



## **Proposed Variation No.4**

### **(Landscape Character Assessment)**

## **Kildare County Development Plan 2023–2029 (as varied)**

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2026**





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This report has been prepared by  
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## 1. Introduction

Kildare County Council, as Planning Authority, hereby gives notice pursuant to Section 58(7) of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended), of Proposed Variation No. 4 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied).

### 1.1 Reason for Proposed Variation No. 4

This Proposed Variation has been prepared to update the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) (hereafter referred to as 'the Plan') by replacing the Landscape Character Assessment (2004) with the recently completed Landscape Character Assessment (2025) that was carried out in response to Action LR A1 of the Plan, which was to review and update the Landscape Character Assessment 2004 within two years of the adoption of the CDP, as follows:

**LR A1:** *Review and update the County Landscape Character Assessment, within two years of the adoption of this Plan, having regard to the European Landscape Convention Florence 2000, in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and to ensure consistency with the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment. All landscape character designations will be fully reviewed having regard to updated best practice guidance, LCAs of adjoining Local Authorities and other local relevant considerations, including clusters of biodiversity rich areas and the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.*

### 1.2 Content of Proposed Variation No. 4

Proposed Variation No. 4 comprises amendments to the written statement of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) as follows:

- Update Chapter 13 (Landscape, Recreation & Amenity) to replace the Landscape Character Assessment (2004) with the Landscape Character Assessment (2025). The changes include new landscape character types, landscape character areas, guidance principles for development, and updated policy and objectives where relevant.
- Update the Wind Energy Strategy (Appendix 2 of the CDP) to have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment (2025).
- Include Landscape Character Assessment (2025) as a new Appendix (Appendix 13) to the CDP.

The Proposed Variation is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report in accordance with the SEA Directive (DIR 2001/42/EC) and pursuant to Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2025. (S.I. 456/2025).

- An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (DIR 92/43/EEC).

The Proposed Variation should be read in conjunction with the above environmental reports.

### 1.3 How to read the Variation

The existing text of Volume 1: Written Statement and the Wind Energy Strategy at Appendix 2 is shown in normal font. Proposed deletions are indicated as ~~red text with strikethrough~~ and proposed insertions are presented in *green italics*.

The Proposed Variation is presented to follow the format and layout of the County Development Plan in the following order:

Chapter 13 Landscape, Recreation & Amenity

Appendix 2 Wind Energy Strategy

Appendix 13 Landscape Character Assessment

Each amendment is preceded by an explanatory table which includes the amendment number, the reason for the amendment and the Plan chapter/section/page number for the amendment. There are 12 no. amendments included in this Variation, number 1-12 inclusive.

## Volume 1: Chapter 13 Landscape, Recreation and Amenity

<b>Proposed Amendment No. 1</b> Update text in Section 13.1 relating to the Landscape Character Assessment (2025).		
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation and Amenity	13.1	440

Amend text in Section 13.1 as follows:

### 13.1 Introduction

Landscapes *are dynamic and constantly changing, are part of our cultural heritage and* embrace all that is visible when one looks across an area of land. As well as being an important part of people's lives, giving individuals a sense of identity and belonging, landscapes are the context in which all changes take place.

*Over time* ~~The~~ landscape of County Kildare *has been shaped and reshaped by both natural processes and human activity.*<sup>1</sup> It comprises a central plain bound to the east by the Kildare uplands, which lie at the foothills of the Wicklow and Dublin Mountains. The Curragh, the boglands of north-west Kildare and the fertile lowlands of the south all comprise part of the central plain. The plain lands are interrupted by two groups of isolated hills, the *Six Hills, including the* Chair of Kildare, and the Newtown Hills. The location of these hills within the central plain has a considerable impact on the landscape of Kildare. Inland waters comprise the River Liffey, River Barrow, River Slate, River Boyne, Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Rye Water River traverse the county, providing important landscape features.

The natural diversity of the landscape, coupled with human interaction in the form of introduced features such as hedgerows, woodlands, archaeological monuments, settlements and buildings, all serve to give Kildare its distinctive characteristic landscape. All developments which take place has the ability to impact on this landscape, positively and negatively. ~~Any new development or building has the ability to either enhance or detract from the environment.~~ It is essential therefore that the landscape is protected and managed in a sustainable and coherent manner.

*There are many factors shaping the landscape: the process of urbanisation, agricultural intensification and the expansion of renewable energy have precipitated landscape changes globally. These drivers of landscape change will have different intensities of relevance in the context of County Kildare. Appendix 13 of this Plan outlines the general drivers of change and examples of change to the Kildare landscape<sup>2</sup> and the landscape implications on land use.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> The evolution of County Kildare's landscapes until recent times is outlined in Chapter 2 of the Landscape Character Assessment (2025), which forms Appendix 13 to the Plan.

<sup>2</sup> Table 6-1 General Drivers of Change and Examples of Change to the Kildare Landscape.

<sup>3</sup> Table 6-2 Land Use and Landscape Implications adapted from the EPA's Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape (EPA, 2023).



<b>Proposed Amendment No. 2</b> Amend the text, tables and maps in Section 13.3 to reflect the updated Landscape Character Assessment (2025).		
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation & Amenity	13.3	442-443

Amend text in Section 13.3 as follows:

### **13.3 Landscape Character Assessment**

~~In 2004, a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the county was undertaken. The LCA focused on characterisation i.e. the discernment of the character of the landscape based on its land cover and landform, but also on its values, such as historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape. It concentrates on distinctive on the distinctiveness of different landscapes and on the sensitivity of that landscape to development. Map V1-13.1 outlines the indicative Landscape Character Areas of the county.~~

~~Landscape Character Areas are areas that generally share the same characteristics. Minor or very small distinctive features that arise from localised topographic circumstances are outcrops, rivers, bogs, fens which are mapped [see Map V1-13.1] as Subordinate Landscape Areas. Table 13.1 indicates the dominant sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area. It is important to note that within each of these areas there can be a wide variety of local conditions that can significantly increase or decrease sensitivity. Notwithstanding this, it is possible to identify a dominant sensitivity within each area — as highlighted in Table 13.1. This is determined by examining the presence/absence or dominance of sensitivity factors within each area by using landscape sensitivity. The resulting classification is then used to produce an evidence-based Landscape Sensitivity Map [see Map V1-13.2].~~

*Landscape Character Assessment is a process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. The process identifies and explains the combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinct from one another by mapping and describing Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). This approach recognises the importance of place and how people perceive their landscapes and has the potential to deepen our understanding of how the landscape is shaped and identify opportunities for further action (e.g., in the areas of forward planning, tourism and recreation, renewable energy, agri-environmental schemes, and enhancement of the landscape character).*

*The Landscape Character Assessment can inform planning policy, development management and guide decision-makers in assessing development proposals that will change the landscape. The character of a valued landscape, once identified, can be maintained and enhanced with proper guidance that is in keeping with national and regional landscape objectives. It is an aid to decision making, to describe what*

*the landscape is like today, how it evolved, and to identify possible trends for future change.*

*In 2025, in response to Action LR A1 of this Plan, a review of the County Landscape Character Assessment was carried out, in accordance with the provisions of the EPA's Reframe Landscape Character Assessment Toolkit (2022). The Landscape Character Assessment (2025) now forms Appendix 13 to the Plan.*

### **Landscape Character Types (LCTs)**

*Landscape character types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the county. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use. For example, River Corridors are a distinct landscape character type and is recognisable as such, whether they occur in County Kildare or other counties.*

*The Landscape Character Assessment identifies eight Landscape Character Types in the county, which are listed and summarised in Table 13.1 below and illustrated in Map V1-13.1. Chapter 3 of the Landscape Character Assessment (2025) provides a more detailed description of each Landscape Character Type (LCT).*

**Amend the text and title of Table 13.1 and insert in Section 13.3 as follows:**

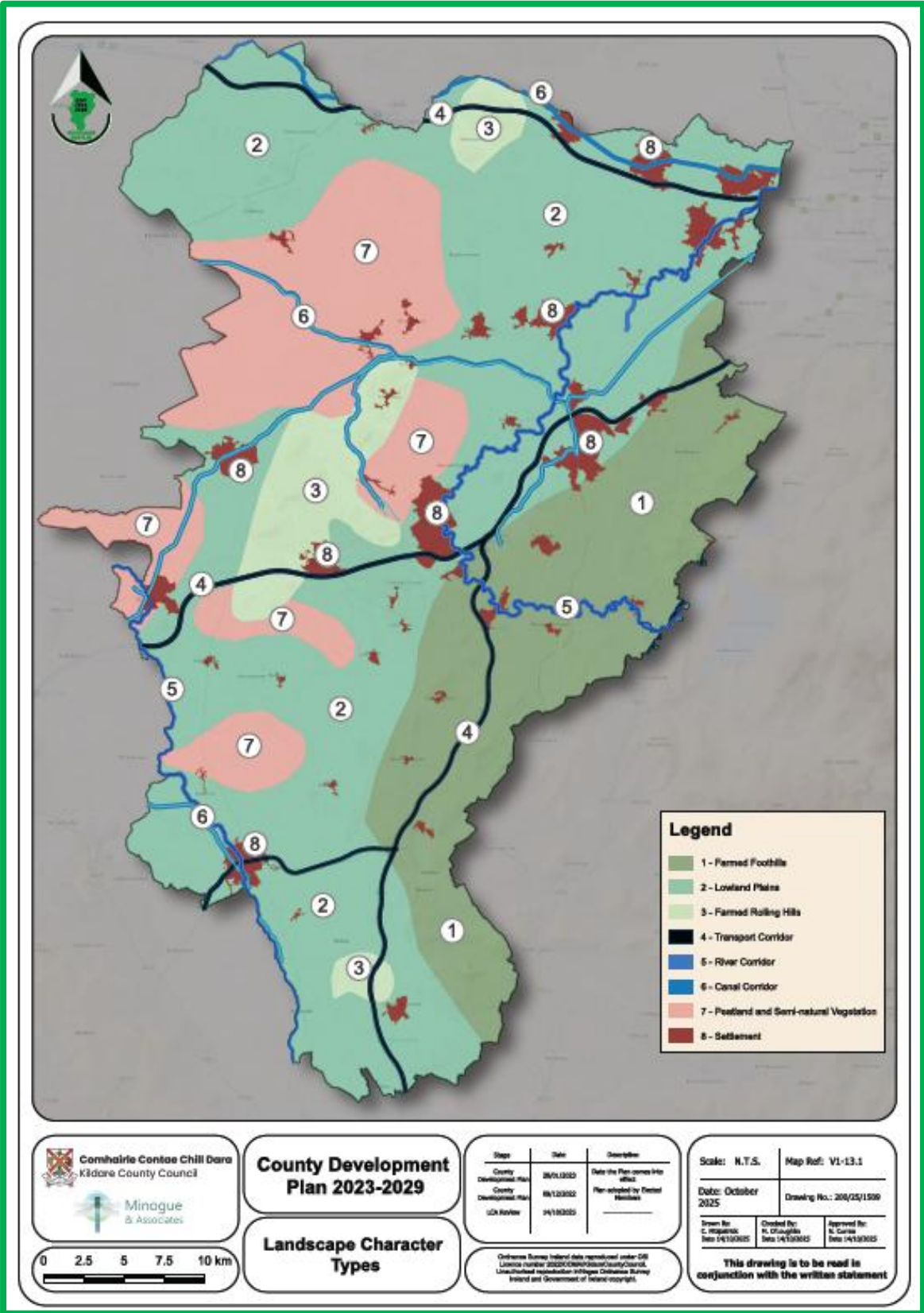
<b>LCT Name</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<i>LCT1 Farmed Foothills</i>	<i>This type of landscape comprises farmed landscape with interlocking field patterns, often visible due to undulating landform and a topography comprising elevation, ridgelines, plateaus and steep slopes. Elevations provide viewpoints and are visually significant from lower areas. Typically, settlement comprises villages and dispersed rural houses in a range of architectural styles.</i>
<i>LCT2 - Lowland plains</i>	<i>This type of landscape consists of a relatively simple landscape pattern with extensive plains of fertile land with elevation commonly around 100m, with expansive views. This LCT is frequently bisected by linear LCTs, namely, river, canal and transport corridors. Land use is both tillage and pasture with some mixed forest and coniferous plantations. Pasture is more prevalent in the north and tillage more prevalent in the south of the county. Many of County Kildare's fastest growing settlements are located in this LCT.</i>
<i>LCT3 - Farmed rolling hills.</i>	<i>Topography comprising elevation, ridgelines, plateaus and steep slopes. This LCT is highly visible and frequently forms a landmark in a generally flat landscape. Kildare County Council identifies hilltop views at the following locations within this LCT: Red Hill, Dunmurray Hill, Grange Hill, Boston Hill, Allen Hill and Crosspatrick Hill.</i>



