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APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

2010 Celbridge Local Area Plan

Submitted to:

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REPORT



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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

 1.1 Terms of Reference 1

 1.2 Methods 1

 1.2.1 Stage 1: Screening 1

 1.3 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment 1

 1.3.1 Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions 2

 1.3.2 Stage 4: Assessment where adverse impacts remain 2

2.0 STAGE 1: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING OF CELBRIDGE LOCAL AREA PLAN 2010 3

 2.1 Brief description of project/plan 3

 2.2 Brief description of Natura 2000 site 3

 2.3 Assessment criteria 4

 2.3.1 Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site 4

 2.3.2 Cumulative Impacts 5

 2.3.3 Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of: 5

 2.3.4 Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: 6

 2.3.5 Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of: 7

 2.3.6 Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: 7

 2.3.7 Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is unknown 8

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS 9

 3.1 Natural Heritage objectives should be reworded to include all nocturnal species and to omit any lighting recommendations until a bat and mammal survey has been completed 9

 3.2 Clarification of the necessity for Appropriate Assessment and in what instances it is required 9

4.0 DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT 10

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NPWS Site Synopsis



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference

This report is an Appropriate Assessment Screening of the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2010, in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive state the following:

6(3). Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

6(4). If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

1.2 Methods

This report has been prepared with reference to the following documents:

- 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 (European Communities, 2002)
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EC

Appropriate Assessment is carried out in stages, as recommended by the Guidance Documents. There are four stages as follows:

1.2.1 Stage 1: Screening

This initial stage aims to identify the likely impacts of a project or plan on a Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The impacts are examined to establish whether these impacts are likely to be significant. Assessment of the significance of effects is carried out in consultation with the relevant nature agencies.

1.3 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

The aim of this stage is to identify the conservation objectives of the site and to assess whether or not the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans will result in adverse effects on the integrity of the site, as defined by the conservation objectives and status of the site. Stage 2 is carried out in consultation with the relevant nature agencies.

Where it cannot be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on the site, it is necessary to devise mitigation measures to avoid, where possible, any adverse effects.



1.3.1 Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions

This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project or plan that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site. If alternative solutions have been identified that will either avoid any adverse impacts or result in less severe impacts on the site, it will be necessary to assess their potential impact by recommencing the assessment at Stage One or Stage Two as appropriate. However, if it can be reasonably and objectively concluded that there is an absence of alternatives, it will be necessary to proceed to Stage Four of this assessment methodology.

1.3.2 Stage 4: Assessment where adverse impacts remain

For sites that host priority habitats and species, it is necessary to consider whether or not there are human health or safety considerations or environmental benefits flowing from the project or plan. If such considerations do exist, then it will be necessary to carry out the Stage Four assessments of compensatory measures. If no such considerations exist, then establish whether there are other imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) before carrying out the Stage Four assessments. Where IROPI exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the site will be necessary before the project or plan can proceed.



2.0 STAGE 1: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING OF CELBRIDGE LOCAL AREA PLAN 2010

2.1 Brief description of project/plan

The development strategy of Kildare County Council, as set out in the 2010 Celbridge Local Area Plan, is to implement all development in accordance with the stated objectives in order to facilitate land use in a manner that will promote proper planning and sustainability.

Specific goals of the plan, as translated into sectoral objectives and policies outlined in Part B of the plan, are;

- To protect and further develop the role of the town centre as the focal point for the economic, cultural and social activity;
- To ensure the adequate supply of serviced, zoned land will be made available to accommodate future population and economic expansion;
- To maximise the potential of the existing public transport infrastructure and make adequate the provision of safe and convenient circulation around the town, by foot, bicycle and car;
- To protect and enhance the unique architectural and archaeological heritage of the town; and
- To ensure that adequate recreational facilities are available to the residents of the town.

2.2 Brief description of Natura 2000 site

Rye Water Valley/Cartron Special Area of Conservation, (Site Code 002162), also designated as a Natural Heritage Area (Site Code: 001398) lies 2km north of Celbridge.

The proposed national designation of the Royal Canal (pNHA Site code: 002103) occurs within 2km north of Celbridge and Grand Canal (pNHA Site code: 002104) occurs within 2km southeast of Celbridge. The Liffey Valley (pNHA Site code: 000128) lies within 3km northeast of Celbridge.

Rye Water Valley/Cartron Special Area of Conservation, (Site Code 002162)

This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth. It extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey. The main importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and of a rare habitat, thermal, mineral, petrifying spring. The woods found on Carton Estate and their birdlife are of additional interest.

NPWS site synopsis for the above SAC is given in Appendix A. There are currently no site synopses available for pNHAs.



