

Kildare Open Space Strategy

Final Report

July 2011

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Kildare County Council

Kildare Open Space Strategy

July 2011

For and on behalf of
Environmental Resources Management

Approved by: Bruce Davidson

Signed:



Position: Partner

Date: 22/07/2011

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In July 2007, Environmental Resources Management Ireland Limited (ERM) in association with ERA Maptec, Sean O' Riordain and Associates and Fitzpatrick Associates was commissioned by Kildare County Council to prepare an *Open Space Strategy for County Kildare*.

This was further revised and updated in 2011 at the request of Kildare County Council to take account of new data in the County Development Plan 2011 - 2017

This strategy document is an updated version of the 2007 document and is based on the revisions arising from the new data in the county dev plan 2011-2017.

The objective of the strategy is to provide clear direction to the County Council on an overall approach to the provision of adequate open space to meet the current and future needs of the community.

The roles and responsibilities carried by the various consultants on the project are outlined below:

- ERM – Overall project management, open space audit and strategy for settlements in Kildare County;
- Sean O' Riordain and Associates – Strategy for Regional Park network in the County;
- ERA Maptec – Preparation of strategy illustrated figures using hand marked map data provided by Kildare County Council and area calculations of open space data provided by Kildare County Council
- Fitzpatrick Associates - Financial Plan.

1.1

WHAT IS AN OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

An open space strategy enables a local authority to adopt an organised approach towards analysing open space supply and planning for meeting future requirements. It provides a means for aligning the policies and functions of a range of council departments that have responsibilities for open space. It also provides a platform for liaison with public agencies, private interests and community groups. The strategy contributes to the development framework, aiming to identify opportunities to maintain and enhance environmental qualities, provide a range of recreation and leisure areas, and link and create wildlife habitats.

The scope of this Open Space Strategy is limited to the recreational and amenity function of open space and excludes other functions of open space relating to biodiversity and climate change. The strategy identifies

considerations for forthcoming plans, strategies and spending plans of Kildare County Council using established standards and local requirements for open space provision. It is based upon a shared vision and set of objectives for open space, aligned with the Kildare County Development Plan (and drafts of the forthcoming replacement plan) and other related plans.

Kildare County Council has a responsibility for the maintenance of public open spaces and aims to bring improvements to the quantitative provision where deficiencies exist. This strategy also allows the Council to account for open space in regard to future urban expansion and to ensure that the quality and function of such areas is aligned with local needs. Therefore, the strategy will set standards for open space provision to ensure that adequate facilities are available to existing and future centres of population.

1.2 OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

The assessment of current and future requirements has been founded on the Council's data relating to existing available open space, contemporary population data from the 2006 census and predicted population in the year 2017 as outlined in the County Development Plan 2011 - 2017.

The strategy brings together this high level audit of existing open space and the assessment of current and future requirements and comprises a vision for the future set out as a series of objectives, priorities and policies for action.

The open space strategy has a number of purposes as identified in the brief including the identification of current open space needs relative to current and future population size. The strategy will provide a basis for the development of more detailed policies and will assist in the development of a hierarchical network of recreational open space.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is summarised as follows.

- A review of existing open space provision, principally that which is currently accessible to the public. This task was undertaken by ERM using data provided by Kildare County Council.
- Completion of a preliminary consultation exercise with the public, statutory stakeholders, other interest groups and public representatives. This task was jointly undertaken by ERM and Sean O'Riordain and Associates.
- Assessment of current and future needs, in particular in regard to both the settlements and the wider rural area as detailed below. This task was undertaken jointly by ERM and Sean O'Riordain and Associates.

- Settlements – specifically the open space requirements in terms of quality and quantity that are required to serve the local population associated with the major towns in the County.
- Rural areas - in particular, the potential to develop or promote existing amenities as rural or country parks of county wide importance and which would draw visitors from the local population and further afield.
- Identification of areas that currently have open space needs, based on population demand and an assessment of current and future requirements. This task was undertaken by ERM.
- Identification of mechanisms for provision including an action plan covering a period from 2008 to 2017 as a basis to inform future County policy in regard to open space provision. This task was jointly undertaken by ERM and Sean O’Riordain and Associates.
- Development of a finance strategy which will provide guidance and prioritise use of capital funds for the purchase of lands for open space provision. This task was undertaken by Fitzpatricks and associates.

1.4

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Legislative and Policy Context

Chapter 3: Criteria and Standards for Open Space Provision

Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter 5: Open space audit

Chapter 6: Assessment of current and future needs

Chapter 7: Open Space Strategy

Chapter 8: Financial Plan

Annex A: Policy Background

Annex B: Open Space Audit of Settlements – Tabulated Results

Annex C: Baseline Studies

Annex D: Public Consultation Results

Annex E: Calculation of Open Space Requirements for Settlements

Annex F: Figures

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines the relevant policy context in relation to open space provision. An overview of relevant European Union policy is presented, and this is followed by relevant national policy, legislation and guidelines. Finally, the relevant policies contained within the County Kildare Development Plan 2011 -2017 is presented. The aim of this chapter is to present the policy framework for open space provision and to ensure that the accompanying strategy represents a good policy ‘fit’.

2.2 EUROPEAN UNION POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.2.1 *Council of the European Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R(86)11. to Member States on Urban Open Space, 1986*

According to the Council of Europe’s *Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R(86) 11 (1986)*, open space is a fundamental aspect of the environment and heritage of an settlement. It “*plays an important educational role, is ecologically significant, is important for social interaction and in fostering community development and is supportive of economic objectives and activities*”. In support of this, the recommendation suggests that member states commit to the following:

- ensure the acquisition, provision and management of open space;
- ensure that open space is secured and protected;
- encourage the provision of open space, in a manner that reflects the real needs of the catchment population, respects the existing environment and promotes social inclusion;
- manage conflicts of use and accessibility; and
- promote appropriate levels of use.

It maintains that in order to provide appropriate open space, consideration must be given to national policies, local authorities, community and neighbourhood-based schemes, education and private sector interests.

2.3 NATIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE RELEVANT TO OPEN SPACE PROVISION

2.3.1 *Planning and Development Act, No. 30 of 2000*

The *Planning and Development Act, 2000* stipulates that development plans shall include objectives for the zoning of land as open space.

The Act also states that the planning authority to which a planning application has been made can grant planning permission on conditions regarding the

provision, completion or maintenance of open spaces (Planning and Development Act 2000, Section 34 Permission for Development).

Section 45 of the Act gives the planning authority the power to acquire by order land for open space provision through the planning application process.

2.3.2 *A Policy for the Provision and Maintenance of Parks, Open Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Areas by Local Authorities, 1987*

Current policy in Ireland on the provision of open space dates back to 1986. The principal objectives are outlined as follows.

- To provide a co-ordinated and graded system of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within settlements so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work.
- To preserve and improve access for the public to those coastal, mountain and countryside areas which have traditionally been used for outdoor recreation and, by land acquisition or other measures, to make accessible to the public, important areas of natural amenity and countryside which have not hitherto been open to the public.
- To secure proper landscaping of public roads in urban and rural areas in the interests of visual amenity.

The guidelines identify the following strategy measures in pursuit of the objectives listed above:

- modernise the legislation under which local authorities carry out functions in relation to open spaces;
- encourage the recruitment of appropriate staff;
- identify sources of funding;
- provide expert assistance to facilitate development and implementation of parks programmes;
- ensure co-ordination of policies and programmes which have a bearing on the conservation of the countryside and important landscapes; and
- play an active role in the conservation of the countryside and including providing for access to scenic landscapes.

2.4 *KILDARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2017*

Policy in relation to recreation and amenity is set out in chapter 14 of the County Plan. The principal aim is as follows:

'To develop recreation areas and the amenities of County Kildare in an equitable, environmental and sustainable way.'

The plan outlines a broad strategy for the provision of open space with aims as follows:

- *'to provide an opportunity for all sectors of Kildare's population, and visitors to the, county to avail of good quality recreational, sports and open space facilities, suitable to their needs;*
- *to ensure that the natural resources which form the basis for countryside recreation are protected and effectively managed; and*
- *to provide and maintain facilities in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.'*

Specific policy objectives in regard to open space provision are presented below as follows.

- *OS 1: To implement the recommendations of the Kildare Open Space Strategy, when adopted, and make provision for a hierarchy of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within town and villages so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work.*
- *OS 2: To require the provision of good quality, well located and functional open space in new residential developments to cater for all age groups.*
- *OS 3: To preserve, manage and maintain to a high standard the existing public parks and open spaces in the county.*
- *OS 4: To develop and improve physical linkages and connections between the network of open spaces.*
- *OS 5: To retain, where appropriate, areas adjacent to waterways as a linear park which may link into the wider open space*
- *network.*

2.4.1

Summary

Further national and regional policies concerning the provision of open space are outlined in *Annex A: Policy Background*. These policies, in general, demonstrate that there is significant institutional commitment to the ongoing provision of quality open space that meets current and future demands. The Kildare Open Space strategy has thus been developed, having regard to the policies and objectives outlined at national level and in the current County Plan.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding section outlined the policy and legislative framework for open space provision. The purpose of this section is to highlight guidelines and current standards and criteria that inform the process of developing an open space strategy.

