



**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT  
SCREENING REPORT  
DRAFT LEIXLIP LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017-2023**

**KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report: Purpose and Process

Kildare County Council has commenced the preparation of the Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (hereafter referred to as the “Draft LAP”). This Draft Plan, through a series of objectives and policies, will set out the vision and direction for the future development of the Leixlip (including Collinstown) area up to 2023.

Proposed land use plans and proposed variations must undergo a formal “test” or “screening” to ascertain whether they are likely to result in any significant adverse effects on specific sites designated for their nature conservation importance. These sites are those designated under the European Commission’s Natura 2000 network of sites (hereafter “European sites”<sup>1</sup>). These sites are designated on the basis of the presence of certain habitats and species that are deemed to be of international importance. The Irish Government and local planning authorities have a legal obligation to protect these sites.

The EC Habitats and Birds Directives are the framework for the designation of these sites. The EC Habitats Directive requires the “screening” of plans and projects under Article 6(3). If the screening process results in a judgement that likely significant effects may occur or cannot be ruled out, then a more detailed “appropriate assessment” (AA) is required.

Scott Cawley Ltd. was appointed by Kildare County Council to analyse the Draft Leixlip LAP during early stages of preparation and prepare an AA Screening Report to inform the Council’s own AA Screening.

## 2 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES, GENERIC THREATS AND PRESSURES

As part of the analysis of the Draft LAP, all European sites (SACs and SPAs) within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP boundary were identified. Similarly, all Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP were identified. NHAs, pNHAs and other designated sites such as Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Ramsar sites do not form part of the European site network, however they often provide an important supporting role to the network, particularly when it comes to fauna species which often do not obey site boundaries. A list of all European sites, NHAs and pNHAs located within the LAP boundary and environs can be found in Section 2.1.

Threats and pressures to the integrity of the European sites and hence the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) of the European sites within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP have been identified. Threats and pressures for QIs were extracted from the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland, Volume 2 &

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<sup>1</sup> Natura 2000 sites are defined under the Habitats Directive (Article 3) as a European ecological network of special areas of conservation composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II. The aim of the network is to aid the long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats. In Ireland these sites are designed as *European sites* - defined under the Planning Acts and/or Birds and Habitats Regulations as (a) a candidate site of Community importance, (b) a site of Community importance, (c) a candidate special area of conservation, (d) a special area of conservation, (e) a candidate special protection area, or (f) a special protection area. They are commonly referred to in Ireland as candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

3 (NPWS, 2013a & 2013b). Information on the parameters contributing to achieving and/or maintaining favourable conservation condition were largely compiled from a range Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) downloaded from the NPWS website, but is also based on professional judgement. Generic threats and pressures to key environmental and ecological conditions required for QIs/SCIs can be found in Section 2.1 also.

## 2.1 European Sites

The analyses identified a single SAC - **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC** - that will fall within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP.

No SPAs were identified as being located within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP. Again, SPAs that lie downstream of the LAP boundary could be vulnerable to potential impacts through alterations to their underlying conditions which currently make them favourable sites for protected bird species (e.g. through water pollution etc.)

Figure 1. (overleaf) shows all European sites within 15km and beyond of the Draft LAP boundary. As stated, one SAC was identified as being within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP, and it was concluded that the Draft LAP had potential to cause significant impacts to this European site. Information regarding European site located within the zone of influence of the Draft LAP and regarded as being vulnerable to potential impacts are outlined in Table 2.1.1 below.

**Table 2.1.1. European Sites within the Draft LAP Boundary and Zone of Influence**

European Sites within the Draft LAP Boundary and Zone of Influence			
Site Code	Special Areas of Conservation	Site Code	Special Protection Areas
<b>Sites within Draft LAP Boundary</b>			
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC		

The Qualifying Interests of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC are presented in Table 2.1.2 below.

**Table 2.1.2 Qualifying Interests of European sites within the Draft LAP Boundary**

Qualifying Interests of European sites within the Draft LAP Boundary	
<b>Site Name:</b>	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC
<b>Site Code:</b>	001398
<b>Qualifying Interests:</b>	<p><b>Annex I Habitats:</b> Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</p> <p><b>Annex II Species:</b> Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014] Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016]</p>
<b>Source:</b> (NPWS, 2015) <i>Generic Conservation Objectives for Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [001398] (13/02/2015)</i>	

5 SACs and 3 SPAs were “scoped out” entirely as a result of an analysis against impact categories identified. These European sites are displayed in Table 2.1.3 below.