<i>LCT4 - Transport Corridor</i>	<i>This LCT has a strong linear form and is associated with transport corridors. The M4 Motorway and the Dublin-Sligo rail line run east to west along the Kildare-Meath border and the M7 Motorway and the rail lines to the south and west traverse the county in an east-west and north-south direction.</i>
<i>LCT5 - River Corridor</i>	<i>This LCT consists of the River Liffey and River Barrow corridors and is generated as 200m wide (100m on each side of river line). Landscape patterns can vary in this landscape character type: a more natural valley character can be seen in parts along the River Barrow, which is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) whilst the River Liffey changes in character along its length with layers of historic modifications to harness the river for power and water. Close to the river corridor, historical landscape features, including designed landscapes, industrial heritage and stone arched bridges contribute to landscape character.</i>
<i>LCT6 - Canal corridor</i>	<i>There are 120km of artificial waterways in County Kildare comprising the Grand Canal, the Royal Canal and the Barrow Line, which were constructed to promote trade. No longer fulfilling this function, their linear structure and associated embankments, locks and bridges offer recreational and ecological benefits. The linear nature of the canals creates corridors and opportunities for habitat connectivity. The vista from most of the arched canal bridges allows for long linear views that are highly attractive in places.</i>
<i>LCT7 - Peatland and semi-natural vegetation</i>	<i>This LCT comprises areas with a high-water table and poor drainage. Soils are dominated by peat soils. Flat topography with few fences or hedges combines to create the potential for open panoramic views, which is characterised by the expansive cut over peatlands. While topography is uniform there is a mosaic of land use, with pasture and woodland along the significant areas of bog. Settlements are sparse with a few small villages or farmsteads on the periphery of the peatlands. Fringe vegetation around bogs and former industrial peatland areas often obscure views within the LCT.</i>
<i>LCT8 – Settlement</i>	<i>This LCT consists of urban settlements that include market towns and estate towns with many having an historic core reflected in Architectural Conservation Area designations. The edge of the settlement and town boundaries contain rapidly growing urban developments and zoned residential land. Chapter 3 of the Landscape Character Assessment provides a more detailed description of each LCT.</i>

Table 13.1 Landscape Character Types (LCTs)

Replace existing Map V1-13.1 with the following:



Map V1-13.1 – Landscape Character Types

## Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are distinct geographic areas that have a recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, such as landform, vegetation, land use, settlement, and cultural features that make them different from surrounding areas e.g. The Curragh Plains.

The Landscape Character Assessment divides the county into ten LCAs, which are listed and summarised in Table 13.2 below and illustrated in Map V1-13.2 below, and a full description of each Landscape Character Area (LCA) is provided in Chapter 3 of the Landscape Character Assessment.

Amend the text and title of Table 13.2 and insert in Section 13.3 as follows:

LCA Name	Summary
LCA1 - Carbury Boyne	This LCA extends along the western boundary of the county, adjoining County Offaly and County Meath. The River Blackwater and River Boyne form the southern and northern boundary respectively. There are major transport corridors traversing the LCA, close to the border with County Meath, such as the M4 Motorway. The landscape is strongly shaped by its agricultural activities, extensive pasturelands and some tillage farming interspersed with occasional mixed woodland and small forestry. The low-lying topography provides broad, open views across agricultural fields punctuated by Carbury Hill, which offers panoramic views across agricultural fields. While the M4 Motorway transport corridor has influenced settlement within this LCA, it has experienced less development than other northern parts of the county.
LCA2 - Slí Mhór Corridor	This character area forms a boundary with County Meath to its north, and with South Dublin and Fingal to the east. It is bounded to the north by the former N4 national primary route (Slí Mhór route), the M4 Motorway and the Royal Canal. The historical influence of the Slí Mhór combined with the Royal Canal, River Liffey and River Rye confer a distinctive character that consists of a necklace of some of the fastest growing settlements in County Kildare along the northern part of this LCA. Increased urbanisation is evidenced by the growth of Celbridge, Leixlip, Maynooth and Kilcock given their proximity to Dublin and transport connections. Outside the towns, the agricultural landscape is well maintained, with strong agricultural quality, predominantly under pasture with an intact hedgerow and treeline network enclosing fields.
LCA3 - River Liffey Valley and Plains	This extensive character area forms a boundary with South County Dublin to its east. The M7 Motorway forms its southeastern boundary. The River Liffey drains much of the LCA, and connects the towns of Clane, Straffan, and Sallins. The landscape is shaped by the River Liffey and its valley with mature vegetation along the river which is evidence of current and former designed demesne landscapes. Many of these former estates

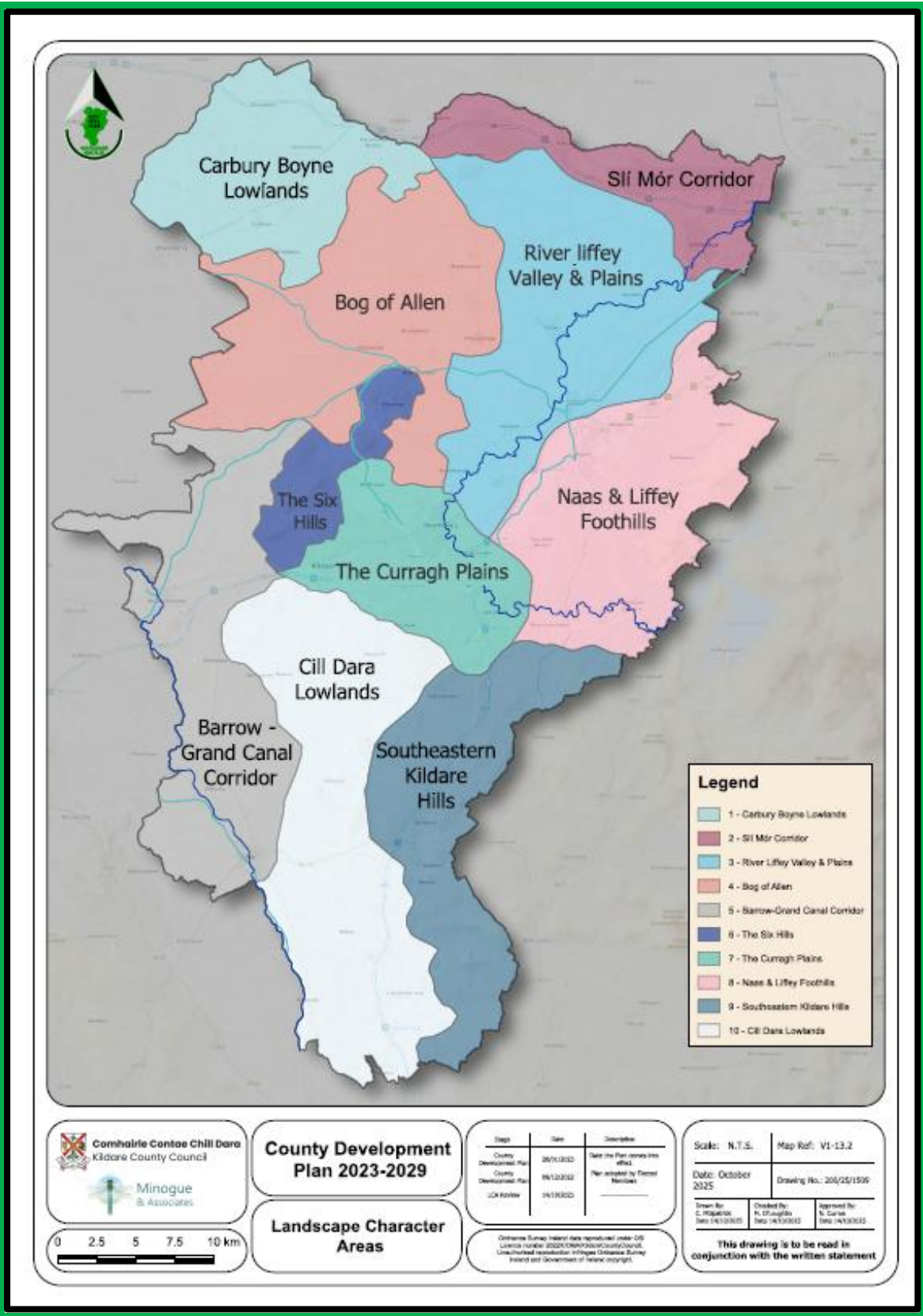
	<i>now serve a recreation use. The landscape is predominantly grass-based agriculture with well-maintained hedgerows and small areas of woodland.</i>
<i>LCA4 - Bog of Allen</i>	<i>This large character area encompasses part of the former Bog of Allen, the largest raised peat bog in Ireland. County Offaly forms the western boundary, and the Grand Canal crosses this LCA in an east-west direction. This area is characterised by flat topography, smooth terrain and a high-water table. Long straight roads traverse the peatlands, characterised by uneven surfaces and large wide ditches on either side. The roads generally offer extensive views, which are intermittently obscured by fringe vegetation, such as wetland scrub and hedgerows. Most of this LCA is categorised as 'Rural' and settlements are sparse, with a few small villages on the periphery of the peatlands and low population density with scattered settlements such as Prosperous.</i>
<i>LCA5 - Barrow Grand Canal Corridor</i>	<i>This character area is located along the western boundary of the county with County Laois where the tributaries of the Barrow River form a natural boundary. The strong influence of historical transportation routes, through Monasterevin and Athy is associated with the railway line and the Grand Canal-Barrow route and the cultural heritage associated with these routes is evident in related infrastructure such as bridges, stone walls and mills. Land is predominantly pasture to the north, with a higher percentage of tillage towards the south. While the area is predominantly rural in character, it contains the fast-growing settlements of Monasterevin and Athy. In places, the flat landscape restricts views, while on the canal, the views from the canal bridges allows for long linear views.</i>
<i>LCA6 - The Six Hills</i>	<i>This character area comprises the Kildare Hills or the Chair of Kildare, as the area is also known as. The area is bounded on the north by Robertstown and Bog of Allen character area wraps around the northern part of the LCA. Kildare Town and the Curragh Plains are located on the southern boundary. The topographic landscape of the Six Hills character area is a characteristic feature of the generally flat Kildare landscape. Land use is pasture with some mixed woodland and coniferous plantations. Despite proximity to fast growing urban settlements and the M7 Motorway transport corridor this LCA has a dispersed rural settlement pattern spread around the lower elevations of the hills.</i>
<i>LCA7 - Curragh Plains</i>	<i>The Curragh Plains character area comprises extensive flat open plains located in the centre of County Kildare and includes the settlements of Newbridge, Athgarvan, Kilcullen and Kildare Town. This landscape area is traversed by the former N7 national primary route, the railway line and the M7 Motorway transport route. The dominant land use is grassland, and the unenclosed landscape allows long uninterrupted vistas and views to higher ground to the east and beyond the county boundary. This LCA has strong connections to Saint Brigid with the town of Kildare</i>



	<i>and the cloak of Brigid in folklore defining the extent of the Curragh plains. Dún Ailinne is located at the southern fringe of the Curragh plains and is listed on the tentative list of Royal Sites for UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination.</i>
<i>LCA8 - Naas and Liffey Foothills</i>	<i>This character area comprises the town of Naas, extending eastwards to the County Wicklow border. The River Liffey, running between Ballymore Eustace and Kilcullen, forms its southern boundary and comprises extensive areas of riparian and demesne woodland. The M7 Motorway transport route forms its boundary with the Curragh Plains. The LCA is largely over 100m and rises to form part of the Wicklow Mountain complex at the eastern boundary. While much of the LCA has a rural feel the town of Naas and its surrounding rural area exhibit a strong urban influence.</i>
<i>LCA9 - South Eastern Kildare Hills</i>	<i>This long character area extends along the eastern edge of the county sharing an extensive border with County Wicklow, the northern boundary is provided by Ballymore Eustace, the River Liffey and Kilcullen and extends south as far as the County Carlow border. The M8 Motorway transport route traverses the lower lands at the western part of the LCA. In comparison with much of the county, topography is almost entirely above 100m creating a hilly character to this area. Open sweeping views from elevated lands are a feature providing expansive views west over the adjoining Cill Dara Lowlands LCA, south into County Carlow and east to County Wicklow. The area is primarily an agricultural landscape with characteristics including field patterns, hedgerows and dispersed settlements an integral part of the landscape.</i>
<i>LCA10 - Cill Dara Lowlands</i>	<i>This large and long character area lies south of the Curragh Plains and is bordered by the South Eastern Kildare Hills LCA to the east. County Laois shares its southern boundary, and the Barrow and Canal corridor frames the northwest of the LCA. Castledermot and Nurney are the main settlements. The LCA comprises tillage and grass-based agriculture with coniferous planting on former peatlands. The topography combined with big, open fields create a large, expansive character for much of the area, and broad, open sky views are a feature through much of this LCA.</i>