In addition to the Irish guidance, this section also includes a summary of the Scottish Planning Advice Note (Pan 65) relating to open space. PAN 65 was revised in 2008 and provides the most up-to-date guidance available in Scotland where open space audits and strategies are mandatory requirements of local authorities.

3.2 DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT - A POLICY FOR THE PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES (1987)

This guidance describes current open space standards applicable in Ireland for the purpose of recreational and amenity uses. The following sections set out the distinction that the Irish standards draw between settlements, rural areas and roadside amenity in terms of the appropriate approach to the provision of such open spaces.

3.2.1 Settlements

Local authorities are encouraged to address open space needs through the following steps outlined:

- assess open space needs in each settlement and include objectives in development plans;
- prepare inventories of all existing open spaces in residential areas;
- find alternative uses for open spaces of limited recreational or amenity value owing to their shape or size and use financial gains, where applicable, for the purchase of alternative appropriate space;
- develop programmes for planting and maintenance for open spaces;
- establish bye-laws concerning the regulation of activities in open spaces;
- ensure that appropriate levels of open space are provided in new residential developments; and
- utilize their power to secure contributions from developers towards developing and maintaining open spaces.

In assessing quantitative open space needs, a standard of 2 hectares of open space per 1000 population is considered appropriate. This is broadly similar to the long-established UK National Playing Fields Association "6 acre standard", wherein 6 acres (2.43 ha) is considered appropriate for the

provision of sports fields and children's play areas for every 1000 residents within a settlement.

A hierarchy of types of open space provision is recommended, based upon population units of 10,000 and includes the following open space types:

- Neighbourhood Park 16 hectares (40 acres);
- two local parks each comprising 2 hectares (5 acres); and
- other open spaces that are associated with housing areas;

The facilities to be included in these open spaces are outlined in the *Table 3.1* below.

Table 3.1 *Standards for Open Space Provision*

Type of Park	Standards and Recommendations
Neighbourhood Park (16 hectares)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be located within 0.8km (0.5miles) of the population it is designed for. • Should be regular in shape and capable of accommodating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football pitches - up to 6 units • Tennis courts - up to 10 units • Netball or basketball courts - up to 2 units • Golf putting greens - up to 2 units • Children's playlot - up to 1 unit • Car parking - up to 1 unit <p>Parks should contain extensive tree and shrub planting, with a path system and a general amenity open space with adequate seating furniture. The Neighbourhood Park's size can be adjusted in accordance with the size and needs of the population.</p>
Local Park (2 hectares)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be located within 0.4km of target population • Should be designed for passive recreation only. • Local Parks be attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs and that paths, seats and litter bins should be adequately provided
Other open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are to be of a size and quality that will enhance residential areas. • Very small areas of open space located at the ends of cul de sacs or at the corners of rears of houses are of little use.

The UK NPFA *Six Acre Standard* is also a useful guidance document. Although this guidance has been developed to address open space provision in the UK, it is used as a reference by local authorities in Ireland.

Some of the main criteria that are used in the identification of suitable lands for open space include the following:

- suitability of the lands to accommodate the facilities required;

- existing features which may or may not lend themselves to appropriate parkland use;
- maximum road frontage is desirable;
- good views;
- lands with overground cables or underground services are not desirable;
- association of lands with natural amenities, for example waterways, is an advantage.

The provision of sites for occasional activities (circus or other entertainment) is recommended to be located outside of settlements.

3.2.2 *Rural Areas*

The countryside and scenic landscapes are important recreational resources. Some of these scenic landscapes have been acquired by the state and designated as National Parks. Other lands have been acquired for use as forestry and recreation. Rural lands have also been acquired by local authorities including woodlands and historic houses together with sites for car parking close to rights of way and picnic areas.

Local authorities have an opportunity to play an active role in the conservation of the countryside including the purchase and/or safeguarding of land with a high scenic or amenity value in order to preserve the recreational resource for the future. In some cases this presents the opportunity for creating a county park. Indeed lands located adjacent to a designated landscape may be allocated in order to buffer or safeguard the outstanding scenic amenity of same. In this regard features and facilities provided must be compatible with the surrounding environment

Where acquisition of lands is not possible, the local authority may make access arrangements with owners of scenic landscapes and historic houses. The Planning Acts can facilitate formal arrangements for public access to lands. The designation of an area under a Special Amenity Area Order may be made for the purpose of conserving the special qualities of a particular landscape.

3.2.3 *Roadside Amenity*

The guidelines refer to the need for local authorities to give attention to the landscape treatment of roads. A range of specific guidelines are outlined around the aspiration of preserving sense of place.

3.3 *DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT – RESIDENTIAL DENSITY GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES (1999)*

These guidelines suggest various qualitative standards in respect of the provision of open space:

- details of the quality of open spaces should be included in planning applications;
- open spaces should be visually and functionally accessible to the maximum number of households;
- developments should not be granted planning permission if the open space design does not facilitate ease of management and access. Open space designed for children's play will facilitate ease of supervision;
- open spaces should be designed in a manner that protects and enhances existing natural features, for example, mature woodland or streams;
- open spaces should be of adequate size, ill proportioned or awkwardly shaped open spaces can be difficult to use or maintain;
- Local or Action Area Plans should indicate the most suitable locations of larger public open spaces. Sports pitches and larger recreational areas should be placed at appropriate distances from residential developments to facilitate easy access. This allows for a more flexible open space design within the residential development, especially with regards to small children's play, informal kickabout and passive amenity;
- the criteria for the locating of public open space should include preservation of natural landscape features, accessibility, and gradient;
- there should be pedestrian links between open spaces and cycle lanes provided where appropriate; and
- hard landscaping elements should be considered for open spaces, especially for all-weather play areas.

In its recommended quantitative standards, the *Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities* states that:

- Open spaces should be provided on a hierarchal basis ranging in size from large regional parks to small passive recreation spaces close to homes;
- Planning authorities should include public open space quantitative standards in their development plans (usually ranging 10-14m²/ person or 10-14 per cent of site area). It does recognise that public open space provision on a population basis can be difficult due to the unpredictability of occupancy rates;
- Planning authorities should take a flexible approach to quantitative standards in order to improve qualitative standards, especially where developments are close to existing public parks, coastal and natural amenities. In these cases, a financial contribution may be sought by local authorities in lieu of public open space not provided;

- In greenfield sites for which Local or Action Area Plans apply, the minimum standard of 15 per cent of site area should be dedicated to useful public open spaces; and
- In all other situations, a minimum standard of 10 per cent of total site area should be maintained as public open space.

3.4 *SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT – PLANNING ADVICE NOTE 65: PLANNING AND OPEN SPACE (2008)*

This guidance document has been developed to address open space provision in Scotland. Whilst not directly applicable in Ireland, it serves as a useful reference in the development of this strategy. The guidance identifies two key functions of the planning system in regard to open space. These are the protection of areas that are valuable and valued as open space, and the provision of quality open space that is within easy reach of new development.

Planning Advice Note 56 (PAN 65) provides guidance and best practice relating to the implementation of associated policy, particularly that set out in SPP11 *Open Space and Physical Activity* which defines Scottish open space planning policy. It recommends that local authorities carry out an audit of open space in their area and develop local standards. Policy Statements produced by the Scottish Government also set objectives for better design standards including the requirement for design quality to be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

3.4.1 *Benefits of open space*

The benefits to be derived are various and include reinforcement of the physical identity of a settlement together with a range of social benefits including increased interaction between members of the community. Other benefits include the establishment of valuable wildlife corridors by linking spaces into networks. Economic benefits are derived also from improvements to the physical environment attributed to good quality open space.

3.4.2 *Definition and typologies*

PAN 65 defines open space as '*those areas within and immediately adjacent to a settlement in terms of the landscape, the natural heritage, recreational or civic functions.*' This definition together with the open space typologies listed below have been used to inform the Kildare Open Space Strategy.

- Public parks and gardens – enclosed areas of land designed as a park or garden.
- Private gardens or grounds – enclosed areas of land associated with a house or institution.
- Amenity greenspace – landscaped areas which provide visual amenity and separate buildings or landuses.

- Playspaces for children and teenagers – areas of land linked closely to housing which are safe, accessible places for play.
- Sports Areas – areas specially laid out for particular sports.
- Green corridors – routes including canals, river corridors, railway lines and other routes that link areas or settlements together.
- Natural / semi natural greenspaces – areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted.
- Other functional green spaces – allotments, churchyards and cemeteries.
- Civic space – Squares and streetscapes, promenades and waterfront areas all of which are predominantly hard landscaped.

The advice note highlights that open space of any type functions at its best when it is part of a network of linked open spaces. The establishment of networks of open spaces is recommended when identifying lands for future open space use as part of the development of an open space strategy for a particular area.

3.4.3 *Open space strategies*

An open space strategy as defined in PAN 65 provides a local authority with a basis for adopting an organised approach towards analysing open space supply and future requirements. The strategy typically comprises three elements:

- an audit of existing open space provision;
- an assessment of current and future requirements; and
- a strategy with a clear set of objectives.