**Table 2.1.3 “Scoped out” European Sites**

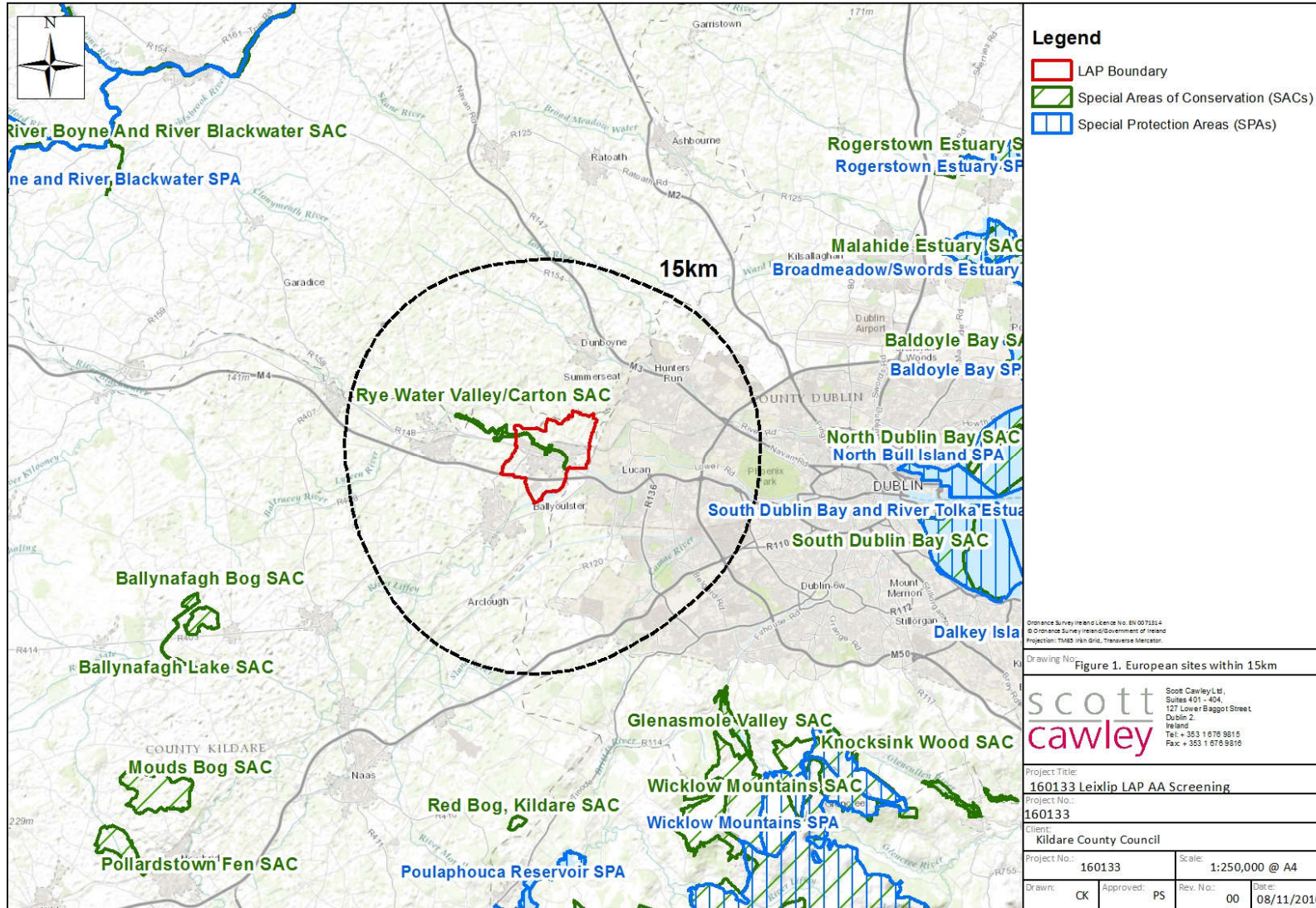
Site Code	Special Areas of Conservation	Site Code	Special Protection Areas
000391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC	004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA
001387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC	004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA
002331	Mouds Bog SAC	004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA

000396	Pollardstown Fen SAC		
002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC		

These European sites were regarded to not have any source-pathway-receptor relationships with the plan area and therefore any likelihood of significant impacts either in isolation or combination with elements of the Draft LAP or other plans and projects, could be ruled out.

