xxp, Xxt	No pressures, no threats	Land use management and direct impacts.
[3260]	Water courses of plain to montane levels with vegetation ( <i>Ranunculon fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho- Batrachion</i> )	The majority of pressures on this habitat are caused by damage through hydrological and morphological change, eutrophication and other water pollution.	A25, A26, B23, C05, F11, F12, F13, K01, K04, K05	Agricultural activities generating point source pollution to surface or ground waters, agricultural activities generating diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters, forestry activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters, peat extraction, pollution to surface or ground water due to urban runoffs, discharge of urban waste water (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water, plants, contaminated or abandoned industrial sites generating pollution to surface or ground water, abstraction from groundwater, surface water or mixed water, modification of hydrological flow, physical alteration of water bodies	Surface water dependent Highly sensitive to hydrological change and direct physical interactions.
[4030]	European dry heaths	A number of significant pressures were recorded for this habitat in the current reporting period, particularly overgrazing by sheep and burning for agriculture with afforestation and wind farms also being recognised as pressures.	A09, A11, B01, D01, N01, N02	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, burning for agriculture, conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage), wind, wave and tidal power, including infrastructure, temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change	Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.
[6430]	Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels	Pressures on the habitat include invasive species; and agricultural intensification and drainage in the lowlands.	A09, A31, I01, I02	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, drainage for use as agricultural land, invasive alien species of union concern, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern)	Changes in management such as grazing regime. Changes in nutrient or base status. Changes to vegetation composition. Introduction of alien species.
[7220]	Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> )	Pressures related to this habitat are associated with drainage, pollution to ground and surface waters, recreational activities, infrastructure, overgrazing and abandonment of grassland management.	A06, A10, E01, F07, H08, J01, K02, K04, L02	Abandonment of grassland management (e.g., cessation of grazing or of mowing), extensive grazing or under grazing by livestock, roads, paths, railroads and related infrastructure (e.g., bridges, viaducts, tunnels), sports, tourism and leisure activities, other human intrusions and disturbance not mentioned above (dumping, accidental and deliberate disturbance of bat roosts (e.g., caving)), mixed source pollution to surface and ground waters (limnic and terrestrial), drainage, modification of hydrological flow, natural succession resulting in species composition change (other than by direct changes of agricultural or forestry practices)	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.
[91A0]	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	The significant pressure facing this habitat are associated with invasive non-native species such as <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> , cherry laurel ( <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> ) and beech ( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> ) and overgrazing by deer.	A09, B09, I02, I04, M07	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, clear-cutting, removal of all trees, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), problematic native species, storm, cyclone	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Introduction of alien species.
[91E0]	Alluvial forests with Alder and Ash ( <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> , <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> )	Many of the pressures facing this habitat include invasive species, particularly sycamore ( <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> ), beech ( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> ), Indian balsam ( <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> ) and currant species ( <i>Ribes nigrum</i> and <i>R. rubrum</i> ) as well as some native species such as brambles ( <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) and common nettle, along with over felling.	B09, I02, I04, I05	Clear-cutting, removal of all trees, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), problematic native species, plant and animal diseases, pathogens and pests	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in management.

### Appendix III Supporting information on the Special Conservation Interests of SPAs

Special Conservation Interests of SPAs including summaries of current threats and sensitivities

Species Code	Common Name	Scientific Name	Threats and Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
A009	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	C03, F02	Renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources
A013	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	C03, H03, I01	Renewable abiotic energy use, marine water pollution, invasive non-native species
A016	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	C03, F02, H03	Renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, marine water pollution
A017	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i>	C03, F02, F03, G01, H03	Renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, marine water pollution
A018	Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	C03, H03	Renewable abiotic energy use, marine water pollution
A176	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Xxp/Xxt	No threats and pressures identified by the NPWS
A179	Black-Headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	A04, C03, F02, H03, J03, M01	Grazing, renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, marine water pollution, other ecosystem modifications, changes in abiotic conditions
A183	Lesser Black-Backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	C03, F02, H03, J03	Renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, marine water pollution, other ecosystem modifications
A184	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	C03, F02, H03, J03	Renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, marine water pollution, other ecosystem modifications
A188	Black-Legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	C03, F02, H03	Renewable abiotic energy use, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, marine water pollution
A191	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	C03, I01	Renewable abiotic energy use, invasive non-native species
A192	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii dougallii</i>	C03, D01, G01, I01	Renewable abiotic energy use, roads, paths and railroads, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, invasive non-native species
A193	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	C03, D01, D03, G01, I01	Renewable abiotic energy use, roads, paths and railroads, shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, invasive non-native species
A194	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	C03, D01, G01, I01, M01	Renewable abiotic energy use, roads, paths and railroads, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, invasive non-native species, changes in abiotic conditions
A200	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	C03, H03	Renewable abiotic energy use, marine water pollution
A204	Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	C03, H03, I01	Renewable abiotic energy use, marine water pollution, invasive non-native species
A229	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	A11, D01, G01, H01, I01, J02	Agriculture activities not referred to above, roads, paths and railroads, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), invasive non-native species, human induced changes in hydraulic conditions

### Appendix IV Relationship with Legislation and Other Plans and Programmes

This appendix is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

Interaction with European and national level Plans were considered in the NIR for the City and County Development Plan<sup>10</sup>, and those plans remain as stated in the NIR, except where updates are provided below.