The audit of existing open space would usually consider type, size, location, condition and maintenance requirements.

The assessment of current and future requirements will be founded on the audit of existing available open space. The approach to assessing requirements may be supply led, demand led or standards based.

Standards for the provision of open space needs would usually address the three criteria already mentioned, these being quality, quantity and accessibility. The guidelines also refer to the 2001 revision of the NPFA 6 acre standard as being applicable to outdoor play space. A minimum standard per 1000 population is 4 acres (1.6ha) for outdoor sport and 2 acres (0.8ha) for children's playspace.

The open space strategy usually brings a range of benefits, including a heightened public awareness, improved rationale for policy and land disposal and a stronger case for accessing funds for the provision of future open space.

PAN 65 refers to the importance of development plans in regard to the provision and protection of open space. These should protect important open spaces from future development. The development plan will highlight identified spaces for future use and spaces requiring improvement. The ultimate aim would be to establish a network of open spaces, preferably of higher quality rather than an extensive network of lower quality space which could pose difficulties from a management and maintenance standpoint.

The development of the open space strategy for Kildare takes account of policy already outlined at national, regional and county level. In addition, best practice standards applicable in Ireland and elsewhere have been used to inform the process. Four key steps in the methodology are identified together with a summary description;

- **Open space audit:** A high level desk based audit was undertaken to identify various different types of open space currently present within the County. This focused predominantly on open spaces that are publicly owned and accessible. An audit of open space for 22 settlements was also undertaken and mapped using data provided by Kildare County Council. The audit results are provided in chapter 5 and tabulated data in *Annex B: Open Space Audit of Settlements – Tabulated results*. Baseline audits of cultural heritage and landscape resources were also conducted and used to develop the supply analysis and the strategy. These are provided in *Annex C: Baseline Studies*.
- **Assessment of current and future needs:** An assessment of the current and future demand for recreational open space was conducted by engaging with the public and stakeholders via a questionnaire. The outcomes from this consultation exercise are outlined in *Annex D: Public Consultation*. The overall assessment of current and future requirements was largely informed by quantitative standards aligned with population data together with consideration of the feedback from the questionnaire. Data on current and future population projections from 2006 to 2017 were used to predict future open space requirements.
- **Strategy Development:** The Draft Strategy gives outline guidance on public open space needs for settlements of varying population sizes within County Kildare. This has been developed on the basis of the information presented in the open space audit and data on open space in settlements provided by Kildare County Council. In addition, guidance is provided in regard to seeking opportunities for future open space provision within the County generally.
- **Financial Plan:** It has been possible to identify requirements for new open space provision throughout the county, based largely on the quantitative standards described above. In the light of these requirements, it is possible to calculate the likely cost of such land. However, a large number of local parks will be delivered through developer contributions or, in some cases, the provision of quality open space areas may be a conditioned requirement of planning consent within major new developments wherein an appropriate proportion of the proposal site is retained or developed as public open space. In the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1999, it is

acknowledged that the percentage of site areas required to be developed as open space, most commonly adopted within development plans, ranges from 10-14% although in greenfield sites or those sites for which a Local or Action Plan is appropriate, public open space should be provided at a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area. Consequently, such provision would not be included in the financial plan for the council's expenditure. Additional considerations for financial planning relate to the upgrading and maintenance of existing parks and recreational areas. This should be evaluated following a comprehensive open space audit for the county which is not included within the remit of this strategy. Following such an audit, identified requirements would be prioritised and costs evaluated.

The remainder of this document presents the strategy process which follows the four steps as outlined above.

The open space audit comprised a desk based study review of the resources in the County generally followed by a field survey of sample open spaces in settlements in Kildare.

5.1 *DESK BASED AUDIT*

The supply of recreational open space was assayed, taking into account existing publically accessible open spaces in the ownership of a range of statutory organisations and Kildare County Council. A two tier hierarchy of facilities are outlined as follows:

- Open areas located within the County generally which are in use as recreational open space or have the potential to be used as such. These have the capacity to serve both local communities and users located within a wider catchment area; and
- Open spaces located within and around settlements (towns and villages) that usually serve as local amenities for residential areas.

5.2 *OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE COUNTY*

This strategy relates largely to publically accessible open space, comprising facilities currently owned by the Office of Public Works, Coillte, Waterways Ireland, and Kildare County Council. In addition, categories of land use derived from the Moland land cover survey ⁽¹⁾ that are not formally accessible to the public but which have relevance to the development of an open space strategy are also included. All of these areas are illustrated in *Figure 5.1: Open space resources in County Kildare*. Their relevance to the strategy is based upon their natural or cultural heritage importance and therefore their potential as high quality, stimulating open spaces.

5.2.1 *Moland Land Cover Categories*

The categories of open or undeveloped space covered in the Moland survey include:

- green settlements that are areas of undeveloped land located within the towns and villages;
- facilities used for sport and leisure (both privately or publically owned);
- areas of forest cover;

(1) MOLAND (Monitoring Land Use/Cover Dynamics) - Greater Dublin Area 2000 (updated 2006)

- areas of peat bog including those undisturbed and those with a history of extraction; and
- waterbodies.

5.2.2 *Publically Accessible Open Space in the Ownership of State Organisations*

The main facilities that are generally accessible to the public and in the ownership of Coillte, Office of Public Works and Waterways Ireland are listed in *Table 5.1* below and also illustrated in *Figure 5.1: Open space resources in County Kildare*.

Table 5.1 *Facilities Currently Accessible to the Public*

Owning authority	Site name
Coillte owned Forest Sites	Donadea forest Park (243 ha)
	Killinthomas Wood (71 ha)
	Rahin Wood (152.8ha)
	Mullaghreelan (43 ha)
	Mooreabbey (100 ha)
	Maddenstown (76.5 ha)
Office of Public Works	Castletown House and Estate
	Connolly's Folly
Waterways Ireland	Open space associated with the Rivers Liffey and Barrow.
	Open space areas associated with the Royal and Grand Canal.
Other	Carton House, a privately run facility including golf course and hotel with some facility for public access and appreciation of the historic house and site.

5.2.3 *Walking Routes*

An audit of walking routes in the County was undertaken by The CSA Group. These facilities are relevant to the strategy for their role as a passive recreation resource throughout the county and the locations of these are illustrated in *Figure 5.1: Open space resources in County Kildare*.

5.3 *OPEN SPACE IN SETTLEMENTS*

Data on the various categories of open space in settlements was obtained from Kildare County Council in a series of hand annotated maps. The categories mapped include the following:

- Open space and amenity – Council owned;
- Open space and amenity – Landuse Zoning;
- Open space and amenity – Privately Owned; and
- Open space and amenity – Owned by Waterways Ireland.

For each of the towns where spatial data was available, the locations of the four categories of open space listed above were digitised by ERA Maptec using GIS and are illustrated in *Figure 5.2 a – v: Open space resources in*

settlements in Kildare. Area calculations in hectares for each of the categories in each of the settlements are presented in *Table 5.2* below.

Table 5.2 ***Open Space Area Data (hectares) for Settlements in Kildare County***

Location	Open space and amenity - Landuse Zoning	Open space and amenity - Privately owned	Open space and amenity - Council Owned	Open space and amenity - Waterways Ireland	Total
Allenwood	20.094				20.094
Athgarvan	25.128		4.072		29.200
Athy	2.58	6.79	40.082		49.452
Ballymore Eustace	1.178				1.178
Castledermot		2.076	2.288		4.364
Celbridge	21.004		43.222		64.226
Clane	21.8	10.603			32.403
Derrinturn	3.560				3.56
Kilcock	24.396	4.357	15.172	4.274	48.199
Kilcullen	6.007	9.121	2.429		17.557
Kildare	11.801	4.296	9.974		26.071
Kill		6.184	1.637		7.821
Leixlip	69.536	6.450	88.601	6.499	171.086
Maynooth	2.620	2.925	47.427		52.972
Monasterevin	8.573	4.837	6.292	6.356	26.058
Moone			0.891		0.891
Naas	79.07	101.92	52.76		233.75
Newbridge	34.461	29.062	28.349		91.872
Prosperous	2.806	5.425			8.231
Rathangan	3.789	1.416	0.151	2.608	7.964
Sallins	12.605	2.979	0.924	5.341	21.849
Straffan		2.477	0.594		3.071
Total	351.008	200.918	344.865	25.078	921.87

5.4 ***OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGIES FOR KILDARE***

The extent of publically accessible open space in County Kildare cited above was further categorised using the open space typologies derived from PAN 65. The category of “public parks and gardens” is further expanded using typologies or sub categories referenced in the Department of the Environment, *A policy for the provision and maintenance of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas*, 1987. Some typologies referred to in the Scottish Executive guidance have been omitted from the analysis where they lie outside the scope of this project. This includes; private gardens or grounds, other functional green spaces (cemeteries, allotments and institutional grounds) and civic spaces.