Table 13.2 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

Replace the existing Map V1-13.2 with the following:



Map V1-13.2 - Landscape Character Areas



<b>Proposed Amendment No. 3</b> Amend the text and maps and tables in Section 13.3.1 relating to Landscape Character Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity.		
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation and Amenity	13.3.1	444-446

Amend the title of Section 13.3.1 as follows:

13.3.1 Landscape Sensitivity *and Landscape Capacity*

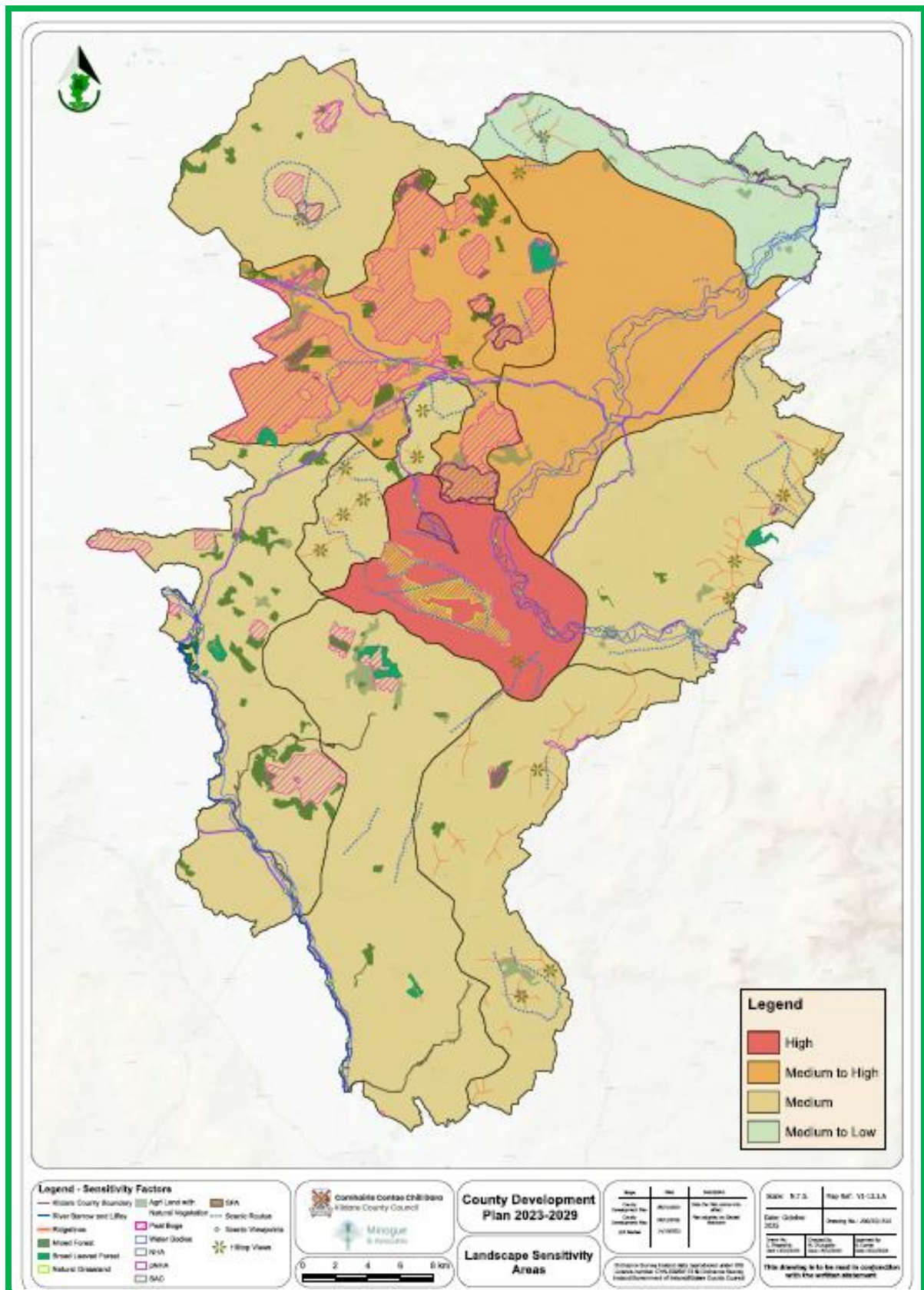
Amend the text of Section 13.3.1 and include maps as follows:

**Landscape Character Sensitivity**

*Landscape character sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity of the landscape irrespective of the type of change being considered. Assessment of sensitivity takes account of the overall landscape character, quality and condition of the landscape and considers its potential ability to change without losing its intrinsic character. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria that consider topography, landscape pattern, historical landscape, relationships to existing settlements and presence of natural habitats.*

*The overall landscape character sensitivity for each LCA is illustrated in Map V1-13.2A LCA Sensitivity (below), assigned from low to high sensitivity. This in turn, informs the consideration of landscape character capacity.*

Amend Section 13.3.1 to include a new Map V1-13.2A as follows:



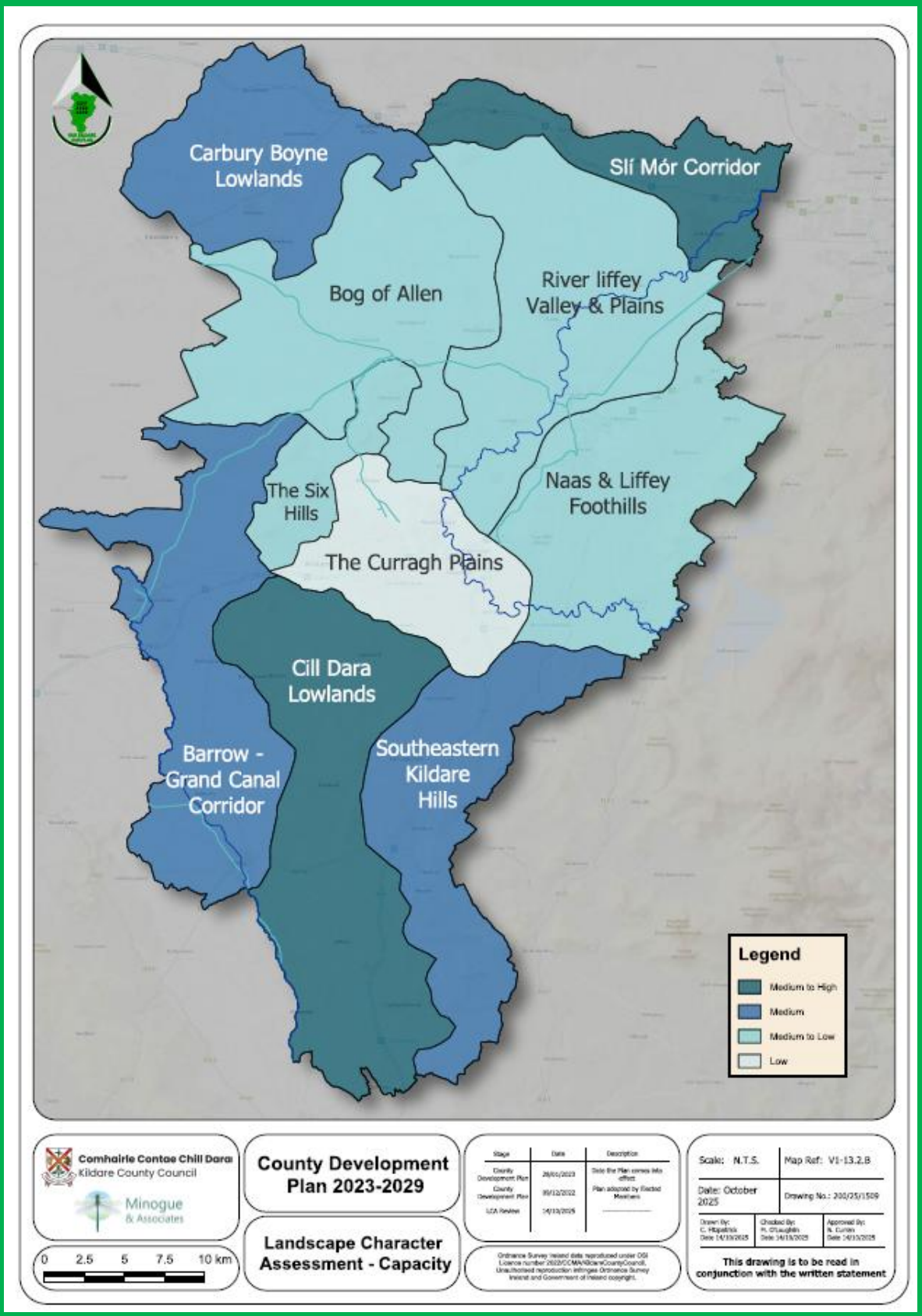
Map V1-13.2A Landscape Sensitivity Areas

### **Landscape Capacity**

*Landscape capacity refers to the extent a landscape can absorb change without significantly altering its character or type. It is essentially a measure of how much a landscape can accommodate new development or activities while still retaining its unique identity. Thus, a high sensitivity landscape would have a low capacity, but the level of capacity will vary according to the type of development concerned. An evaluation of capacity derives from a combination of landscape sensitivity, visual sensitivity and landscape value. At project level, relevant site assessments and reference to the Landscape Character Assessment (2025) should inform siting, design and mitigation. Landscape capacity does not indicate maximum or minimum standards or thresholds for development types. These must be guided by site appraisal, and compliance with land use zoning and relevant policies and objectives within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied). Capacity will be determined on a case-by-case basis because it will vary according to the type and form of development, its location in relation to the landscape character area in question, and its visibility from it. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate change without adversely affecting landscape quality is illustrated in Map V1-13.2B below.*

*A Detailed Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment of each LCA and LCT is included at Annex C of the Landscape Character Assessment (2025), which forms Appendix 13 of the Plan.*

Amend Section 13.3.1 to include a new Map V1-13.2B as follows:



Map V1-13.2B Landscape Character Assessment - Capacity



<b>Proposed Amendment No. 4</b> Amend the text and tables in Section 13.3.1.		
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation and Amenity	Table 13.3	444-446

Amend the text and title of Table 13.3 and insert in Section 13.3.1 as follows:

### **Landscape Character Assessment Sensitivity and Key Landscape Management Principles**

*The key landscape management principles for each Landscape Character Area (LCA) are identified in Table 13.3 below. It should be noted that all developments are unique and at micro/local level, landscapes vary in terms of their ability to absorb development, and each site should be assessed on its individual merits.*