A watching brief will be maintained during the remainder of the AA process and if necessary, these European sites will be scoped “back in”.

Figure 1. European Sites within 15km of the LAP boundary.



Sites of national importance were also considered throughout this scoping exercise. 3 pNHA sites are located within the Draft LAP boundary. These sites are presented in Table 2.1.4 below.

**Table 2.1.4 Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas within the Draft LAP**

<b>Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas in County Clare and within a 15km buffer of the County Boundary</b>	
<b>Site Code</b>	<b>proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)</b>
<b>Sites within Draft LAP Boundary</b>	
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton
002103	Royal Canal
000128	Liffey Valley
<b>Site Code</b>	<b>proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)</b>
<b>Sites outside of LAP boundary</b>	
	None

The ecological interest of these national sites are outlined in Table 2.1.5 below while a map of these sites is presented in Figure 2 (overleaf).

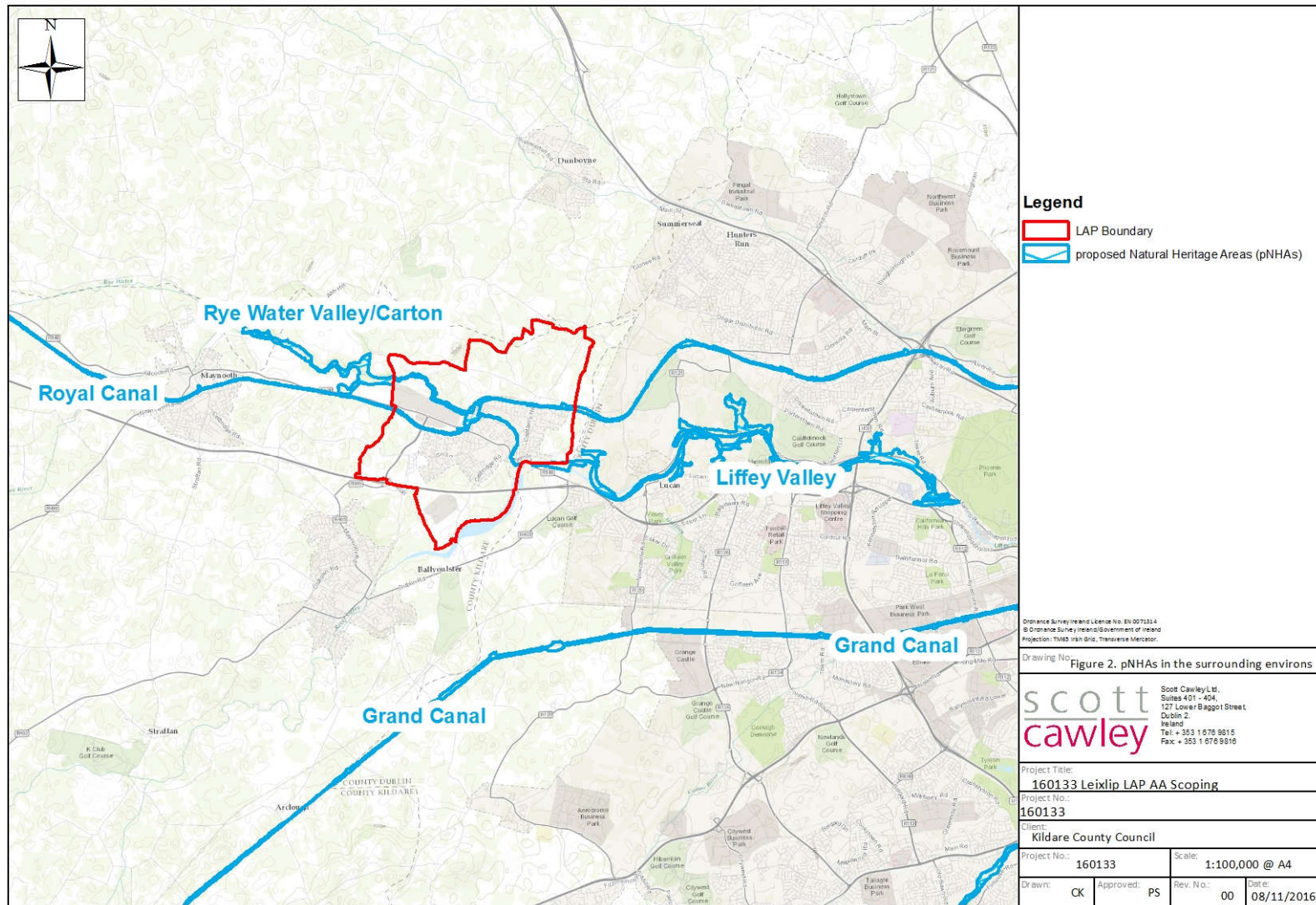
**Table 2.1.5 Ecological Interests of National sites within the Draft LAP Boundary**