The typologies that apply in particular to public open spaces in County Kildare are detailed in *Table 5.3* below and illustrated in *Figure 5.3 : Audit of open space currently accessible to the public*.

The sub categories; neighbourhood park, local park and amenity greenspace were assigned to open spaces in settlements currently owned by the county council in line with the size criteria that defines these spaces; that being ≥ 16 hectares for the former and ≥ 2 hectares for the latter. The category 'amenity greenspace' was assigned to open spaces currently owned by the county council which are below the size threshold of 2 ha.

Table 5.3 *Public Open Space Typologies for Kildare County*

Category PAN 65	Sub Category DOE Guidelines 1987	Description	Site or location - Kildare County
Public Parks and Gardens	Country Park	Large recreational facility to which users travel some distance by car usually seeking a family day out	OPW Sites Castletown House and grounds Carton House
	Neighbourhood Park	Large area of parkland (≥ 16 ha minimum) located within 0.8km of target population and managed as a public park to facilitate both passive and active recreation.	Kilcock – one open space area measuring 15.17ha Leixlip – two open spaces each measuring 20.54 and 16.29ha respectively Maynooth – one open space area measuring 20ha Naas – one open space measuring 16.8 ha Athy - one open space measuring 18.8 ha
	Local Park	Small area of parkland (≥ 2 ha minimum) located within 0.4km of target population and managed for passive recreation only.	Celbridge – 7 no open spaces. Kildare – 1 no open space in this category. Leixlip – 8 no open spaces in this category. Maynooth – 3 no open spaces in this category. Monasterevin – 1 no open spaces in this category. Newbridge – 3 no open spaces in this category. Naas – 3 no open spaces in this category. Athy – 2 no open spaces in this category
Amenity Green space	-	Relatively small areas of open space associated with individual housing estates.	These small areas of open space associated with residential areas are present in 14 of the towns and villages in the County.
Playspace for children and teenagers	-	Areas designed to facilitate childrens play usually located within an existing public park and easily	Usually within settlements

Category PAN 65	Sub Category DOE Guidelines 1987	Description	Site or location - Kildare County
		accessible from residential areas.	
Sports Areas	-	Sports pitches and sports facilities.	Usually within settlements
Green Corridors		Linear green spaces such as canal and river corridors.	Waterways Ireland Sites River Liffey River Barrow Grand Canal Royal Canal
Natural/ semi natural green spaces	-	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with habitats such as woodland or wetland areas	Coillte Owned Sites Donadea forest Park Killinthomas Wood Rahin Wood Mullaghreelan Mooreabbey Maddenstown Wood Moland Land Use categories. Areas of bog Forests Green settlements

Five towns have open space provision of sufficient area to qualify as a neighbourhood park. Leixlip has two large areas of open space that fall into this size category whilst Naas, Athy, Maynooth and Kilcock have one such open space area each.

Open spaces that meet the size criteria for “local parks” occur in eight towns. Both Celbridge and Leixlip have the highest number of open spaces that meet the size criteria of local park. Celbridge has seven such areas and Leixlip has eight. Newbridge and Naas each have three open spaces of this size category and Maynooth and Athy each have two open spaces of this size category. Both Kildare and Monasterevin have one area of open space in this size category.

A number of towns and villages included in the study have no open spaces of a size that equates to either the definition of a neighbourhood or local park. Amenity greenspace is the only category of open space available in these towns. These are listed in *Table 5.4* below. A number of towns included in the study currently feature no open space in the above categories and these are also referred to in the table below.

Table 5.4 *Towns and Villages with Limited or No Available Public Open Space in Council Ownership*

Towns with amenity green space only	Towns with no recorded council owned open space
Athgarvan	Allenwood
Castledermot	Prosperous
Kilcullen	Ballymore Eustace
Kill	Clane
Moone	Derrinturn
Rathangan	
Sallins	
Straffan	

5.5 *FIELD BASED OPEN SPACE AUDIT*

The audit was undertaken for the 22 settlements referenced in the strategy and focused on one or two sample open spaces within each settlement. The purpose of the audit was to begin to identify, for the sample open spaces surveyed, the quality and condition of these spaces and facilities contained therein together with some initial recommendations for improvements to the open space resource for each settlement for recreation and amenity purposes.

The scope of the open space audit is limited in that it addresses a sample number of open spaces and the qualitative assessment or evaluation of these open spaces was undertaken in accordance with limited criteria as set out below. With this in mind the purpose of this exercise was to start an audit process which could be applied to all open space for recreation and amenity purposes both present and future. In this regard, the outline audit will be a basis for the preparation of a detailed qualitative open space audit for all settlements in the County which will be maintained and updated regularly.

5.5.1 *Introduction*

The field survey focused on a sample of open spaces located within the 22 settlements included in this study. The mapped data on open space provided by Kildare County Council and illustrated in *Figure 5.2: Open Space Resources in Settlements in Co Kildare* was used as a basis for the survey.

5.5.2 *Methodology*

During the fieldwork, conducted mid-September, sample open spaces were visited in each of the settlements and these were evaluated or scored against a list of set criteria outlined below.

- land cover type;
- intended users;
- frequency of use;
- rating of facilities;
- rating of aspects;

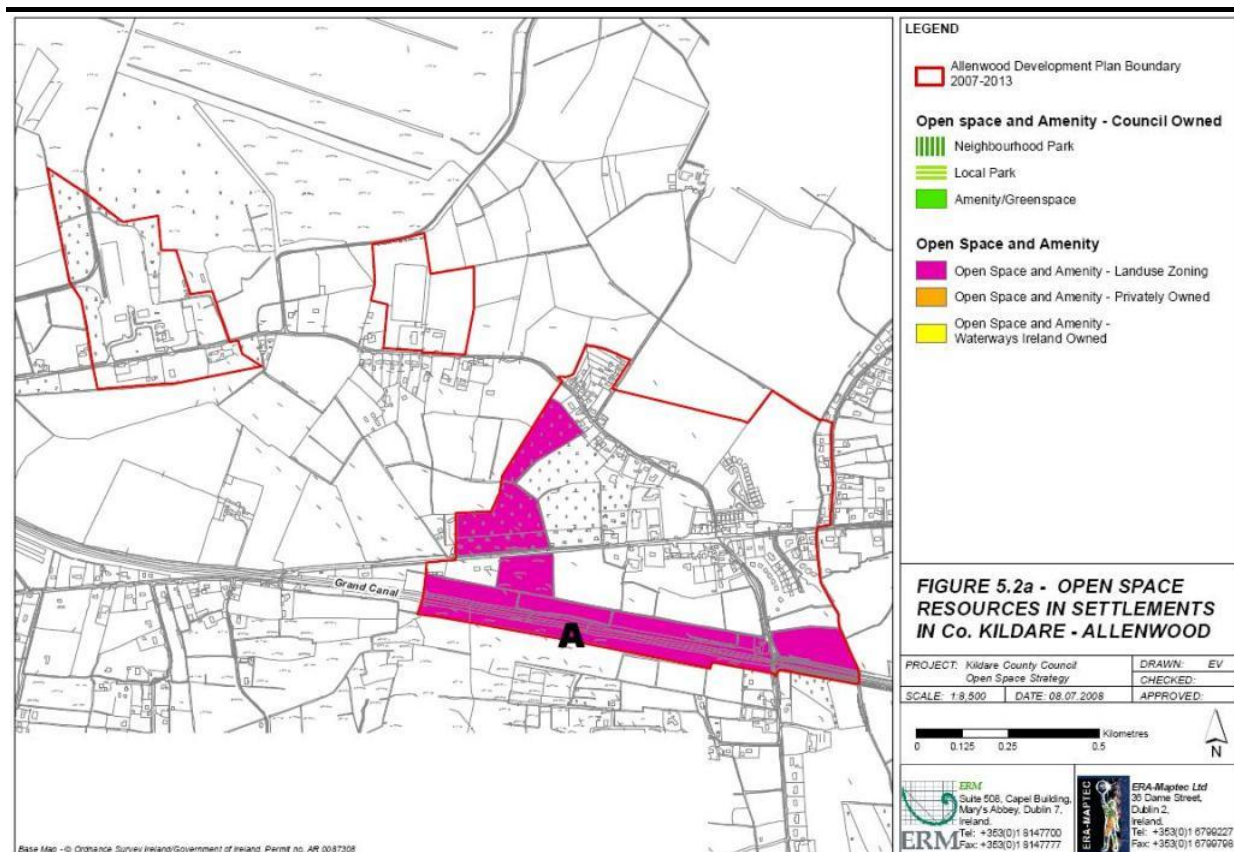
- material features present;
- location;
- accessibility; and
- condition.

The open space audit form (see *Annex B: Open Space Audit Form*) used to conduct the audit particular open spaces is outlined in this report . The field survey findings are outlined below for each settlement. A map of the open space data (provided by Kildare County Council) for each settlement is presented and sites visited are labelled A, B or C in turn. A description of the open space resource together with the survey findings for the sites visited is provided. Each of the sites visited were scored against the above criteria and the results of these are presented in *Annex B: Open Space Audit – Tabulated results..* Photographs were also taken of the sites visited in order to illustrate the issues being highlighted by the audit.