**Table 13.3** - Specific Landscape Character Area Guidance Principles

LCA	Specific Landscape Character Area (LCA) Guidance Principles
<b>Carbury Boyne</b>	<p><i>This small but diverse LCA contains significant historical and ecological landscapes. Enhancing and recognising these attributes whilst supporting the rural, and often tranquil character of this LCA is important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Applicants should demonstrate how new development will provide ecological linkages within the LCA, and integrate new developments via tree planting into the wider landscape</i></li> <li><i>Give recognition to the demesnes associated with country houses as important contributors to the historic landscape character and ecology of the area. Support the landscape of demesne parkland through continued replacement tree planting and woodland management</i></li> <li><i>Support community groups in local landscape initiatives and landscape scale proposals to improve water quality in the LCA.</i></li> <li><i>This LCA functions as a rural and largely tranquil landscape in contrast with the LCAs to the east and parts of the M4 Motorway to the northeast. Retaining separation distances to support the LCA's strong rural, agricultural character is important.</i></li> <li><i>Potential linkages via former peatlands and the Royal Canal offer potential recreational uses and should also seek co-benefits in terms of improving and enhancing ecological linkages and landscape quality.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Slí Mhór Corridor</b>	<p><i>The communications character of this LCA provides a necklace of settlements and historical transport routes. Maintaining the distinctive character of the rural landscape between the towns is important. Shared and co-ordinated landscape responses with County Meath particularly around the waterbodies is recommended.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Integrate any new development into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting. This is particularly important for development at the edge or boundaries of the existing settlements of Leixlip, Maynooth, Celbridge and Kilcock that form the edge between the built settlement, and the wider rural landscapes present in the LCA.</i></li> <li><i>A presumption against hedgerow removal particularly those identified in 1st and Last Edition Ordnance Survey maps<sup>4</sup> should apply. Older trees and hedgerows are of significant cultural and environmental value and merit protection and appropriate management. Applicants should demonstrate how these features will be managed over time particularly in larger development proposals in the above towns.</i></li> <li><i>The main settlements of Celbridge, Leixlip, Maynooth and Kilcock include significant built heritage and vernacular features including stone walls, cut- stone bridges and estate avenues. New development should demonstrate the use of vernacular materials and styles to extend and advance the townscape character of these settlements.</i></li> </ul>
<b>River Liffey Valley and Plains</b>	<p><i>Retaining the strong, largely intact, rural character of this LCA is important in order to contain urban expansion and pressures.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Integrate any new development into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting, this is particularly important for development at the edge or boundaries of the existing settlements, and the wider rural landscapes present in the LCA.</i></li> <li><i>Support the recommendations contained in the Liffey Valley Park Strategy (OPW, 2006) and any superseding strategies.</i></li> <li><i>All development proposals along or adjacent to the River Liffey and Grand Canal shall be accompanied by a detailed landscaping plan, prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect. The landscape plan shall address the varying topography of the site and shall have regard to the ecological designations, protected species and built heritage where present. The plan shall also include details of hard and soft landscaping, proposed species and sensitive lighting. Where new canal crossings or interventions (footbridges/cycle bridges) are proposed, they shall be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitats associated with the River Liffey and Grand Canal Corridor</i></li> </ul>
<b>Bog of Allen</b>	<p><i>This LCA includes important areas of bog that are of great historical, cultural and ecological importance. Recognising and retaining these values whilst supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, including Just Transition initiatives is key to retaining the character of this LCA.</i></p>

<sup>4</sup> First and Last Edition Ordnance Survey Maps are available to view at: [GeoHive Map Viewer](#)

LCA	Specific Landscape Character Area (LCA) Guidance Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dominant open character and large skies are important features of this LCA; new development proposals should be sensitivity sited and designed to reflect and enhance the local character. Large bulky developments would require a landscape and tree plan to offer screening of large-scale buildings.</li> <li>• Integrate any new development into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting.</li> <li>• The establishment of bog woodland at the fringes of bogs offers a potential link to wider ecological network and similar species should be promoted in nearby developments (i.e., Downy Birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>): Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), Willow (<i>Salix</i> species) and Scots Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>). Shrub species may include ling heather and bilberry depending on hydrological conditions.</li> <li>• The industrial heritage associated with peat extraction such as industrial buildings and narrow-gauge railways are important cultural and landscape features, restoration and awareness about this industry should be supported and enhanced, reflecting the strong community associated with the peatlands.</li> <li>• Support community groups in local landscape initiatives and landscape scale proposals to improve water quality and landscape scale restoration in the LCA.</li> <li>• Support actions including in the Just Transition programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Barrow-Grand Canal Corridor</b>	<p>This LCA includes the River Barrow and Grand Canal Barrow line. Water bodies, riparian vegetation, cut-stone canal and river bridges, plus historical buildings associated with the canal all confer local character.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All development proposals along or adjacent to the River Barrow and Grand Canal shall be accompanied by a detailed landscaping plan, prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect. The landscape plan shall address the varying topography of the site and shall have regard to the ecological designations, protected species and built heritage where present.</li> <li>• The plan shall also include details of hard and soft landscaping, proposed species and sensitive lighting. Where new canal crossings or interventions (i.e. footbridges/cycle bridges) are proposed, they shall be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitats associated with the River Barrow and Grand Canal Corridor</li> <li>• Integrate any new development into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting. This is particularly important for development at the edge or boundaries of the existing settlements of Athy, Monasterevin, and Rathangan that form the edge between the built settlement, and the wider rural landscapes present in the LCA. This LCA has a relatively strong wooded character and the above supports enhancement of same.</li> <li>• A presumption against hedgerow removal particularly those identified in 1st and Last Edition Ordnance Survey maps should apply. Older trees and hedgerows are of significant cultural and environmental value and merit protection and appropriate management. Applicants should demonstrate how these features will be managed over time particularly in larger development proposals.</li> <li>• The main settlements of Monasterevin, Rathangan and Athy include significant built heritage, support for reuse/ renovation of derelict buildings should be prioritised.</li> <li>• New development should demonstrate the use of vernacular materials and styles to extend and support the townscapes character of these settlements.</li> </ul>
<b>The Six Hills</b>	<p>This LCA forms an important backdrop to the surrounding plains particularly for Kildare Town and western Newbridge. The views are also important from the western LCAs of Carbury Boyne Lowlands and around Rathangan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network of field boundaries on the lower lands between the six hills are important and link into some of the hills that are afforested.</li> <li>• The six hills support a variety of different land use activities, notably mineral extraction around the Hill of Allen, telecoms and afforestation and the prominent Alymer's folly on the top of the Hill of Allen.</li> <li>• Retaining the separation and distinctive character between this LCA with its landform and historical uses and the urban settlement of Kildare Town is particularly important.</li> <li>• Applicants should demonstrate how new development will provide ecological linkages within the LCA.</li> <li>• A presumption against hedgerow removal particularly those identified in 1st and Last Edition Ordnance Survey maps should apply. Older trees and hedgerows are of significant cultural and environmental value and merit protection and appropriate management. Applicants should demonstrate how these features will be managed over time particularly in larger development proposals.</li> </ul>



LCA	Specific Landscape Character Area (LCA) Guidance Principles
<b>The Curragh Plains</b>	<p><i>The Curragh Plains LCA has a significant cultural and ecological landscape that includes Dún Ailinne. Dún Ailinne is one of a collection of six locations known as the “Royal Sites” which are currently being assessed for consideration for inclusion addition to on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Tentative List. The Tentative List is an inventory of those sites which a country considers having potential Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and intends to nominate for inscription onto the World Heritage List. Therefore, Policy AH P4 and Objectives AH O16, AH O17 and AH O18 of Section 11.12 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) will apply when assessing proposals for development in order to protect the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the Dún Ailinne site.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• The Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan 2024<sup>5</sup> prepared by the Department of Defence in conjunction with Kildare County Council provide key Conservation Policies and Actions to guide the landscape management of the lands included within the Plan.</i></li><li><i>• The Curragh Plains are open and unwooded and tree planting is not appropriate on these lands. See also policy proposals in the Conservation Management Plan. P.6.6 - Disallow tree planting and investigate the possibility of removing certain existing plantations.</i></li><li><i>• Integrate any new development at Kildare Town, Kilcullen and Newbridge into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting. This is particularly important for development at the edge or boundaries of the existing settlement area of these towns and smaller settlements such as Athgarvan and Milltown that form the edge between the built settlement and the wider rural landscapes present in the LCA.</i></li><li><i>• New development should demonstrate the use of vernacular materials and styles to extend and support the townscapes character of these towns and villages above.</i></li><li><i>• A presumption against hedgerow removal particularly those identified in 1st and Last Edition Ordnance Survey maps should apply. Older trees and hedgerows are of significant cultural and environmental value and merit protection and appropriate management. Applicants should demonstrate how these features will be managed over time particularly in larger development proposals.</i></li><li><i>• Maintain the riparian corridors associated with the River Liffey and its tributaries. Support local initiatives to improve water quality and habitat quality.</i></li></ul>
<b>Naas and Liffey Foothills</b>	<p><i>This LCA includes the River Liffey, the Grand Canal Corbally Branch and a mix of habitats including woodland, bog and waterbodies. Both the River Liffey and the foothills to the larger adjacent Wicklow Mountains are important features and frame the lower lands in this LCA and to the north and west across the Curragh Plains and Cill Dara lowlands.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• A presumption against hedgerow removal particularly those identified in 1st and Last Edition Ordnance Survey maps should apply. Older trees and hedgerows are of significant cultural and environmental value and merit protection and appropriate management. Applicants should demonstrate how these features will be managed over time particularly in larger development proposals.</i></li><li><i>• All large development proposals along or adjacent to the River Liffey and Grand Canal shall be accompanied by a detailed landscaping plan, prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect. The landscape plan shall address the varying topography of the site and shall have regard to the ecological designations, protected species and built heritage where present.</i></li><li><i>• The plan shall also include details of hard and soft landscaping, proposed species and sensitive lighting. Where new canal crossings or upgrades (i.e. footbridges/cycle bridges) are proposed, they shall be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitats associated with the River Liffey and Grand Canal Corbally Branch.</i></li><li><i>• Integrate any new development into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting, this is particularly important for development at the edge or boundaries of the existing settlement of Naas. Once established this will provide buffers from noise and light impacts associated with the M7 Motorway along the northern boundary of this LCA.</i></li><li><i>• Support the ongoing diversity and mosaic of habitats and the variety of field sizes within this LCA.</i></li><li><i>• The foothills form a significant backdrop and add visual interest at county scale; large scale proposals should demonstrate sensitive siting and design that enhances local landscape character, uses natural screening via siting with the landform and avails of planting of native species.</i></li><li><i>• Support community groups in local landscape initiatives and landscape scale proposals to improve water quality and landscape scale restoration in the LCA.</i></li></ul>

<sup>5</sup> Available at: [Curragh Plains - Conservation Management Plan - December 2024 - Kildare County Council](#)

LCA	Specific Landscape Character Area (LCA) Guidance Principles
<b>South Eastern Kildare Hills</b>	<p><i>This LCA extends along the Wicklow border and provides important ridgelines and hill and mountain views that provide visual and landscape interest from the neighbouring Naas and Liffey Foothills, Cill Dara lowlands and Curragh Plains LCAs. Long views into Wicklow and west across the county, are afforded from these hills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• A presumption against hedgerow removal particularly those identified in 1st and Last Edition Ordnance Survey maps should apply. Older trees and hedgerows are of significant cultural and environmental value and merit protection and appropriate management. Applicants should demonstrate how these features will be managed over time particularly in larger development proposals.</i></li> <li><i>• Integrate any new development into the landscape setting through the appropriate use of native tree and hedge planting, this is particularly important for development at the edge or boundaries of the existing settlements such as Ballitore.</i></li> <li><i>• Large scale proposals should demonstrate sensitive siting and design that enhances local landscape character, uses natural screening via siting within the landform and avails of planting of native species.</i></li> <li><i>• Support for ongoing diversity and mosaic of habitats and the variety of field sizes within this LCA.</i></li> <li><i>• Support community groups in local landscape initiatives and landscape scale proposals to improve water quality and landscape scale restoration in the LCA.</i></li> <li><i>• The historical and landscape significance of the River Greese and valley should be recognised.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Cill Dara Lowlands</b>	<p><i>This LCA includes important tillage areas combined with raised bog habitats. Recognising and retaining the mosaic of land uses is important to keep the character of this LCA.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The largely open character and large skies confer an expansive character to much of this LCA. New development proposals should be sensitively sited and designed to reflect and enhance the local character. Large bulky developments would require a landscape and tree plan to offer screening of large-scale buildings.</i></li> <li><i>• The establishment of bog woodland at the fringes of bogs offers a potential link to wider ecological network and similar species should be promoted in nearby developments (i.e. Downy Birch (Betula pubescens): Silver Birch (Betula pendula), Willow (Salix species) and Scots Pine (Pinus sylvestris). Shrub species may include ling heather and bilberry depending on hydrological conditions.</i></li> <li><i>• Farm machinery requires larger access gates and field sizes; consideration to provide wider field buffers and extend existing hedgerows should be supported.</i></li> <li><i>• Where cut stone walls are a feature associated with country houses and small villages such as Kilkea these features should be retained, and new developments reflect stone type and construction.</i></li> <li><i>• Support community groups in local landscape initiatives and landscape scale proposals to improve water quality and landscape scale restoration in the LCA.</i></li> </ul>

**Proposed Amendment No. 5**

Amend the text and tables in Section 13.3.2 relating to Impact of Development on Landscape and amend existing objectives to reflect the Landscape Character Assessment (2025).