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high-level aim/purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
<b>National level</b>			
NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs	Management planning for nature conservation sites has a number of aims. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify and evaluate the features of interest for a site</li> <li>• To set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest</li> <li>• To describe the site and its management</li> <li>• To identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site</li> <li>• To set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve the objectives</li> </ul>	Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites within the Natura 2000 network) have to be set for the habitats and species for which the sites are selected. These objectives are used when carrying out appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact on these sites.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3 and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

<sup>10</sup> ibid

<p>National Planning Framework – First Revision 2025</p>	<p>The First Revision focuses on the need to update the Framework in order to appropriately reflect changes to government policy that have taken place since its initial publication six years ago, such as climate transition, regional development, demographics, digitalisation and investment and prioritisation.</p>	<p>National Strategic Outcomes as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compact Growth</li> <li>2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility</li> <li>3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities</li> <li>4. Sustainable Mobility</li> <li>5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills</li> <li>6. High-Quality International Connectivity</li> <li>7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage</li> <li>8. Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society</li> <li>9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources</li> <li>10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services</li> </ol>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3 and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>The Healthy Ireland Framework 2013-2025</p>	<p>The HIF vision is “<i>A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility</i>”</p>	<p>Goals as follows:</p> <p>Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life</p> <p>Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities</p> <p>Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing</p> <p>Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3 and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

<p>National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024</p>	<p>Gives effect to national and EU waste policy, and address waste prevention and Management.</p>	<p>Sets out the current situation including policy, the existing waste landscape and financial, human and market resources deployed. It also identifies the key waste management challenges facing the State.</p> <p>Sets out the responses to the waste management challenges identified including the Plan ambition, targets, policies and priority actions. Targeted policies and priority actions are identified for a range of focus areas chosen to align with the challenges.</p> <p>Sets out the delivery roadmap for the responses contained in Volume II and contains key deliverables required to enable the ambition, targets, policies, and actions identified.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p><b>Regional level</b></p>			

Southern Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy 2019-2031	The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Southern Region in order to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework.	The Southern Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy includes provisions for its nine counties, Cork, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford. The Region's nine counties are administered by 10 local authorities; Cork includes Cork City Council and Cork County Council.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Fáilte Ireland Tourism plans and strategies, including those relating to the Ireland's Ancient East brands	Fáilte Ireland's work includes preparing various plans and strategies for Ireland's Ancient East and other brands and initiatives. These plans are subject to their own environmental assessment processes and any project arising is required to be consistent with and conform with the provisions of all adopted/approved Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including provisions for the protection and management of the environment	Some of Fáilte Ireland's plans and strategies include various projects relating to land use and infrastructural development, including those relating to development of land or on land and the carrying out of land use activities. Many of these projects exist already while some are not currently in existence. The Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes that provide for different projects undergo a variety of environmental assessments. These assessments ensure that environmental effects are considered, including: those arising from new and intensified uses and activities; and those arising from various sectors such as tourism.	Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

<p>Land Use Plans in force within Kilkenny and in other adjoining planning authorities. This includes Development Plans and Local Area Plans</p>	<p>Outline planning objectives for land use development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic framework for planning and sustainable development including those set out in National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies.</li> <li>• Set out the policies and proposals to guide development in the specific Local Authority area.</li> </ul>	<p>Identify future infrastructure, development and zoning required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhances amenities and environment.</li> <li>• Guide planning authority in assessing proposals.</li> <li>• Aim to guide development in the area and the amount of nature of the planned development.</li> <li>• Aim to promote sustainable development.</li> <li>• Provide for economic development and protect natural environmental, heritage.</li> </ul>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
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<p>Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), including the Kilkenny LECP 2023</p>	<p>Vision Statement: By 2028 Kilkenny will be a future-ready, citizen-centric and welcoming county that is climate resilient, provides jobs, attracts highly productive businesses, delivers inclusive services and celebrates creativity.</p>	<p>High-Level Goals and Objectives</p> <p>Goal 1: To ensure that climate action is embraced, and that our actions and interventions are embedded across all areas of the LECP in order to contribute positively to the global climate and biodiversity crisis affecting our citizens and support Ireland to achieve its climate and biodiversity goals and obligations.</p> <p>Goal 2: To build a resilient, sustainable business base and support new and existing businesses to grow, be enterprising and take advantage of new opportunities.</p> <p>Goal 3: To realise the economic and social value of Kilkenny's built and natural heritage, its cultural reputation and offer, and its growing tourism, creative and cultural sectors.</p> <p>Goal 4: To ensure our rural economy and communities are supported to develop sustainably.</p> <p>Goal 5: To increase the number of economically active people in the County by ensuring access to further and higher education infrastructure and to lifelong learning for every working age resident who wants to work to enhance their educational qualifications and achieve the skills required.</p> <p>Goal 6: To grow the number of third level graduates working in County Kilkenny.</p> <p>Goal 7: To reduce inequalities and promote and enhance the importance of health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Goal 8: To reduce the number of people living in deprivation and promote community development, community resilience, climate justice, integration, diversity and social inclusion.</p> <p>Goal 9: To develop increased local capacity and improve targeting of social investment through increased engagement and participation with local community groups that will deliver improved community facilities, supports and services.</p> <p>Goal 10: To support the provision of appropriate community supports and services for new and existing housing developments.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
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<p>Groundwater Protection Schemes</p>	<p>A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.</p>	<p>A Groundwater Protection Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater, and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment-based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p><b>Local</b></p>			
<p>Kilkenny’s Statement of Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2028</p>	<p>Underpin the Councils’ support for the tourism industry in Kilkenny over the next five years.</p>	<p>Sets out a vision, goals, objectives, and aligns with national tourism policy, national initiatives, regional objectives and the objectives of the Council’s adopted Local Economic Community Plan. It is intended that the Strategy and Work Programme will support the delivery of the objectives of the LECP, support Kilkenny Tourism, and support local community tourism initiatives.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