Initial recommendations for improvements to the open space resource in each settlement are presented on the basis of the survey audit findings of the open spaces sampled and the mapped data on open space resources for each settlement provided by Kildare County Council.

5.5.3 Allenwood

Figure 5.1 Allenwood Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Allenwood A

Description

Allenwood has one area of land which is zoned for open space and amenity, located along the Grand Canal.

Key Findings

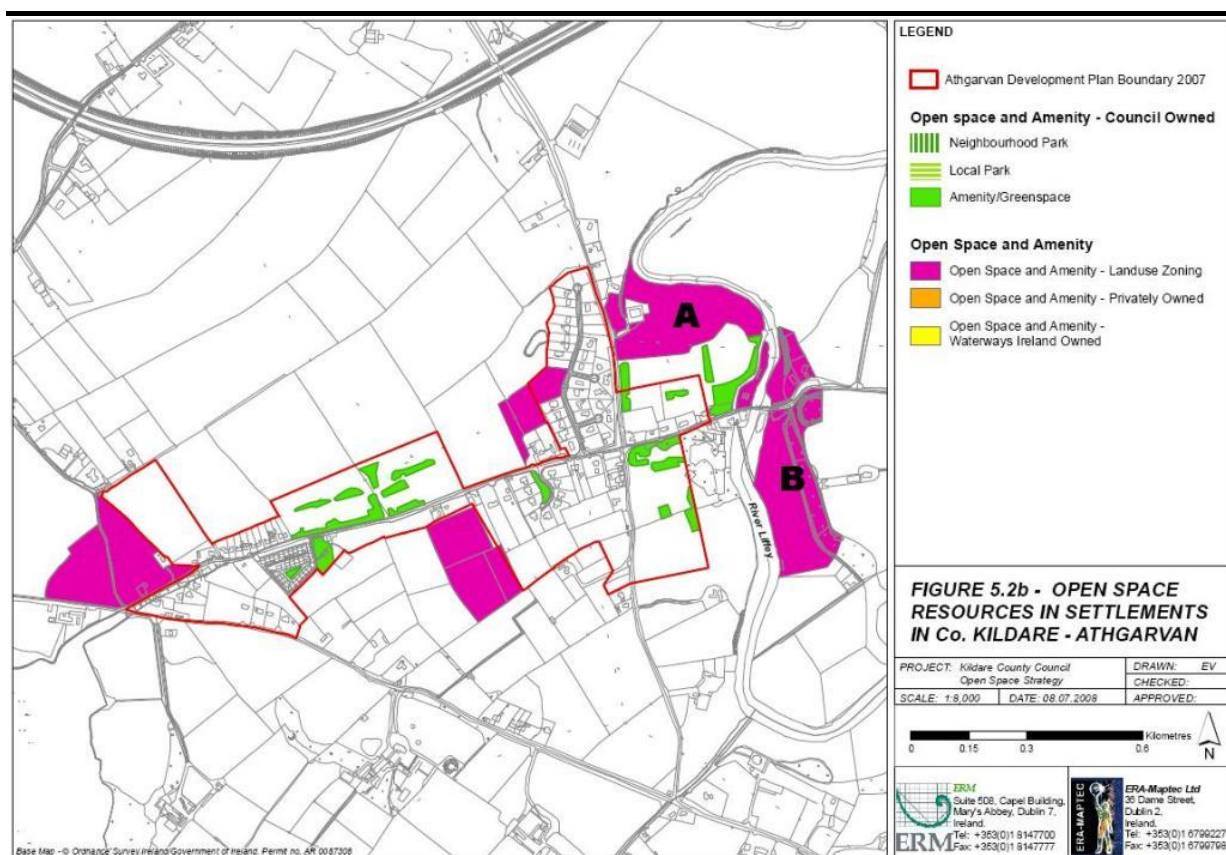
- There are no open spaces currently in public ownership within Allenwood.
- The land zoned as open space at location A along the canal is some distance from the town centre and therefore its potential as an amenity open space is limited. It has a roughly surfaced footpath and is quite overgrown with vegetation in places. Parts of this land is inaccessible to the public.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- Some maintenance work together with the provision of facilities, such as footpath, cycle-track and seating areas , would significantly improve this canal corridor as a recreational amenity.
- The canal corridor contains a mixture of habitat types, and while it could potentially be used as an open space, it is important that the future management of this space takes account of the need to retain and enhance its ecological resource.
- A local park or neighbourhood park should be provided that ideally connects the residential areas of the town with the existing natural greenspaces that are currently zoned as an open space. There are no facilities in this town to cater for active recreation, this needs to be addressed.

5.5.4 Athgarvan

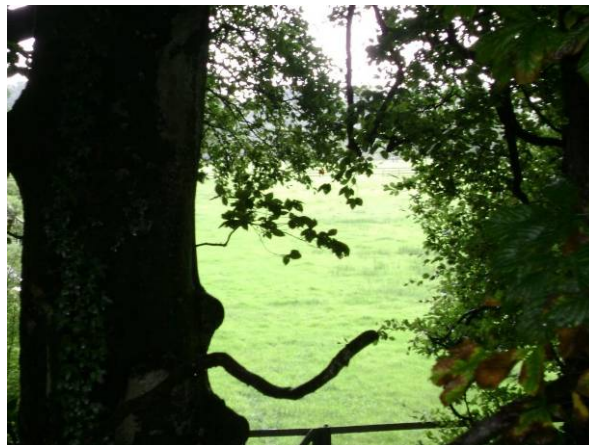
Figure 5.2 Athgarvan Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Athgarvan B



Photograph of Athgarvan A

Description

Adjacent to the residential areas of Athgarvan there are numerous small open spaces . These amenity greenspaces are very small and whilst they may serve as playspaces for small children, they primarily serve as a visual amenity. There are no local parks or neighbourhood parks in Athgarvan. However, there are a number of land parcels zoned as open space within the town. The River Liffey runs through some of these zoned lands on the eastern side of the town.

Key Findings

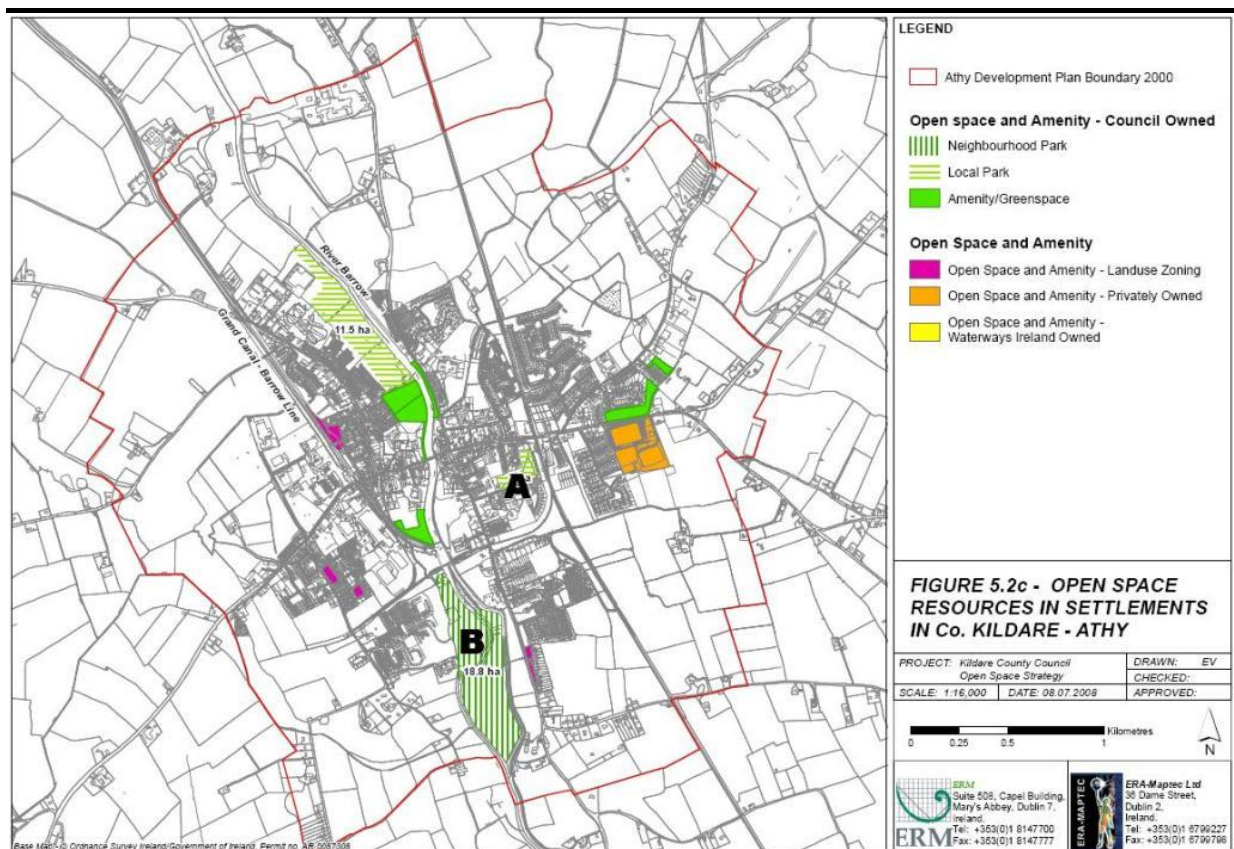
- There are no public open spaces of significant size within Athgarvan that are easily accessible to the population. The only open spaces available for use by the public are the small areas within the residential areas.
- Athgarvan Farm, location B which is zoned as open space and by the public. Signs on the gates of the property warn against trespassing.
- The open space at location A is situated on the banks of the River Liffey. While it is accessible it appears to be seldom used as an amenity open space and contains no facilities to cater for users. During the audit this open space was largely inaccessible due to waterlogging.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- There is a shortage of larger open spaces in Athgarvan which would accommodate both sporting and passive recreational facilities. Locations for open spaces of a larger size need to be identified.
- There are several locations surrounding Athgarvan which could be used to cater for active and passive open space users. With the proposed expansion of the residential stock of Athgarvan it is essential that open spaces, both active and passive, be provided within the residential areas.
- Land should also be secured to cater for active recreation, as the young population ages there will be a need for sports pitches accessible from the adjacent housing.
- The River Liffey corridor has great potential as an attractive setting for a local linear park catering for passive and some active recreation including walking and cycling.