Chapter	Section(s)	Page(s)
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation and Amenity	13.3.2	447-451

Amend the text of Section 13.3.2 and Table 13.4 as follows:

**Section 13.3.2 Impact of Development on Landscape**

In order to determine the likely perceived impact of a particular development on the landscape, the potential impact of the development must be viewed having regard to the sensitivity of the area. Table 13.4 below provides guidance on the likely compatibility between a range of land-use classes and the principal landscape areas of the county classified by sensitivity. ~~Table 13.4 identifies the likely compatibility between a range of land-uses and proximity of less than 300m to the principal Landscape Sensitivity Factors.~~ It should be noted that all developments are unique and at micro/local level, landscapes vary in terms of their ability to absorb development, and each site should be assessed on its individual merits.

Compatibility Key											
	Most	High	Medium	Low	Least						
LCA's	Sensitivity	Agriculture	Forestry	Rural housing	Urban expansion	Industrial projects	Tourism projects	Major powerlines	Quarrying	Wind energy	Solar
LCA 1 Carbury Boyne Lowlands	Medium										
LCA 2 Slí Mhór Corridor	Medium to low										
LCA 3 River Liffey Valley and Plains	Medium to high										
LCA 4: Bog of Allen	Medium to high										

Proposed Variation No. 4 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied)

LCA 5 Barrow Grand Canal Corridor	Medium										
LCA 6 The Six Hills	Medium										
LCA 7 Curragh Plains	High										
LCA 8 Naas and Liffey Foothills	Medium										
LCA 9 South Eastern Kildare Hills	Medium										
LCA 10 Cill Dara Lowlands	Medium										

Table 13.4 – Landscape Character Assessment Sensitivity and Land Use.

Amend text of existing objectives in Section 13.3.2 as follows:

## Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

LR 02	<p><del>Require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany proposals that are likely to significantly affect:</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• Landscape Sensitivity Factors;</del></li> <li><del>• A Class 4 or 5 Sensitivity Landscape (i.e. within 500m of the boundary);</del></li> <li><del>• A route or view identified in Map V1-13.3 (i.e. within 500m of the site boundary).</del></li> <li><del>• All Wind Farm development applications irrespective of location, shall be required to be accompanied by a detailed Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment including a series of photo-montages at locations to be agreed with the Planning Authority, including from scenic routes and views identified in Chapter 13.</del></li> </ul> <p><i>Require a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany significant development proposals in areas of High landscape character sensitivity. A LVIA should also accompany applications for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>– significant development proposals in other parts of the county, on a case-by-case basis (e.g., housing development, wind turbine and solar array developments, extractive industry, telecommunications infrastructure, afforestation and replanting of commercial forestry proposals); and</i></li> <li><i>– smaller scale developments taking account of the landscape sensitivity of an area and/or concerns regarding potential negative landscape or visual impacts.</i></li> </ul>
LR 06	<p><del>Investigate the feasibility of preparing a Landscape Conservation Area Assessment within the county to identify any area(s) or place(s) within the county as a Landscape Conservation Area, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).</del></p> <p><i>Kildare County Council will have regard to the landscape character of adjoining counties, and any relevant regional strategies, when considering projects which may have a material impact on the landscape character of the adjoining counties.</i></p>
LR 07	<p>Restrict the quarrying of sensitive sites within the Landscape Character Areas <del>in line with Table 13.3 and Table 13.4 above</del> <i>in line with the LCA Sensitivity Map V1-13.2A and Table 13.4 above</i> <del>and to protect and conserve the ecological, archaeological, biodiversity and</del></p>



	<del>visual amenity surrounding quarry sites.</del> <i>in identifying sites for restriction.</i>
<b>LR 011</b>	Support collaboration between Kildare County Council, the Midlands Regional Transition Team and all other relevant stakeholders and the development of partnership approaches to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporates the management, rehabilitation and restoration/re-wetting of significant tracts of peatlands in conjunction with appropriate development after uses, in accordance with the <i>guidance and recommendations for peatlands contained in Appendix 13 Landscape Character Assessment (2025) for the county.</i>
<b>LR 012</b>	Recognise that boglands, including cutaway and cut-over bogs, are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons, particularly for climate mitigation and adaptation. <i>Have regard to relevant peatland landscape character areas (LCAs) and sensitivity classes in evaluating all project proposals.</i> Development proposals for boglands that reduce biodiversity and increase greenhouse gas <i>emissions</i> will not be considered. Appropriate environmental assessment should be carried out for any development proposals which impact on boglands.
<b>LR 013</b>	Recognise that some cutaway and cut-over boglands may represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially fit to absorb a variety of development provided that the development proposals <del>does</del> do not increase greenhouse gas emissions or damage protected habitats or species. <i>Refer to peatland landscape character areas (LCAs) and sensitivity classes in evaluating all project proposals.</i> Projects or developments which would result in increased ammonia emissions to watercourses shall not be considered.
<b>LR 014</b>	Maintain the visual integrity of <del>Eastern Transition lands</del> <i>the Naas and Liffey Foothills and the South Eastern Kildare Hills landscape character areas,</i> <del>Transition lands</del> which have retained an upland character.
<b>LR 015</b>	Continue to facilitate appropriate development in the <del>Eastern Transition Lands</del> <i>Naas and Liffey Foothills</i> and <i>South Eastern Kildare Hills</i> landscape character areas, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognizing the need for sustainable settlement patterns and economic activity within the county.

<b>Proposed Amendment No. 6</b> Amend Section 13.4 as follows: To amend the title, text and Policy LR P2 and objectives of Section 13.4 to reflect the Landscape Character Assessment (2025).		
Chapter	Section(s)	Page(s)
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation & Amenity	13.4.4 and 13.4.12	452-458

Amend the title of Section 13.4 as follows:

### **13.4 Areas of High Amenity/*Areas Protected under International, European and National legislation.***

Amend text of Sections 13.4.4 and 13.4.12 as follows:

#### **13.4.4 The River Liffey and River Barrow Valleys**

The River Liffey and the River Barrow valleys are of significance in terms of landscape and amenity value and as such are sensitive to development. The River Barrow is a designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). They are characterised by smooth terrain and low vegetation, with extensive upland views (i.e. the ~~Chair of Kildare~~ *Six Hills* to the west and the ~~Eastern Uplands~~ *Naas & Liffey Foothills* to the east) and distant views including the neighbouring Wicklow Mountains. The topography is such that it allows vistas over long distances without disruption along the river corridor. As a result, development on the banks of the rivers can have a disproportionate visual impact, due to an inherent inability to be visually absorbed. However, the undulating topography occurring within the river valleys provides physical shielding and has the potential to visually enclose the built form within the river valley, where it does not break the skyline. Shelter vegetation exists along some stretches of the valleys with the presence of natural and native woodland that grows on the floodplains of the rivers, as well as by conifer plantation in adjacent lands. This vegetation has a shielding and absorbing quality in landscape terms. It can provide a natural visual barrier as well as adding to the complexity of a vista, breaking it up to provide scale and containment for built forms.

Many views of the river valleys are available from local roads and from viewing points located along the valleys. While river valleys represent potentially vulnerable linear landscape features, as they are often highly distinctive in the context of the general landscape, in certain circumstances landscape sensitivities may be localised or site-specific.

#### **13.4.12 ~~East Kildare Uplands~~ *The Naas & Liffey Foothills and the South Eastern Kildare Hills***

The ~~Eastern Uplands~~ *eastern part of the Naas & Liffey Foothills and the South Eastern Kildare Hills LCAs* are located in the east of the county and are part of the Wicklow Mountain complex. The topography rises from the lowland plains, through undulating terrain to the highest point of 379m above sea level (O.D.) at Cupidstownhill,

east of Killeel. The elevated nature of this area provides a defined skyline with scenic views over the central plains of Kildare and the neighbouring Wicklow Mountains which further define the skyline and the extent of visibility. The ~~East Kildare Uplands~~ *eastern part of the Naas and Liffey Foothills and South Eastern Kildare Hills* are rural in character with a number of scenic views from elevated vantage points. The general land use on the uplands is pasture, with some tillage, quarrying and forestry.

Along a number of roads, which cross the upper and lower slopes of the uplands, there are long-distance views towards the Kildare lowlands and the ~~Chair of Kildare~~ *Six Hills*. The sloping land provides this area with its distinctive character and intensifies the visual prominence and potential adverse impact of any feature over greater distances. Public roads traversing the slope provide an increased potential for development to penetrate primary and secondary ridgelines when viewed from lower areas and in a few areas the recent pattern of ribbon development obscures views across the plains of Kildare. In the ~~Eastern Kildare Uplands~~ *eastern part of the Naas and Liffey Foothills and the South Eastern Kildare Hills*, nearly all ridgelines are secondary when viewed from the lowland areas, as the Wicklow Mountains to the east define the skyline (i.e. form primary ridgelines). Gently undulating topography and shelter vegetation provided by conifer and woodland plantation can provide a shielding of built form. Views of the River Liffey Valley as well as of the Pou-laphouca Reservoir are available from the hilltops and high points on some of the local roads.

Amend the text of Policy LR P2 as follows:

## Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

<b>LR P2</b>	Protect High Amenity areas/ <i>Areas Protected under International, European and National legislation identified in Section 13.4 of this Plan</i> from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place.
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Amend the text of existing objectives in Section 13.4 as follows:

## Objectives

*It is an objective of the Council to:*

<b>LR O17</b>	(a) Control development that will adversely affect the visual integrity of Areas of High Amenity/ <i>Areas Protected under International, European and National legislation</i> by restricting the development of incongruous structures that are out of scale with the landscape within these <i>Areas of High Amenity</i> including advertising signs,
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	<p>hoardings, fencing etc., which create visual clutter and disrupt the open nature of these areas.</p> <p>(b) <i>Require development in Areas of High Amenity/ Areas Protected under International, European and National legislation to employ high standards of design and creativity in mitigating impact on the environment.</i></p>
LR 018	Facilitate appropriate development in areas of <i>High Amenity/Areas Protected under International, European and National legislation</i> that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation.
LR 030	Sensitively consider development in the <b>Upland Character Areas</b> including <b>East Kildare Uplands</b> <i>the Naas &amp; Liffey Foothills and the South Eastern Kildare Hills LCAs</i> that have a functional and locational requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoirs, telecommunication masts or wind energy structures) where it can be explicitly demonstrated that residual adverse visual impacts are minimised and mitigated.
LR 031	Have regard to the potential for screening vegetation when evaluating proposals for development within the Upland Character Areas including East Kildare Uplands <i>Naas &amp; Liffey Foothills and the South Eastern Kildare Hills.</i>

<b>Proposed Amendment No. 7</b> Amend Section 13.5 to reflect the Landscape Character Assessment (2025) and include new objectives.		
Chapter	Section(s)	Page(s)
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation & Amenity	13.5	467-468

Amend Section 13.5 to insert new paragraph after paragraph 2 as follows:

*During the field surveys and consultation, an evaluation was undertaken of the existing scenic routes and views to and from bridges over the main rivers and canals. All were visited as part of the field surveys, and all remain intact and merit ongoing protection.*

Amend existing objectives of Section 13.5 to include a new objective as follows:

### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

LR 038	<del>Ensure unenclosed land which has not been fenced in the last 10 years remains not fenced as per the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Art 9 (1)(a)(x) – Restrictions on exemption.</del>
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	<p>a. To protect designated views of special amenity value identified in the Plan [see Tables 13.5 / Scenic Routes, Table 13.6: Hilltop Views, Views from Bridges / Table 13.7 Views from Bridges or other land use plans and ensure that development proposals do not have an undue detrimental impact on these views.</p> <p>b. Development proposals will be assessed against their impact on the designated view if it falls within the foreground, middle ground or background of that view. New development should not harm, and where possible, should make a positive contribution to, the characteristics and composition of the designated views and their landmark elements.</p> <p>c. Development proposals that could affect a designated view should be accompanied by an assessment that explains, evaluates and justifies any visual impact on the view affected. The scoping process for determining whether a development proposal is likely to affect a designated view should be completed in consultation with Kildare County Council. The assessment should demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with the relevant objectives of this Plan. The assessment should form part of a landscape and visual impact assessment, design statement or townscape and visual impact assessment submitted with a planning application.</p> <p>d. Development in the foreground and middle ground of a designated view should not be overly intrusive, unsightly or prominent to the detriment of the view. Most designated views are seen in a 120-degree field of view. It is not expected that the view outside of this field of vision should be assessed unless specified by Kildare County Council.</p> <p><i>Designated views of special amenity value and views of local landmark buildings / other local views of significance will need to be considered in the scoping of views to identify the potential impacts of development proposals.</i></p>
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#### **Proposed Amendment No. 8**

To amend Section 13.6.4 of the Chapter to remove the reference to the 'Western Boglands' landscape character area and replaced it with 'Bog of Allen' to reflect the updated Landscape Character Assessment.