<b>Ecological Interests of National sites within the LAP Boundary</b>	
<b>Site Name:</b>	<b>Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC</b>
<b>Site Code:</b>	001398
<b>Ecological Interest:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220], and Annex I habitat is found at Louisa Bridge.</li> <li>▪ The Annex II species Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014] and Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016] occur in the marshy habitats near Louisa Bridge.</li> <li>▪ A number of protected faunal species occur here: White Clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>), an Annex II species, has been found near Leixlip; Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) an Annex I species protected under the Birds Directive and Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) and Trout are also known to spawn here.</li> <li>▪ The rare and legally protected Hairy St. John's wort (<i>Hypericum hirsutum</i>) (Flora Protection Order 1987) is known to occur here.</li> <li>▪ Green Figwort (<i>Scrophularia umbrosa</i>), listed in the Red Data Book also occurs here.</li> </ul>
<b>Source:</b> (NPWS, 2009) <i>Site Synopsis for the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [002103] (11/10/2013)</i>	
<b>Site Name:</b>	<b>Royal Canal pNHA</b>
<b>Site Code:</b>	002103
<b>Ecological Interest:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ecological value of the canal lies more in the diversity of species its supports along its linear habitats than in the presence of rare species.</li> <li>▪ The rare and legally protected Opposite-leaved Pondweed (<i>Groenlandia densa</i>) (Flora Protection Order 1987) is present between Locks 4 and 5. <i>Tolypella introcata</i> (a stonewort listed in the Red data Book as being vulnerable) is also found here, the only site in Ireland where it is now found.</li> <li>▪ Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>), an Annex II species, is known to frequent the canal.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The canal provides a refuge for species threatened by modern farming methods in the surrounding agricultural land.</li> </ul>
<b>Source:</b> (NPWS, 2009) <i>Site Synopsis for The Royal Canal pNHA [002103] (09/12/2009)</i>	
<b>Site Name:</b>	<b>Liffey Valley pNHA</b>
<b>Site Code:</b>	000128
<b>Ecological Interest:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The site is important because of the diversity of the habitats within the site, ranging from aquatic to terrestrial.</li> <li>▪ The threatened Green Figwort (<i>Scrophularia umbrosa</i>), a species listed in the Irish Red Data Book has been identified here.</li> <li>▪ The rare and legally protected Hairy St. John's wort (<i>Hypericum hirsutum</i>) Flora (Protection) Order, 2015 has been recorded from the woodlands in this site.</li> <li>▪ The threatened Yellow Archangel (<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>), listed in the Irish Red Data Book, is also recorded from these woodlands.</li> <li>▪ The river is a Salmon river. Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) is a species protected under Anne II and IV of the Habitats Directive (1992).</li> </ul>
<b>Source:</b> (NPWS, 2009) <i>Site Synopsis for Liffey Valley pNHA [000128] (05/11/2009)</i>	



Figure 2. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within the Lap Boundary and surrounding environs.



## 2.2 Threats and Pressures

The threats to, and pressures on, the integrity of European sites, as obtained from relevant published NPWS materials are displayed below. Threats and pressure relating specifically to the European site located within the Draft LAP boundary, namely the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC, are presented below (Table 2.2.1) followed by generic threats and pressures specific to its Qualifying Interests. Those in bold would be regarded to be potential consequences of implementing a land-use plan.