5.5.5 *Athy*

Figure 5.3 *Athy Open Space Audit*



Location of Audit



Photograph of Athy A



Photograph of Athy B

Description

Athy contains a range of sizes and types of open spaces which are accessible to the public. The open spaces form an integral part of the town, with good signage, information and facilities. Throughout the residential areas there are small areas of amenity greenspace. There are larger spaces which fit the size criteria of neighbourhood and local parks.

Key Findings

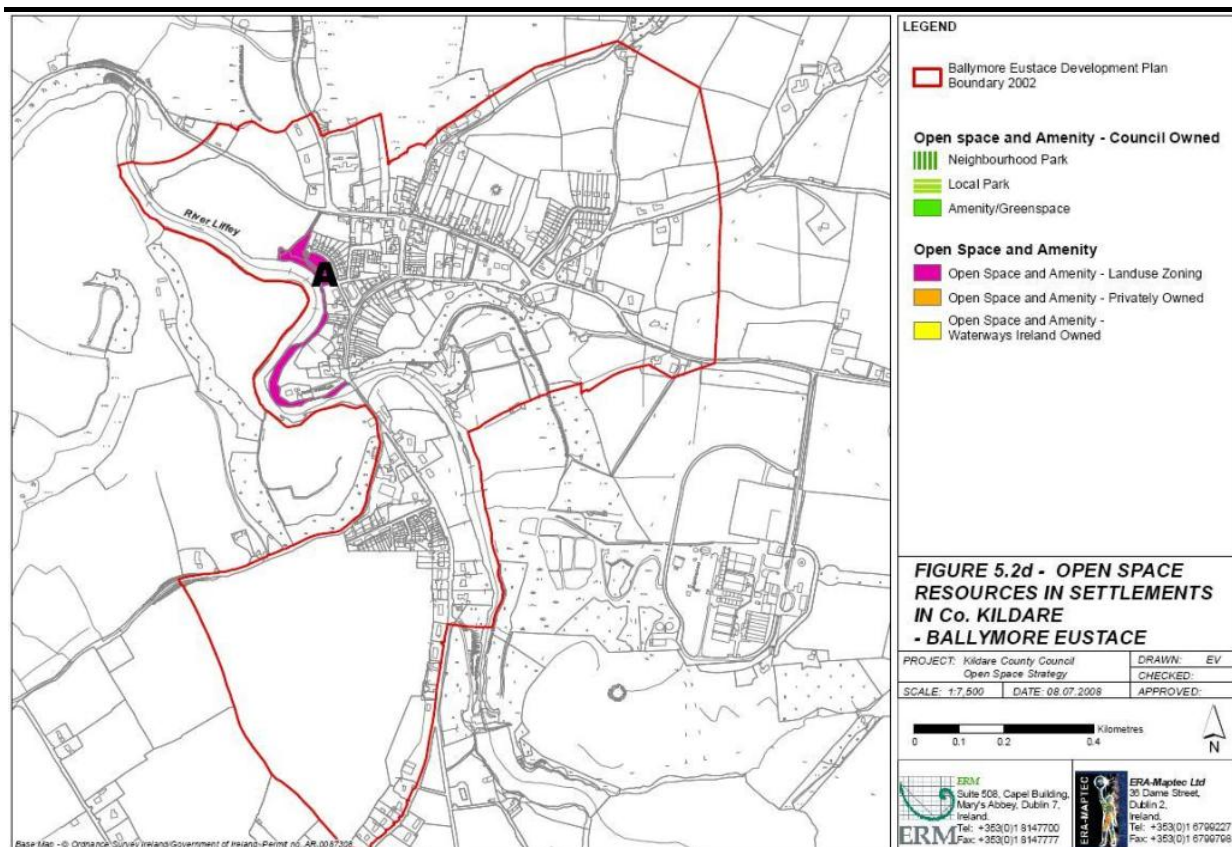
- At location A, adjacent to the train station, there is a formal park of high quality. This open space appears to be very well used and appears to be a focal point for the local community.
- At location B, the Grand Canal and the River Barrow converge. This site is prone to flooding and its use as an open space is limited by the fact that the central area is difficult to access.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- The use of the open space at location A could be encouraged through the provision of secure bicycle locking facilities would draw users from a wider catchment.
- While there are several areas of high quality open space in Athy, their amenity value could be enhanced by the provision of linked access between these and other open spaces such as that along the Grand Canal.

5.5.6 Ballymore Eustace

Figure 5.4 Ballymore Eustace Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Ballymore Eustace A

Description

There is no public open space in Ballymore Eustace according to the map data illustrated. A small section of land along the River Liffey corridor is zoned for open space use.

Key Findings

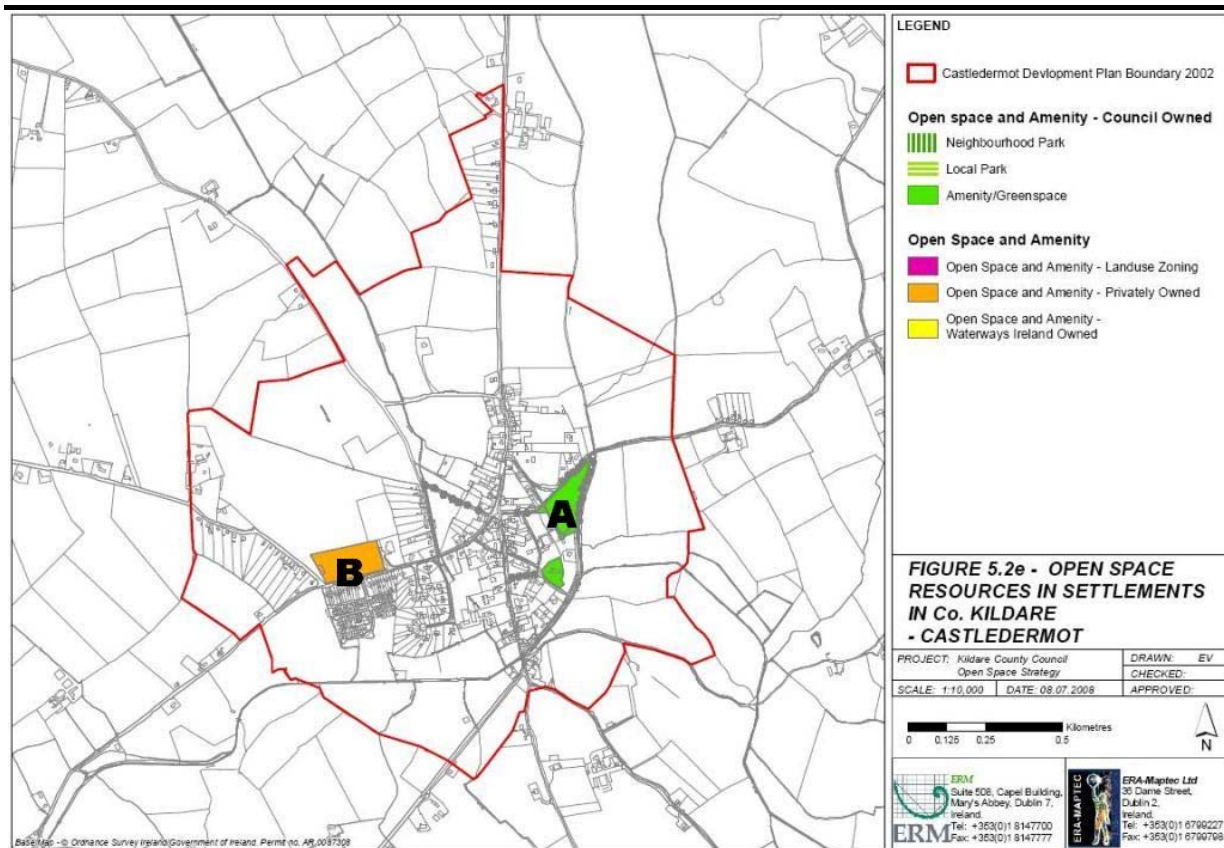
- There is land zoned as open space adjacent to the River Liffey, including the lands audited at location A. These lands are adjacent to a residential area but provide little benefit due to the fact that there is no obvious pedestrian access.
- This open space at location A is of limited use, comprising grassland, with no facilities.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- It would be beneficial to secure further land for open along natural corridors, such as the River Liffey, which meanders through Ballymore Eustace.
- There is a need for public open space generally which would cater for active and passive recreation for all age groups.
- The provision of facilities, such as footpaths, cycle-ways and seating areas, in areas zoned as open spaces such as the River Liffey corridor could be of great amenity benefit to the users as well as serving as an access route from the north to the south of the town.