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation & Amenity	13.6.4	470

Amend the text of the fifth paragraph of Section 13.6.4 as follows:

#### **13.6.4 Greenways, Blueways, Peatways, Trails and Peatland Railways**

In the ~~Western boglands~~, *Bog of Allen*, the peatlands and disused railway lines coupled with a rich natural, architectural and built heritage provide excellent opportunities to develop further long-distance routes (cycling/walking) and connecting existing canal-side routes together.

## **Appendix 2 Wind Energy Strategy**

### **Proposed Amendment No. 9**

To amend Section 2.4.3 of the Wind Energy Strategy at Appendix 2 of the Kildare County Development 2023-2029 (as varied) to reflect the updated Landscape Character Assessment (2025).

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Appendix 2: Wind Energy Strategy	2.4.3	12-13

Amend text in Section 2.4.3 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:

### **2.4.3 Landscape Character Assessment**

The ~~updated-county's~~ Landscape Character Assessment (2025) for the county is included in Chapter 13 ~~and forms Appendix 13~~ of the ~~Kildare~~ County Development Plan ~~2023-2029 (as varied)~~. The natural diversity of the landscape, coupled with human interaction in the form of introduced features such as hedgerows, woodlands, archaeological monuments, settlements and buildings, all serve to give Kildare its distinctive characteristic landscape. All developments which take place has the ability to impact on this landscape, positively and negatively. It is essential therefore that the landscape is protected and managed in a sustainable and coherent manner. A review of the Kildare County Development Plan landscape provisions was ~~recently~~ undertaken to provide a robust strategy which classifies the landscape of the county, appraises landscape sensitivity, making a judgement on sensitivity to change and taking into account historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape.

Based on the findings of the ~~updated~~ Landscape Character Assessment a landscape sensitivity rating was developed for each of the ~~updated~~ Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Character Types. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. ~~It is determined using the following factors: slope, ridgeline, water bodies, land use and prior development.~~

~~The updated Landscape Character Assessment identified four~~ 5 classes of sensitivity ~~were developed~~, these include:

- ~~Class 1 - Low Sensitivity - North-Western Lowlands, Northern Lowlands, Central Undulating Lands and Southern Lowlands.~~
- ~~Class 2 - Medium Sensitivity - Eastern Transition Lands and South-Eastern Uplands.~~
- ~~Class 3 - High Sensitivity - Western Boglands and Eastern Uplands.~~
- ~~Class 4 - Special - Chair of Kildare, Northern Hills, River Liffey and River Barrow, Dun Ailinne and Old Kilcullen.~~
- ~~Class 5 - Unique - The Curragh and Pollardstown Fen.~~



- *High Sensitivity – The Curragh Plains.*
- *Medium to High Sensitivity – The Bog of Allen and River Liffey Valley & Plains.*
- *Medium Sensitivity – Carbury Boyne Lowlands, Barrow Grand Canal Corridor, The Six Hills, The Cill Dara Lowlands, the South Eastern Kildare Hills and the Naas and Liffey Foothills.*
- *Medium to Low Sensitivity – Slí Mhór Corridor.*

**Proposed Amendment No. 10**

To amend text and maps in Section 3.2.1 and 3.2.3 of the Wind Energy Strategy at Appendix 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) to reference the Landscape Character Assessment (2025).

Appendix	Section(s)	Page(s)
Appendix 2: Wind Energy Strategy	3.2.1 and 3.2.2	23-52

Amend text in Section 3.2.1 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:

### 3.2.1 Kildare Landscape Character Assessment

The Guidelines recommend that an evaluation of the landscape and its sensitivity for wind energy developments be prepared or utilised. Factors that can inform landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include scenic quality, rarity, uniqueness, natural and cultural heritage and environmental considerations. Special attention is recommended in areas where there is higher potential for the occurrence of adverse visual impacts arising from limited assimilative capacity.

*In 2025, in response to Action LR A1 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) (hereafter referred to as ‘the Plan’), a review of the County Landscape Character Assessment was carried out, in accordance with the provisions of the EPA’s Reframe Landscape Character Assessment Toolkit (2022). The Landscape Character Assessment (2025), which now forms Appendix 13 to the Plan, focused on the discernment of the character of the landscape based on its land cover and landform, but also on its values, such as historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape. This approach recognises the importance of place and how people perceive their landscapes. It concentrates on the distinctiveness of different landscapes and on the sensitivity of that landscape to development. This Landscape Character Assessment complies with the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025.*

Figure 3 *illustrates* the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) of the county as contained in the *Landscape Character Assessment (2025) that forms Appendix 13 of the Kildare County Development Plan (CDP). The process identifies and explains the combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinct from one another by mapping and describing Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and*

*Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The Landscape Character Assessment (2025) identifies ten LCAs in the county that are listed below and illustrated in Figure 3 below. The LCAs are described in more detail in Chapter 4 of the Landscape Character Assessment.*

*Landscape Character Areas*

- *Carbury Boyne Lowlands*
- *Slí Mhór Corridor*
- *River Liffey Valley and Plains*
- *Bog of Allen*
- *Barrow Grand Canal Corridor*
- *The Six Hills*
- *Curragh Plains*
- *Naas and Liffey Foothills*
- *South Eastern Kildare Hills*
- *Cill Dara Lowlands.*

Replace existing map in Figure 3 and amend title of Figure 3 as follows:

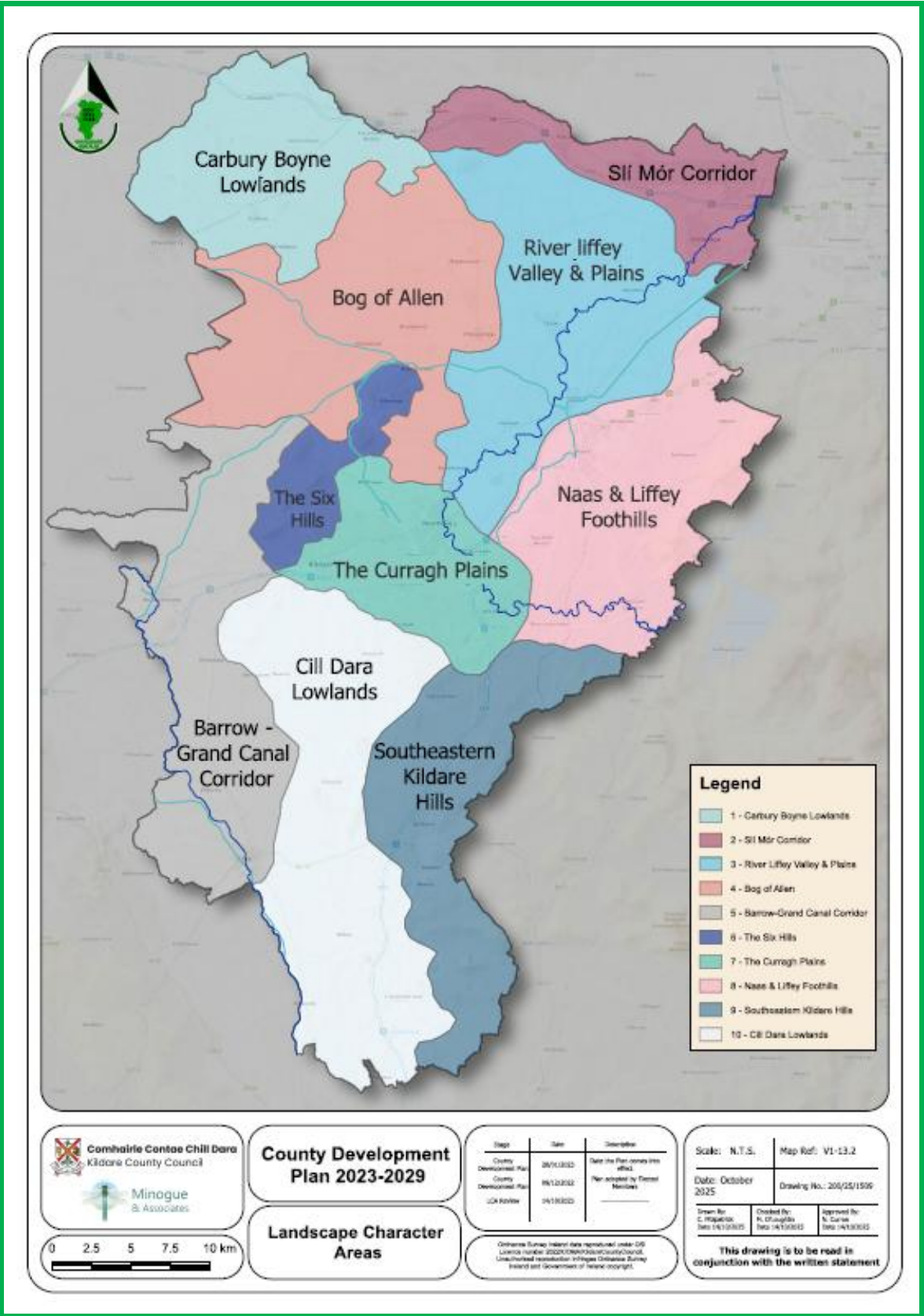


Figure 3: *Landscape Character Areas*

*Figure 3A illustrates the eight LCTs that are identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2025), which are listed below and described in more detail in Chapter 3 of the Landscape Character Assessment (2025) that forms Appendix 13 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied).*

*LCT1 – Farmed foothills*

*LCT2 – Lowland plains*

*LCT3 - Farmed rolling hills*

*LCT4 – Transport Corridor*

*LCT5 – River Corridor*

*LCT6 – Canal Corridor*

*LCT7 – Peatland and semi-natural vegetation*

*LCT8 - Settlement*

Insert new Figure 3A after Figure 3 as follows:

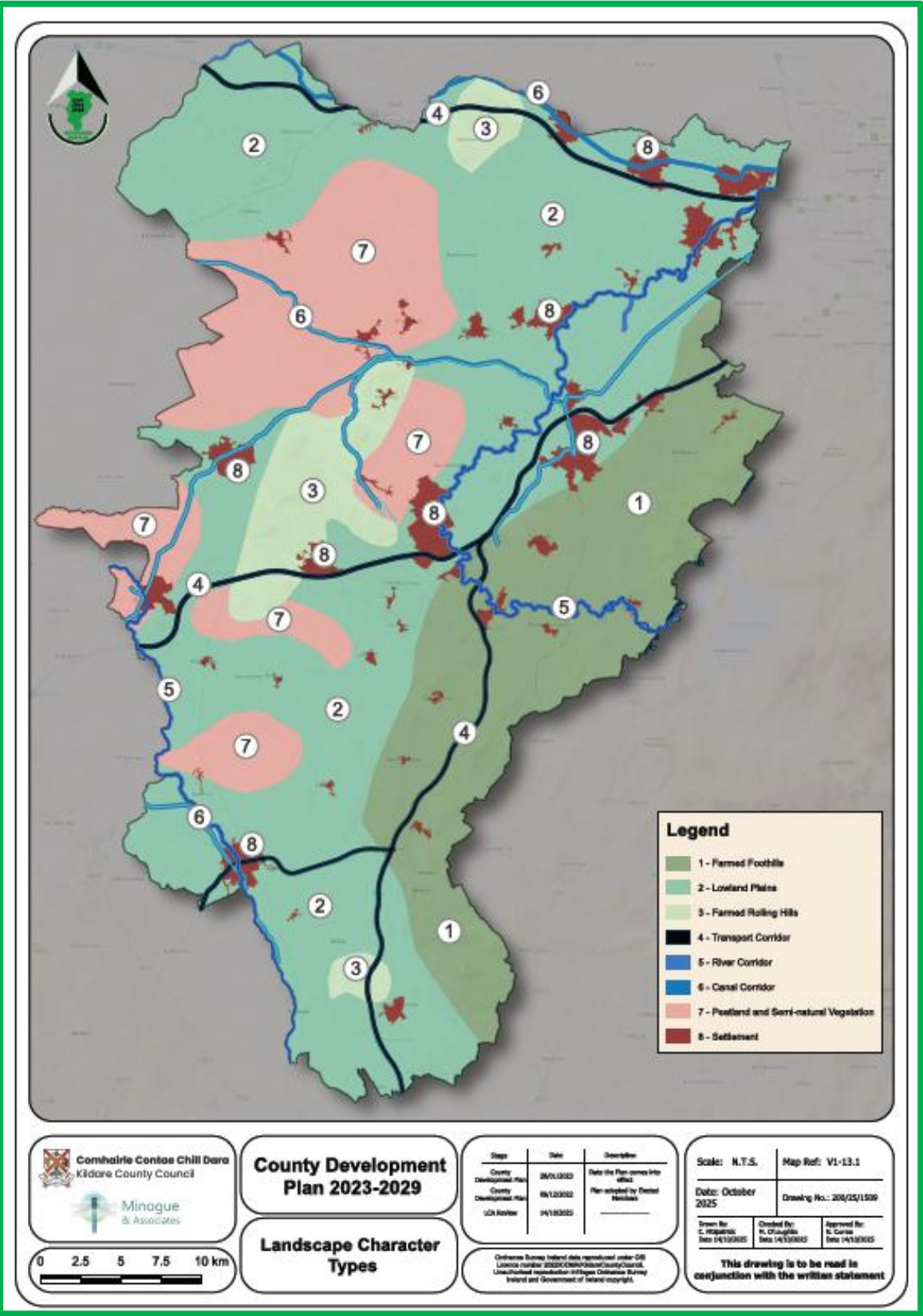







Figure 3A – Landscape Character Types



Delete Table 3 as follows:

**Table 3: Classes of landscape sensitivity in County Kildare**

Sensitivity	Landscape Character Area	Location	Description
Class 1 Low Sensitivity	North-Western Lowlands Northern Lowlands Central Unfolding Lands Southern Lowlands		Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area.
Class 2 Medium Sensitivity	Eastern Transition Lands South-Eastern Uplands		Areas with the capacity to accommodate a range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to localised sensitivity factors.
Class 3 High Sensitivity	Western Boglands Eastern Uplands		Areas with reduced capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to prevalent sensitivity factors.
Class 4 Special	Chair of Kildare Northern Hills River Liffey River Barrow		Significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to prevalent sensitivity factors.
Class 5 Unique	The Curragh Pollardstown Fan Dun Ailinne		Areas with low capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to special sensitivity factors.

Source: Proposed County Development Plan 2023-2027

This Landscape Character Assessment complies with the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025. Appendix 1 of the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 states this assessment should convert this map using three sensitivity classifications. Therefore, the *four* classifications of landscape listed in the Kildare Landscape Character Assessment (2025) are converted into three following classifications for the purposes of this Wind Strategy:

- ~~a) Low Landscape Sensitivity (Class 1—Low Sensitivity~~
- ~~b) Medium Landscape Sensitivity (Class 2—Medium Sensitivity, Class 3—High Sensitivity~~
- ~~c) High Landscape Sensitivity (Class 4—Special, Class 5—Unique~~

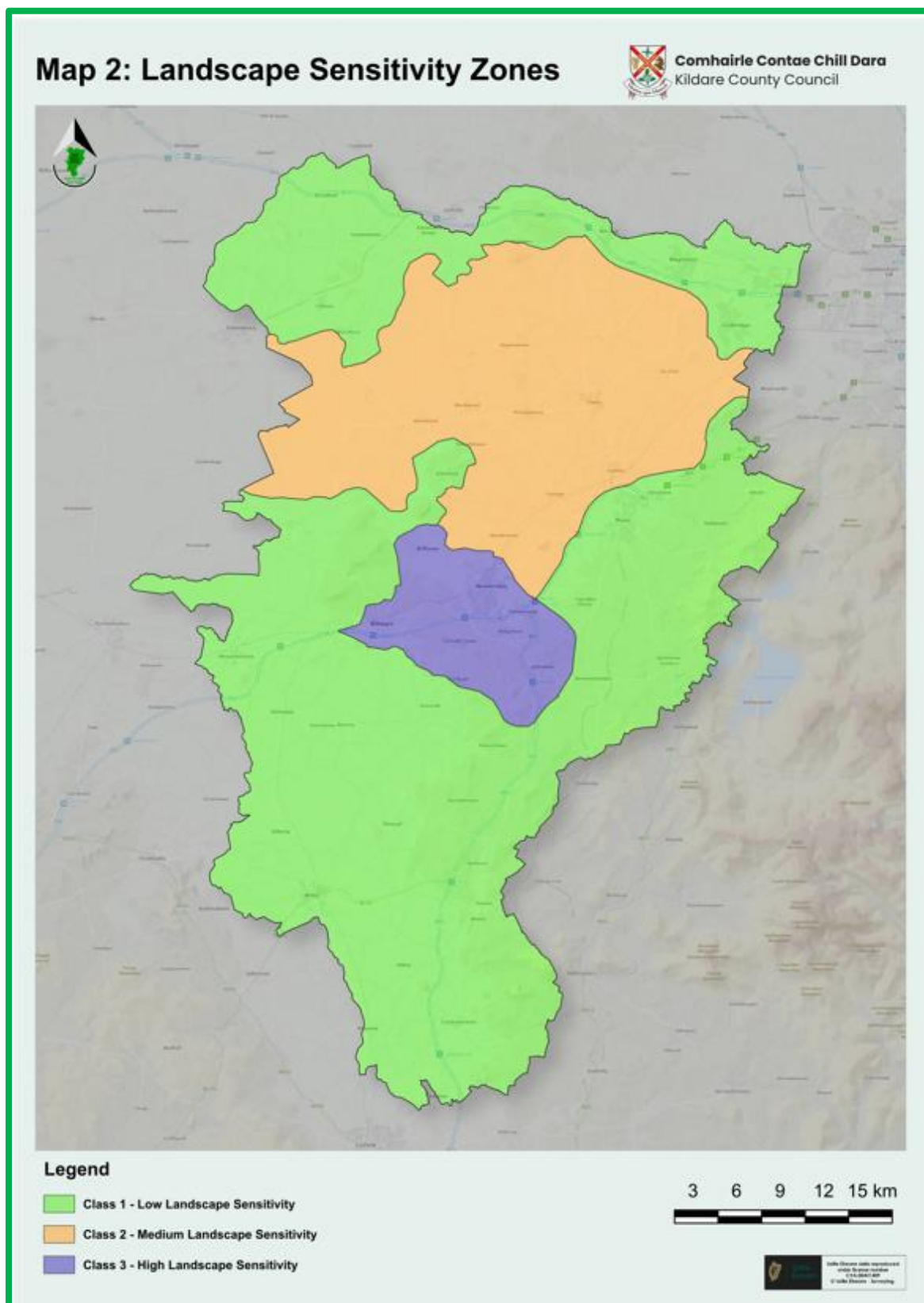
*Class 1 – Low Landscape Sensitivity (Medium to Low Sensitivity, Medium Sensitivity)*

*Class 2 – Medium Landscape Sensitivity (Medium to High Sensitivity)*

*Class 3 – High Landscape Sensitivity (High Sensitivity)*

Below is a rationalised map of this landscape character assessment with these three levels of sensitivity mapped which will be used for the purposes of this Wind Energy Strategy.

Replace the existing Map 2 as follows:



*Map 2: Landscape Sensitivity Zones.*

Amend the title of Section 3.2.3 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:

~~2~~.3.2.3 Evaluation of Step 2

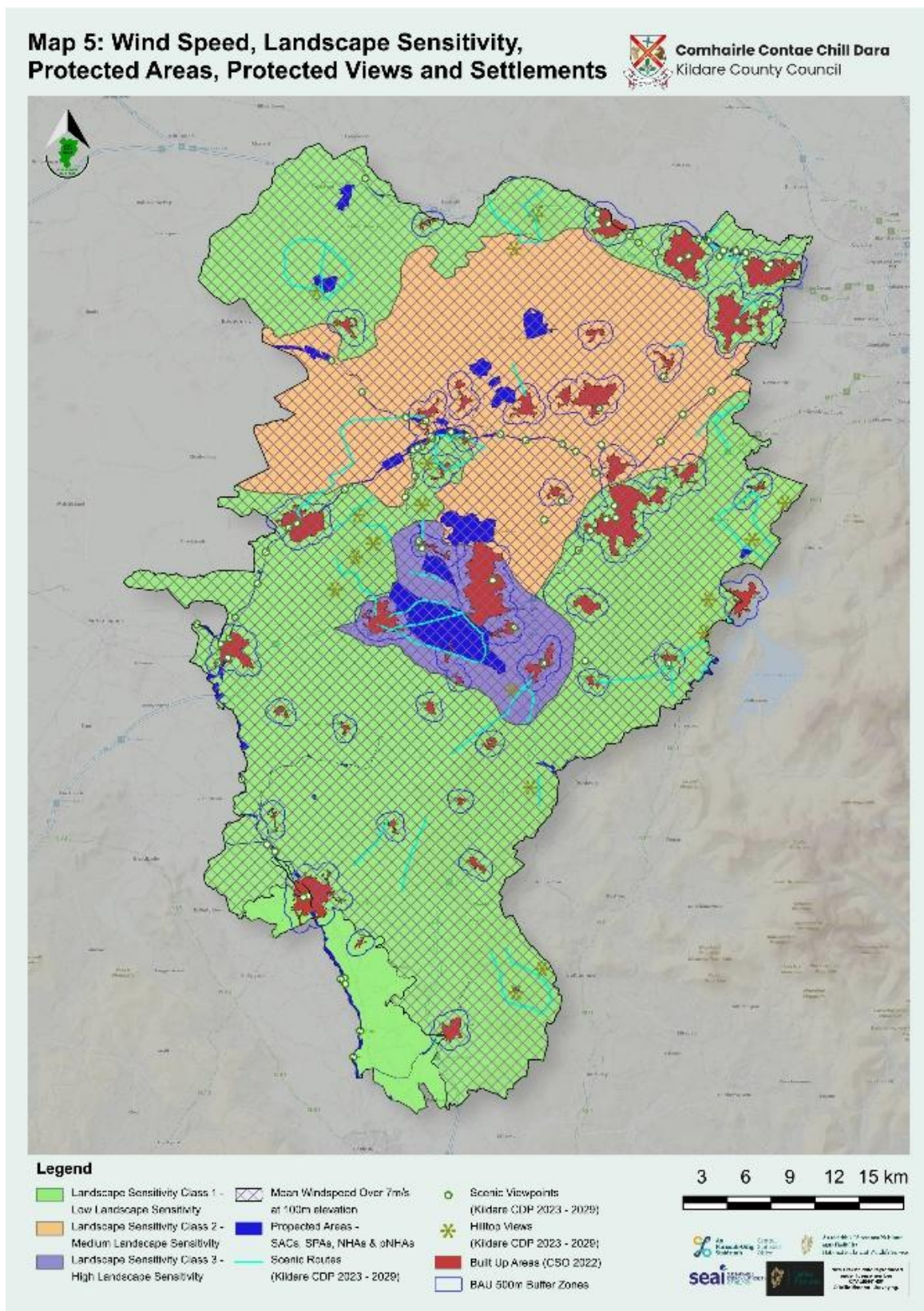
Amend the first paragraph of Section 3.2.3 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:

3.2.3 Evaluation of Step 2

County Kildare is mainly flat and has a landscape largely suitable for considerable wind energy developments. However, it does contain some prominent upland areas including the **Six Hills** and the **western part of the Slí Mhór Corridor Landscape Character Area** which would be sensitive to large scale development. Similarly, the Liffey and Barrow river valleys would also be sensitive to large scale development. Unique area of landscape including the Curragh and Pollardstown Fen would be sensitive to all types of wind energy.



Replace existing Map 5 in Section 3.3.5 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:



Map 5: Wind Speed, Landscape Sensitivity, Protected Areas, Protected Views and Settlements.