Table 2.2.1 Threats and Pressures

Threats and Pressures	
Site Specific Threats/Pressures:	
Site Name:	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC
Site Code:	001398
Threats/Pressures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grazing</li> <li>▪ Fertilisation</li> <li>▪ <b>Continuous Urbanisation</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Modifying structures of inland watercourses</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Dispersed habitation</b></li> <li>▪ Sylviculture and forestry</li> <li>▪ <b>Roads and Motorways</b></li> <li>▪ Removal of hedges and copses or scrub</li> </ul>
Source: (NPWS, undated) NATURA 2000- Standard Data Form for the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [002103]	
Habitat Specific Threats/Pressures:	
Habitat Name:	Petrifying Springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> )* [7220]
Threats/Pressures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general</b></li> <li>▪ Abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing</li> <li>▪ Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities</li> <li>▪ Trampling, overuse</li> <li>▪ <b>Roads and Motorways</b></li> <li>▪ Intensive grazing</li> <li>▪ <b>Water abstractions from groundwater</b></li> <li>▪ Surface water abstractions for agriculture</li> <li>▪ Collapse of terrain, landslide</li> <li>▪ <b>Intensive management of public parks/ cleaning of beached</b></li> <li>▪ Missing or wrongly directed conservation measures</li> <li>▪ <b>Continuous urbanisation</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Outdoor sports and leisure activities</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees)</b></li> <li>▪ Speleology</li> <li>▪ <b>Invasive non-native species</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Disposal of household/ recreational facility waste</b></li> <li>▪ Other sport/leisure complexes</li> <li>▪ Groundwater pollution by leakages from waste disposal sites</li> </ul>
Source: (NPWS, 2013) <i>The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland: Habitat Assessments; Volume 2</i>	
Species Specific Threats/Pressures:	
Species Name:	Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail ( <i>Vertigo angustior</i> ) [1014]
Threats/Pressures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intensive Grazing</li> <li>▪ Abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing</li> <li>▪ Camping and caravans</li> <li>▪ <b>Modification of hydrographic functioning, general</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Paths, tracks, cycling tracks</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Car parks and parking areas</b></li> <li>▪ Stock feeding</li> <li>▪ Intensive sheep grazing</li> </ul>
<b>Source:</b> (NPWS, 2013) <i>The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland: Species Assessments; Volume 3</i>	
<b>Species Specific Threats/Pressures:</b>	
<b>Species Name:</b>	Desmoulin's Whorl Snail ( <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> ) [1016]
<b>Threats/Pressures:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing</li> <li>▪ Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh</li> <li>▪ Species composition change (succession)</li> <li>▪ Infilling of ditches, dykes, ponds, polls, marshes or pits</li> <li>▪ Dredging/ removal of limnic sediments</li> <li>▪ <b>Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general</b></li> </ul>
<b>Source:</b> (NPWS, 2013) <i>The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland: Species Assessments; Volume 3</i>	

Following on from the identification of the main threats and pressures to the integrity of the European Sites within the zone of influence, these threats and pressures were grouped into impact types. Impact types were determined by the nature of activities (relevant to the Draft LAP) which could potentially result in such impacts occurring, e.g. agricultural and rural activities may lead to overgrazing. A summary of the main pressures and threats with regard to impact types is presented in Table 2.2.2 below.