5.5.7 Castledermot

Figure 5.5 Castledermot Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Castledermot A



Photograph of Castledermot B

Description

There are two areas of amenity greenspace within Castledermot. At location A, It was noticeable that the greenspace was primarily used as a shortcut. There is a GAA sports ground at location B on the west side of the town.

Key Findings

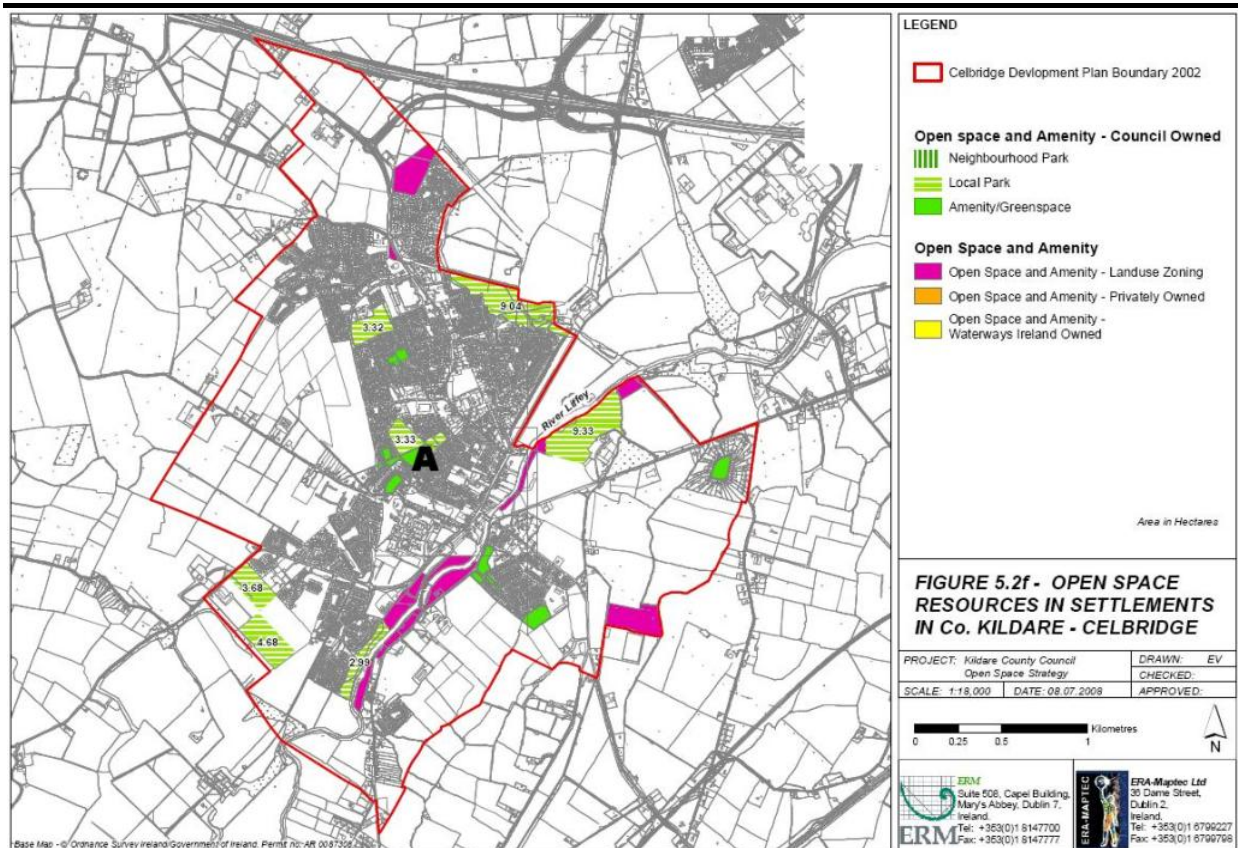
- The amenity greenspace audited at location A is set back from the main street of the village. It appears not to be used too frequently other than as a through route. This open space provides mainly visual amenity to a small number of adjacent houses.
- The GAA club provides for active recreation, but only when it is open.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- The use of the amenity greenspace at location A could be enhanced through the provision of facilities chosen to meet the needs of the local population. The layout design and accessibility of this open space by adjacent residents ought to be reviewed.
- Location A may be a suitable location for particular facilities, such as a small playground.

5.5.8 Celbridge

Figure 5.6 Celbridge Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Celbridge A

Description

There is a significant amount of public open spaces within the urban fabric of Celbridge. However, there are no neighbourhood parks, the majority of open space is in the form of local parks, adjacent to residential areas, such as that at location A. There is the large country park to the northeast of the town, the Castletown House and Estate, which caters for the needs of the residents of that end of the town.

Key Findings

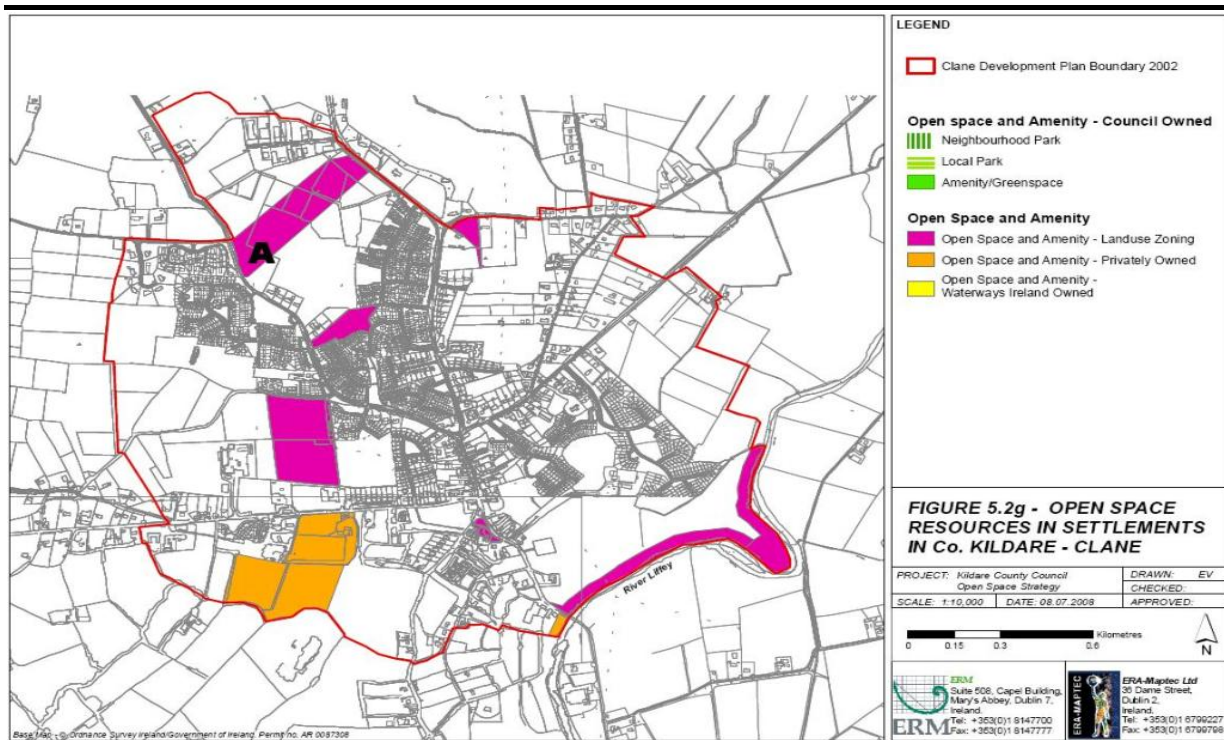
- A significant amount of the lands classed as open space are difficult to access and not directly accessible from the residential areas of the town. The open space at location A is typical of the types of open space within Celbridge.
- In the southern areas of the town there is a lack of accessible, quality open space.
- While the open spaces, such as that at location A, are suitable for residential areas with young populations, it appears that they are less used in residential areas with older populations. These open spaces would originally have been used for kickabout, but as the resident families grow older the community's need for kickabout declines and hence the utility of open spaces designed for kickabout also declines.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- Opportunities to secure land along the River Liffey corridor for open space use should be taken. Not only would this provide a conduit for residents from the southern end of town to the Castletown Estate, it would also allow for the easy movement of pedestrian traffic through the town.
- On open spaces, such as at location A, where residential populations are relatively older, it would be worthwhile to consider alternative uses, such as community gardens, allotments, tone zones (outdoor spaces with exercise equipment designed specifically for older users), etc.