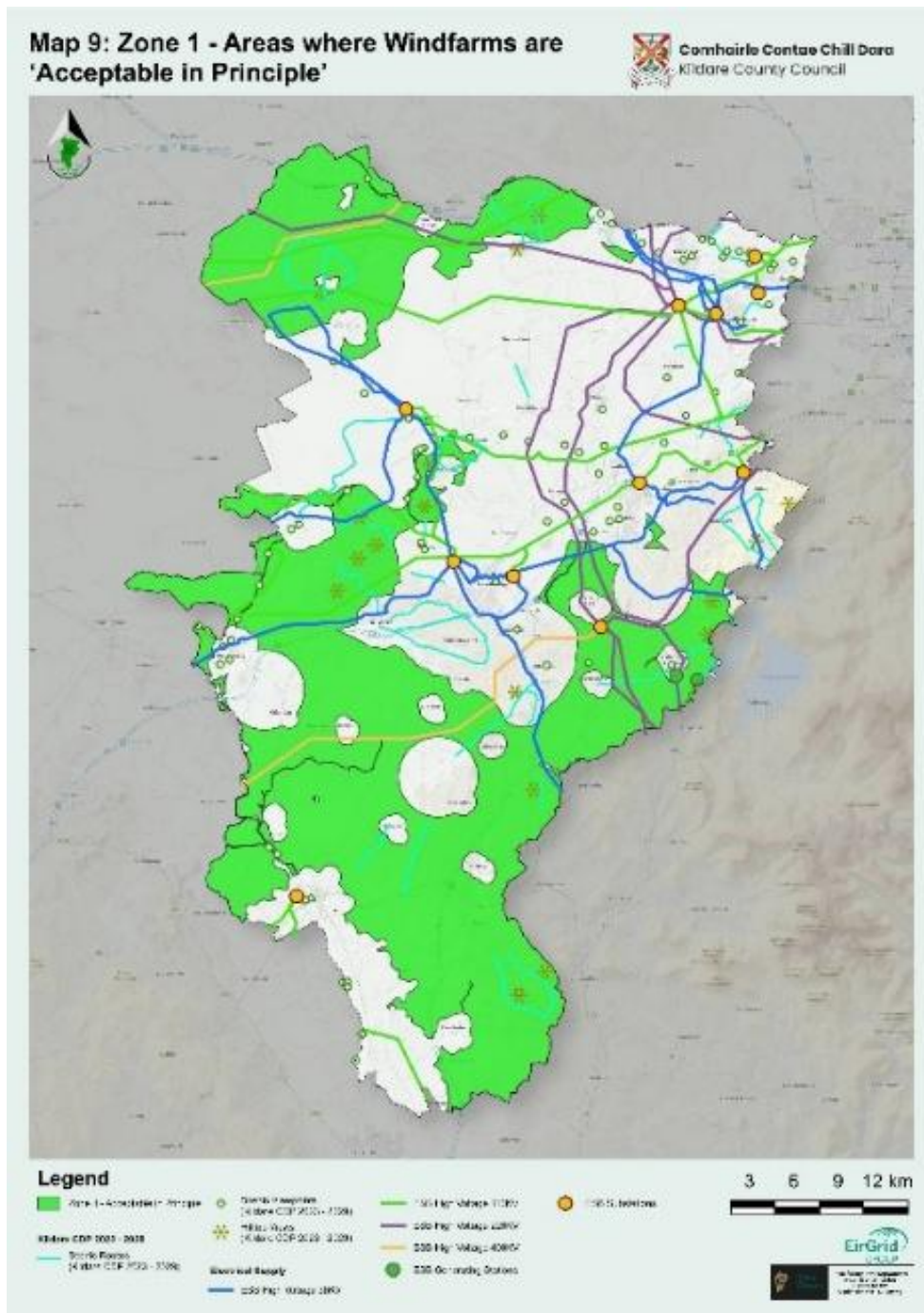


**Proposed Amendment No.11**

To amend Section 4 of the Wind Energy Strategy at Appendix 2 of the Kildare County Development 2023-2029 (as varied) to reflect the Landscape Character Assessment (2025).

Appendix	Section(s)	Page(s)
Appendix 2: Wind Energy Strategy	4	45-52

Replace existing Map 9 in Section 4.2 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:

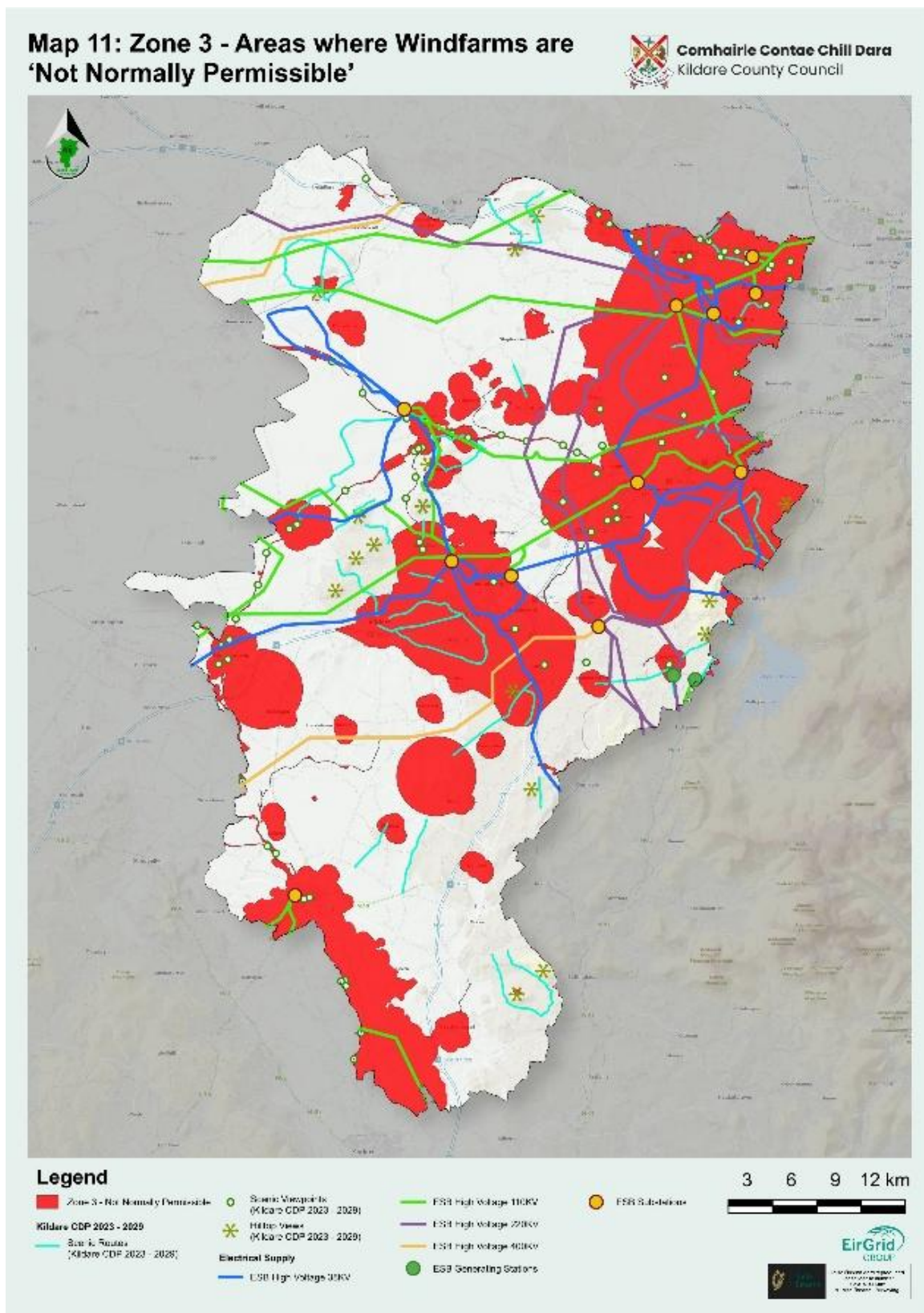


Map 9: Zone 1 – Areas where Windfarms are 'Acceptable in Principle'.



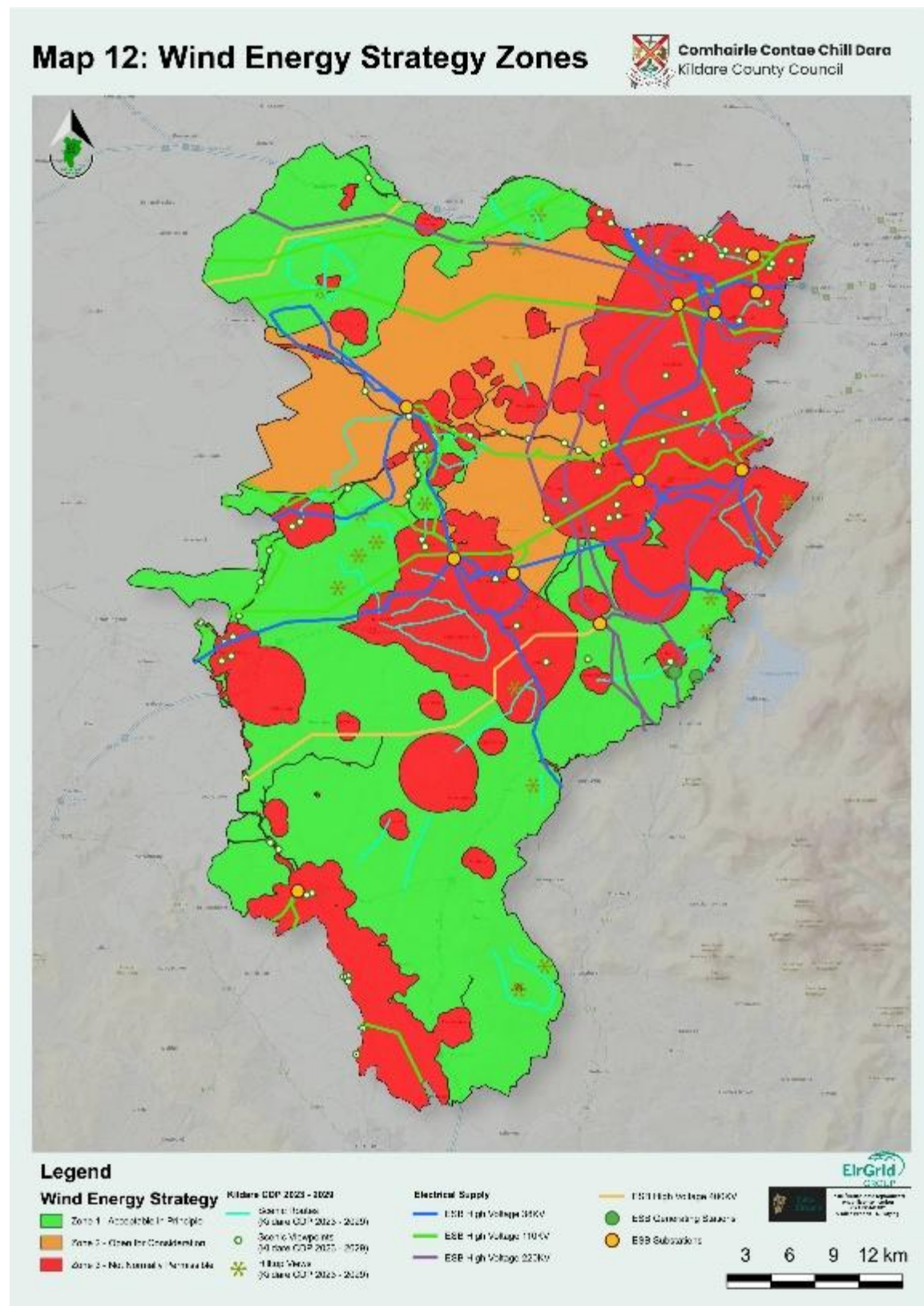


Replace existing Map 11 in Section 4.5 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:



*Map 11: Zone 3 – Areas where Windfarms are 'Not Normally Permissible'*

Replace existing Map 12 in Section 4.5 of the Wind Energy Strategy as follows:



Map 12: Kildare Wind Energy Strategy Zones

**Proposed Amendment No.12**

To amend Appendices of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied) to insert a new Appendix 13 Landscape Character Assessment.

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
Appendix 13 Landscape Character Assessment (2025).	Appendix 13	

Insert the Landscape Character Assessment (2025) (LCA) to form a new Appendix 13 in the Appendices attached to the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (as varied).