**Table 2.2.2 Summary of Pressures and Threats on QIs/SCIs in the zone of influence of the Draft LAP**

<b>Summary of Pressures and Threats on QIs/SCIs in the zone of influence of the Draft LAP</b>	
<b>Agricultural and Rural activities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fertilisation;</li> <li>• Grazing, (lack of/undergrazing /overgrazing);</li> <li>• Abandonment of pastoral systems;</li> <li>• Sylviculture and forestry</li> <li>• Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities</li> <li>• Surface water abstractions for agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of vegetation (hedges/copses/scrub);</li> <li>• Stock Feeding;</li> <li>• Infilling of ditches, dykes, ponds, pools, marshes or pits</li> <li>• Intensive sheep grazing</li> </ul>
<b>Economic and Infrastructure Development, Communications and Energy Network Development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Water abstraction from groundwater;</b></li> <li>• <b>Roads, motorways;</b></li> <li>• <b>Groundwater pollution by leakages from waste disposal sites</b></li> <li>• Shipping lanes</li> <li>• Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh</li> <li>• Dredging/ removal of limnic sediments</li> <li>• <b>Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Landfill, land reclamation and drying out;</b></li> <li>• <b>Disposal of household/ recreational facility waste</b></li> <li>• <b>Continuous Urbanisation</b></li> <li>• <b>Modifying structures of inland watercourses</b></li> <li>• <b>Dispersed habitation</b></li> </ul>
<b>Tourism, Recreation and Leisure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trampling/overuse;</b></li> <li>• <b>Other sport/leisure complexes</b></li> <li>• <b>Camping and caravans</b></li> <li>• <b>Speleology</b></li> <li>• <b>Paths, tracks, cycling tracks</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intensive management of public parks/ cleaning of beaches</b></li> <li>• <b>Artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees)</b></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parks and parking areas</li> <li>• Outdoor sports and leisure activities;</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collapse of terrain/landslide;</li> <li>• Modification of hydrographic functioning</li> <li>• Species composition change (succession)</li> <li>• Invasive non-native species</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing or wrongly directed conservation measures</li> <li>• Speleology</li> </ul>

### 3 LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DRAFT LAP

The Draft LAP has potential to result in significant impacts to the European site. It was also identified that there was potential for in-combination effects on European sites as a result of the implementation of the Draft LAP. It is recommended to the Council that this European site along with European sites located downstream (e.g. South Dublin Bay SAC) should be brought forward in the AA process and further analysis carried out during the preparation of the Draft LAP and NIR.

The likely significant effects as a result of implementation of the Draft LAP were identified as far as it could be predicted at the initial preparatory stage. The main potential impacts types predicted are listed below:

- **Hydrological/hydrogeological linkages to European sites and potential for impacts arising to and from surface and ground water quality.** Seven habitat types identified in the Leixlip area (see Appendix A) are dependent on having some degree of freshwater for their continued existence; e.g. Wet willow-alder-ash woodland, Wet grassland, Tall-herb swamp, Rich fen and flush, Reed and large sedge swamps, Calcareous springs and Drainage ditches. Activities that undermine this water supply could potentially have indirect adverse effects on European sites through habitat fragmentation, changes in species composition and habitat alterations. Furthermore, the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC is designated for the freshwater habitat "*Petrifying springs with tuffa formation (Cratoneurion)*", as well as two mollusc species. This habitat type is dependent on having an available supply of freshwater. Therefore, any activities that could directly or indirectly affect water quality or supply, such as developments located adjacent to or within the SAC boundary, could potentially affect this European site.
- **Direct habitat loss or loss of ecological networks supporting European sites.** For example, roads and other new development occurring on undeveloped lands within or in close proximity to the European site etc.
- **Direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species.** Even though most sites were not directly within European sites they could affect it via indirect disturbance, e.g. river walkways, noise disturbance due to construction.
- **Direct or indirect threats to European sites by invasive species.** Many freshwater and terrestrial European sites are vulnerable to the adverse effects of invasive species introductions.

#### 4 SCOPING OF OTHER ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE AA OF THE DRAFT LAP

Analysis of the following AA process of plans covering the wider and adjoining environs will be carried out and any particular issues raised in relation to threats and pressures will be noted:

- Leixlip and Collinstown Local Area Plan (2010-2016);
- Kilcock Local Area Plan (2015-2021);
- Newbridge Local Area Plan (2013-2019)
- Maynooth Local Area Plan (2013-2019);
- Draft Celbridge Local Area Plan (2017-2023); and;
- Kildare County Development Plan (2017-2023).

The following issues have been noted as being pertinent to the assessment of the overall LAP and featured as key issues in several of the above documents:

- Water Abstraction;
- Provision of adequate wastewater treatment with regards to any additional loading which may result with proposed development;
- Road Projects;
- Open Space Zoning, recreation and the potential for disturbance;
- In-combination effects of increased tourism, amenity/recreational activity and associated infrastructure inside and outside the plan area;
- Direct and indirect effects of developments adjacent to or within the SACs/SPAs which may impact underlying conditions controlling the quality of key habitats;
- Reduction in key species as a result of increase human presence, disturbance and lighting.

Any potential for **in-combination effects** should be assessed further during the preparation of the NIR.