<p>Kilkenny County Council Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023</p>	<p>The opportunity embraced within the Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 is to support people’s participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.</p>	<p>This plan identifies five strategic priorities with clear objectives to fulfil the Council’s creative vision for Kilkenny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enable best practice delivery of culture and creativity</li> <li>– Increase and diversify participation in culture and creativity</li> <li>– Support culture and creativity in rural and urban areas</li> <li>– Engage children and young people in culture and creativity</li> <li>– Communicate the value of culture and creativity</li> </ul>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Kilkenny County Council’s Climate Action Plan 2024-2029</p>	<p>In accordance with the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, Kilkenny County Council published its Climate Action Plan in 2024.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out how the Council will respond to the climate crisis by improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and embedding climate resilience across the organisation. It also addresses how the Council will adopt a leadership role in the county by supporting local communities, businesses and other stakeholders to take climate action.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>




<p>Kilkenny Noise Action Plan 2024-2028</p>	<p>The Noise Action Plan is aimed at strategic long-term management of environmental noise from transport systems. Additionally, the Noise Action Plan considers areas potentially free from long-term noise effects caused by human activity, with the aspiration of preserving their environmental noise quality. These are referred to as Candidate Quiet Areas.</p>	<p>Under the Regulations, Kilkenny County Council is the action planning authority responsible for the creation and implementation of the Noise Action Plan for County Kilkenny. The Noise Action Plan for County Kilkenny is based on the results of the strategic noise maps which informed assessments of population exposure and harmful effects of noise.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Various existing, planned and emerging projects provided for by the above plans and programmes</p>	<p>These projects have been provided for by higher-level plans and programmes</p>	<p>These projects will contribute towards the development of the area to which the Plan relates and/or wider area and will contribute towards environmental protection and management.</p>	<p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in combination effects (see Section 3.3. and 3.4) may arise. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

## Appendix V Kilkenny City and County Development 2021 Environmental Provisions relating to Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Water, Flood Risk and Soil.

Environmental/ Component	Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 Provision (Existing, already in force policy/objective/development management standard)
<b>Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna</b>	<p><i>See also measures on this table under Soil, Water, Flood Risk Management and Water Services</i></p> <p>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 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Water</b>	<p><i>See also measures on this table under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Soil, Water Services and Flood Risk Management</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Council will promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives established—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009;</li> <li>for groundwater, and groundwater by European Union Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.</li> </ul>

<b>Flood Risk</b>	<p>To adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Soil</b>	<p><i>See also measures on this table under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Water, Water Services and Flood Risk Management</i></p> <p>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.</p>

## Appendix VI AA Screening Determination

 <p><b>Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh</b> Halla an Chontae Sraid Eoin Cill Chainnigh R95 A39T</p> <p>Pobail agus Áiteanna Inbhuanaithe a Chruthú</p>	 <p><b>Kilkenny County Council</b> County Hall John Street Kilkenny R95 A39T</p> <p>Creating Sustainable Communities and Places</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended for:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proposed Variation 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021</b></p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening determination has been made by Kilkenny County Council regarding Proposed Variation 5.</p> <p>Section 12 (7) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), requires, inter alia, a determination to be made as to whether the Proposed Variation warrants the undertaking of AA.</p> <p>Variation No. 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan (KCCDP) proposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the KCCDP, as part of a new Volume 3, Settlement Plans,</li> <li>• To make associated changes to Volume 1 to reflect this, and</li> <li>• To incorporate the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the <i>Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)</i> as relevant.</li> </ul> <p>The AA screening process has found that the proposed Variation does not require any further assessment to demonstrate compliance with the Directive in accordance with the methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.</p> <p>Taking into account the findings of the AA process that are detailed in an AA Screening Report that accompanies this Determination, Kilkenny County Council have determined that Proposed Variation 5 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 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.</p> <p>Signed  Denis Malone Senior Planner</p> <p>Date <u>21/5/2025</u></p>	