2.3 Assessment criteria

2.3.1 Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site

The River Liffey flows from Celbridge to Leixlip. The Rye Water (part of the Rye Water Valley/Carnton) continues through Leixlip northeast of Celbridge. Other watercourses in the area include the Royal Canal and Grand Canal, along with the Liffey Valley are also considered as wildlife corridors that may provide links to the Rye Water Valley/Carnton SAC, and species for which it is designated. Elements of the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2010 likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site and pNHA include the following:

7.5 Flooding FL1

'Buffer Zones shall be created between all watercourses and new development, including the River Liffey. The extent of these buffer zones shall be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist and following a Flood Risk Assessment. Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of any buffer zone areas.'

9.1 Amenity and Recreation

AR1: To develop the riverside in conjunction with all relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies. This development shall include;

- A linear park(s)
- The provision of a high quality well-lit cycling and pedestrian route. The route shall also be suitable for the requirements of disabled users.
- High Quality formal and informal seating arrangements.
- The planting of a mixture of semi mature and mature trees for the length of the linear park, both formally and informally.



2.3.2 Cumulative Impacts

No cumulative impact is anticipated on the SAC.

2.3.3 Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:

Size and scale	N/A
Land-take	SAC: None pNHA: None
Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site	7.5 <i>Flooding FL1</i> Any buffer zones along the River Liffey would be ca.2km from the SAC and pNHAs 9.1 <i>Amenity and Recreation AR1</i> Lighting along the River Liffey would be ca. 2km from the SAC and pNHAs.
Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)	None
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)	Release of sediments/pollutants into watercourses possible during construction activities and the possible impact on water quality caused by the removal of part of the riparian vegetation to install 'hard landscaping' such as pathways. This may impact aquatic species for which the SAC is designated.
Excavation requirements	None within the SAC or pNHAs
Transportation requirements	Unknown
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Unknown
Other	None



2.3.4 Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:

<i>Reduction of habitat area</i>	None
<i>Disturbance to key species</i>	Higher levels of human activity in the areas of public open space along the River Liffey may result in some disturbance to bird/mammal species such as bats that may use the River Liffey as a wildlife corridor connecting to the SAC and pNHAs. If these areas are lit; there is a possibility of disturbance to nocturnal fauna species, most notably bats.
<i>Habitat or species fragmentation</i>	Lighting may cause habitat fragmentation to some nocturnal species including bats, otters and some aquatic species for which the SAC is designated.
<i>Reduction in species density</i>	Reduction in species density is possible especially for bats and other nocturnal species, as a result of lighting.
<i>Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)</i>	Possible runoff into river during construction works of riverside hard landscaping and bridges.
<i>Climate change</i>	None likely



2.3.5 Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:

<p><i>Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site:</i></p>	<p>The construction of pathways, cycle paths and the provision of lighting along sections of the River Liffey may indirectly impact on certain species for which the SAC and pNHA are designated.</p> <p>Lighting in particular may interfere with the ability of animal species to pass freely throughout the area between the River Liffey, the SAC, the pNHAs and surrounding areas.</p>
<p><i>Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site</i></p>	<p>The site is listed for the following Annex II species on the Habitats Directive including Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Crayfish, Twaite Shad, Atlantic Salmon, and Otter; Annex I bird species listed on the E.U. Birds Directive including kingfisher, whooper swan, Bewick’s swan and peregrine falcon; and also supports the Annex I (E.U. Habitats Directive) habitat Floating River Vegetation.</p> <p>It is likely that bats are using the river at Leixlip as well as other fauna. Any disturbance due to lighting and human activities are likely to directly and adversely impact any mobile species of the SAC such as kingfisher and otter, thus interfering with relationships that define the structure of these sites.</p> <p>Indirect effects, such as silt runoff into the water channels, from the planned construction of ‘hard’ landscaping (including walkways) and the construction of bridges, may impact on aquatic species including fish, crustacean and invertebrate species listed above. Also, any loss of the riparian zone along the river may impact on water quality and aquatic species.</p>

2.3.6 Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

<p><i>Loss (Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat)</i></p>	<p>SAC: None</p> <p>pNHAs: None</p>
<p><i>Fragmentation</i></p>	<p>Some habitat fragmentation is likely as a result of potential construction of walkways through loss of riparian zones along the canal and river.</p>
<p><i>Disruption & disturbance</i></p>	<p>Some day-time levels of disturbance along the river due to human disturbance. If lit, there will be some permanent night-time effects also. Temporary disruption is likely during the construction phase of walkways and bridges (noise, vibration, dust/sediment release).</p>



Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)

Risk of pollution to the SAC and the pNHAs as a result of the construction of walkways etc. along the river and proposed bridge crossings.

2.3.7 Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is unknown

The Natural Heritage objectives outlined in the Celbridge LAP 2010 in Section 12.2 aim to ameliorate the likely impacts on the Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC and the pNHA in the vicinity of Celbridge.

Following initial screening and consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the recommendations in Section 3.0 overleaf were incorporated by Kildare County Council into the Natural Heritage Objectives of the 2010 Celbridge Local Area Plan. As a result of their incorporation, it is anticipated that no significant effects on the SAC will arise from elements of the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2010.