Kildare County Council will be required to issue a determination as to whether they are of the opinion that there are likely significant effects of the implementation of the Draft LAP and in combination with other plans and projects. This determination will be published alongside the Draft LAP.



## References

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## **Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2017-2023**

**Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination in accordance with the EU's Habitats Directive Article 6(3) and the Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)**

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening determination has been made by Kildare County Council regarding the Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2017-2023.

The Leixlip Local Area Plan, through a series of Objectives and Policies, will set out the vision and direction for the future development of the Leixlip area up to 2023. Proposed land use plans and proposed variations must undergo a formal "test" or "screening" to ascertain whether they are likely to result in any significant adverse effects on specific sites designated for their nature conservation importance. These sites are those designated under the European Commission's Natura 2000 network of sites (hereafter "European sites"). These sites are designated on the basis of the presence of certain habitats and species that are deemed to be of international importance. The Irish Government and local planning authorities have a legal obligation to protect these sites. The EC Habitats and Birds Directives are the framework for the designation of these sites. The EC Habitats Directive requires the "screening" of plans and projects under Article 6(3). If the screening process results in a judgement that likely significant effects may occur or cannot be ruled out, then a more detailed 'appropriate assessment' (AA) is required.

### **Determination**

Having regard to the content of the Leixlip Local Area Plan 2017-2023 and consideration of the potential for significant impacts arising from its implementation which may have the potential to adversely affect any Natura 2000 site; with regard to their Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives, it was determined as part of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment that in the absence of appropriate mitigation measures the Plan has the potential to impact on the Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC (Site Code: 001398).

This decision has been informed by information and analysis prepared by Scott Cawley Ltd., Ecological Consultants as well as the Issues paper and other material pertinent to the European Sites held by the Council.

As part of the analysis of the LAP, all European sites (SACs and SPAs) within the zone of influence of the LAP boundary were identified. The analyses identified a single SAC - Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC - that will fall within the zone of influence of the LAP. No SPAs were identified as being located within the zone of influence of the LAP. 5 SACs and 3 SPAs were disregarded entirely as a result of analysis against impact categories identified. These European sites were regarded to not have any source-pathway-receptor relationships with the plan area and therefore any likelihood of significant impacts either in isolation or combination with elements of the LAP or other plans and projects, could be ruled out.



Threats and pressures to the integrity of the European sites and hence the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) of the European sites within the zone of influence of the LAP were identified. Following on from this, these threats and pressures were grouped into impact types. Impact types were determined by the nature of activities (relevant to the LAP) which could potentially result in such impacts occurring, e.g. agricultural and rural activities may lead to overgrazing.

The LAP was regarded to have potential to result in significant impacts to the European site - Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC - contained within its boundary. It was also identified that there was potential for in-combination effects on European sites as a result of the implementation of the LAP.

The AA Screening Report includes a recommendation to the Council that this European site should be brought forward in the AA process and further analysis carried out during the preparation of the Draft LAP and NIR. The Council has taken this recommendation into account.

The Council has concurred with the AA Screening Report on the likely significant effects as a result of implementation of the LAP which were identified as far as it could be predicted at the initial preparatory stage. The main potential impacts types predicted were:

- 1. Hydrological/hydrogeological linkages to European sites and potential for impacts arising to and from surface and ground water quality.** The Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC is designated for the freshwater habitat "*Petrifying springs with tuffa formation (Cratoneurion)*", as well as two mollusc species. This habitat type is dependent on having an available supply of freshwater of a specific chemical composition. Therefore, any activities that could directly or indirectly affect water quality or supply, such as developments located adjacent to or within the SAC boundary, could potentially affect this European site.
- 2. Direct habitat loss or loss of ecological networks supporting European sites.** For example, roads and other new development occurring on undeveloped lands within or in close proximity to the European site etc.
- 3. Direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species.** Even though most sites were not directly within European sites they could affect it via indirect disturbance, e.g. river walkways, noise disturbance due to construction.

In conclusion, in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Section 177U of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 (as amended), taking into account all matters relevant it has been determined that it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information available at this stage, that the LAP, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. Therefore, the Leixlip LAP will be subject to a full Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Report should be published alongside the draft LAP.

Signed



Date

6<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Signatory (Approved Officer):

A/Director of Services, Planning Department