3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Natural Heritage objectives should be reworded to include all nocturnal species and to omit any lighting recommendations until a bat and mammal survey has been completed

- **To conserve and protect Riparian (beside rivers) Corridors:** New development will not be permitted within a minimum of 10m from either side of all watercourses measured from the top of the bank, apart from in exceptional circumstances, to provide:
 - Visual amenity of the river;
 - Public space and access;
 - Public walkway/cycle ways/lighting;
 - Spaces to allow for the conservation and enhancement of landscape features, such as tree coverage;
 - Spaces to conserve and enhance biodiversity capacity.
- In all instances a buffer of 2.5m of vegetation shall be retained along the river bank to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat. Redevelopment shall seek to create riparian buffer strips of at least 2.5m, along either side of all watercourses measured from the top of the bank. Riparian buffers have the greatest potential to control environmental damage, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitats.
- In the event of lighting being proposed along river corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment) including bat and otter survey shall be conducted by specialists. The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented. No lighting will be installed without prior consultation with NPWS and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into the impact of lighting on bats and other species and also to reflect advances in technology in the lighting industry.

3.2 Clarification of the necessity for Appropriate Assessment and in what instances it is required

Clarification of the requirement for Appropriate Assessment for any development that has the potential to impact on a Natura 2000 site is necessary in the Natural Heritage Objectives, regardless of whether the development occurs inside or outside the Natura 2000 site, is recommended.

- To ensure that any development proposal within the vicinity of or having an effect on a designated site, or adjacent to/within an SAC will provide sufficient detail illustrating how it will limit any possible impact upon the designated site and will include proposals for appropriate amelioration. Any proposed development which has the potential to impact on a Natura Site will be screened for Appropriate Assessment. In all such cases the developer shall consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Section of the DoEHLG.



4.0 DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment was carried out by:

Senior Ecologist – Anne Murray, Golder Associates Ireland

Sources of Data:

Existing information from NPWS

Level of assessment completed:

Desktop study and Screening report issued to National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS). Submission by Dr. Linda Patton, NPWS.

The results of the assessment can be accessed and viewed at the Planning Office, Kildare County Council, Aras Chill Dara, Naas, County Kildare and on www.kildarecoco.ie



Report Signature Page

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APPENDIX A

NPWS Site Synopsis



SITE: RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC

SITE CODE: 001398

This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth. It extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey.

The Rye Water in Carton Estate is dammed at intervals, creating a series of lakes. Reed Grass (*Glyceria maxima*) is frequent around the lakes, along with Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Starwort (*Callitriche* spp.). Along the remainder of the site the river has recently been dredged and much of the Reed fringe removed.

To the north-west of Carton Bridge a small clump of Willows (*Salix* spp.), with Dogwood (*Cornus* sp.) some Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) occurs. The ground flora found here includes Golden Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), Wavy Bitter-cress (*Cardamine flexuosa*) and Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*).

The woods on Carton Estate are mostly old demesne woods with both deciduous and coniferous species. Conifers, including some Yew (*Taxus baccata*) are dominant, with Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Ash and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) also occurring. The ground flora is dominated by Ivy (*Hedera helix*) with such species as Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Ivy Broomrape (*Orobanche hederæ*) also occurring.

Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), a species legally protected under the Flora Protection Order (1987), occurs in Carton Estate; there is an old record from the estate for the similarly protected, Hairy Violet (*Viola hirta*), but this has not been recorded from here in recent years. Another species listed in the Red Data Book, Green Figwort (*Scrophularia umbrosa*), occurs on the site in several locations by the Rye Water. The woods at Carton Demesne are the site of a rare Myxomycete fungus, *Diderma deplanatum*.

Within the woods, Blackcap, Woodcock and Long-eared Owl have been recorded. Little Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, Tufted Duck, Teal and Kingfisher, the latter a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, occur on and about the lake.

The marsh, mineral spring and seepage area found at Louisa Bridge supports a good diversity of plant species, including Stoneworts, Arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinea caerulea*), Sedges (*Carex* spp.), Common Butterwort (*Pin guicula vulgaris*), Marsh Lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*), Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). The mineral spring found at the site is of a type considered to be rare in Europe and is a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. The Red Data Book species Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*) is found growing on a wall at Louisa Bridge. The Rye Water is a spawning ground for Trout and Salmon, and the rare, White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) has been recorded at Leixlip. The latter two species are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The semi-aquatic snails *Vertigo angustior* and *V. moulinsiana* occur in marsh vegetation near Louisa Bridge; both are rare in Ireland and Europe and are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The scarce Dragonfly, *Orthetrum coerulescens*, has been recorded at Louisa Bridge.

The main importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and of a rare habitat, thermal, mineral, petrifying spring. The woods found on Carton Estate and their birdlife are of additional interest.

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