5.5.9 Clane

Figure 5.7 Clane Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Clane A

Description

There is no public open space indicated in the above map for Clane. There are lands zoned for open space to the west of the town and along the banks of the River Liffey. There is also an area of land to the south owned by the GAA and used for sports.

Key Findings

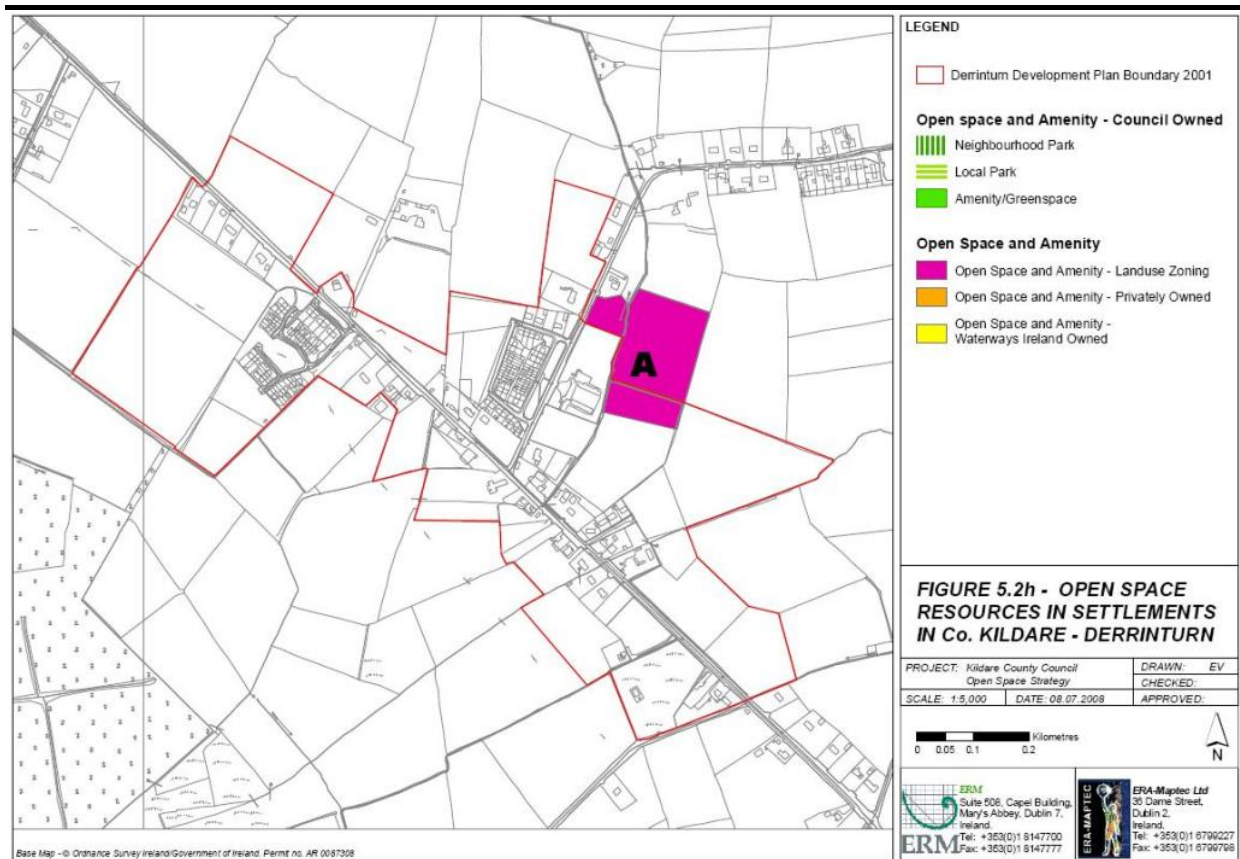
- Amenity greenspaces within the town of Clane (not marked on the above map) are small and provide for visual amenity primarily and as confined playspaces for small children. There are no Council owned open spaces which cater for active or passive recreation.
- At location A there is land zoned as open space but which is inaccessible to the public. It appears to currently accommodate overhead electrical transmission lines and contains no facilities for public users.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- There is a need to provide public open space. These open spaces should serve the needs of residential areas.
- The potential of the River Liffey corridor as a linear open space ought to be explored. The planning of future open spaces will, where possible, take advantage of potential linked access to the river corridor and connect existing open spaces throughout the town.

5.5.10 Derrinturn

Figure 5.8 Derrinturn Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Derrinturn A

Description

There are no Council owned open spaces within the town of Derrinturn. There is some land on the east side of the town, adjacent to a school that has been zoned as open space. This land is currently not accessible to the public.

Key Findings

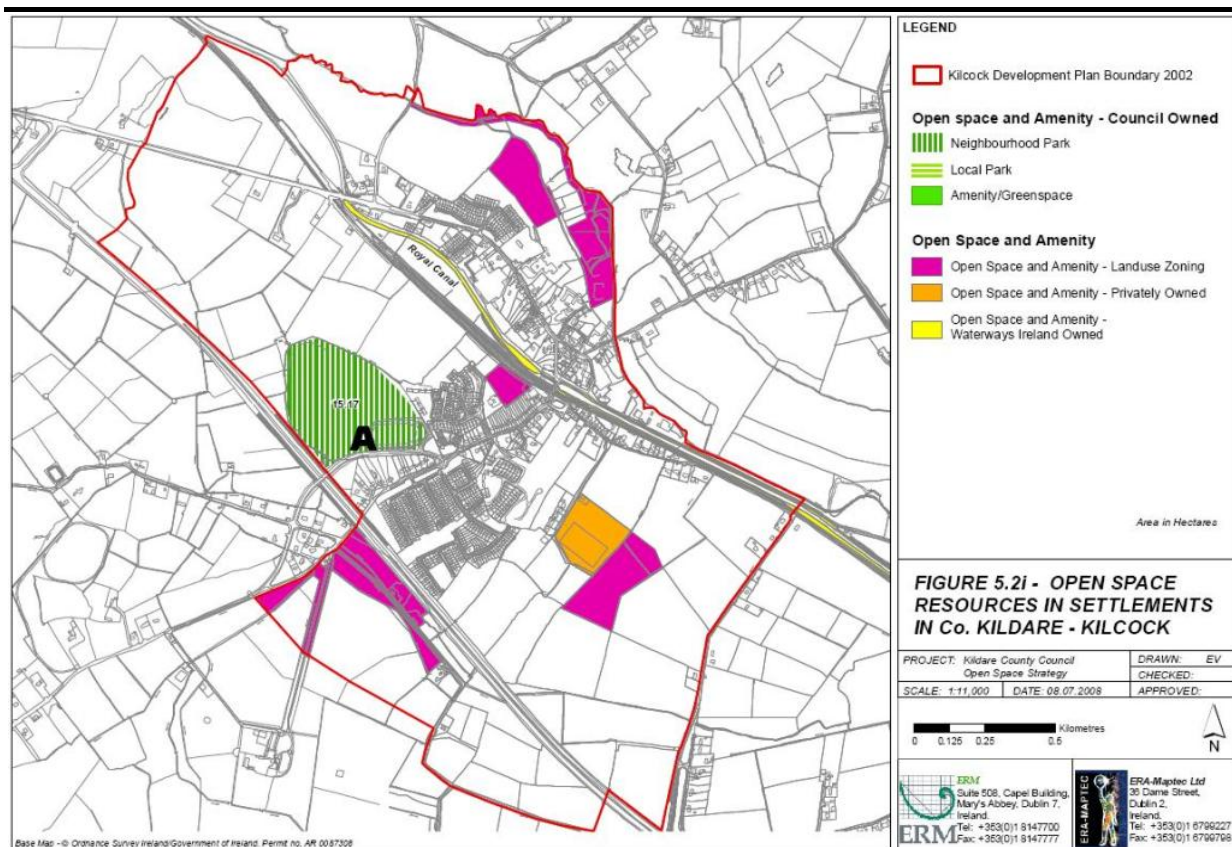
- There is a very small amount of amenity greenspace within the town of Derrinturn (not marked on the above map). This open space primarily serves a purpose in separating residential areas from roads and in providing some visual amenity.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- It is necessary that public open space is provided to meet population needs including both passive and active recreation.
- Provision of active recreational facilities on the lands zoned as open space may well be appropriate for local use as well as use by the students of the adjacent school.

5.5.11 Kilcock

Figure 5.9 Kilcock Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Kilcock A

Description

There is a substantial amount of land that has been zoned as open space. There is also a sports ground on the south-eastern side of the town. A large open space, containing a playground is located on the western side of the town adjacent to a large residential area. The banks of the Royal Canal are an open space, in the ownership of Waterways Ireland, passing through the town of Kilcock.

Key Findings

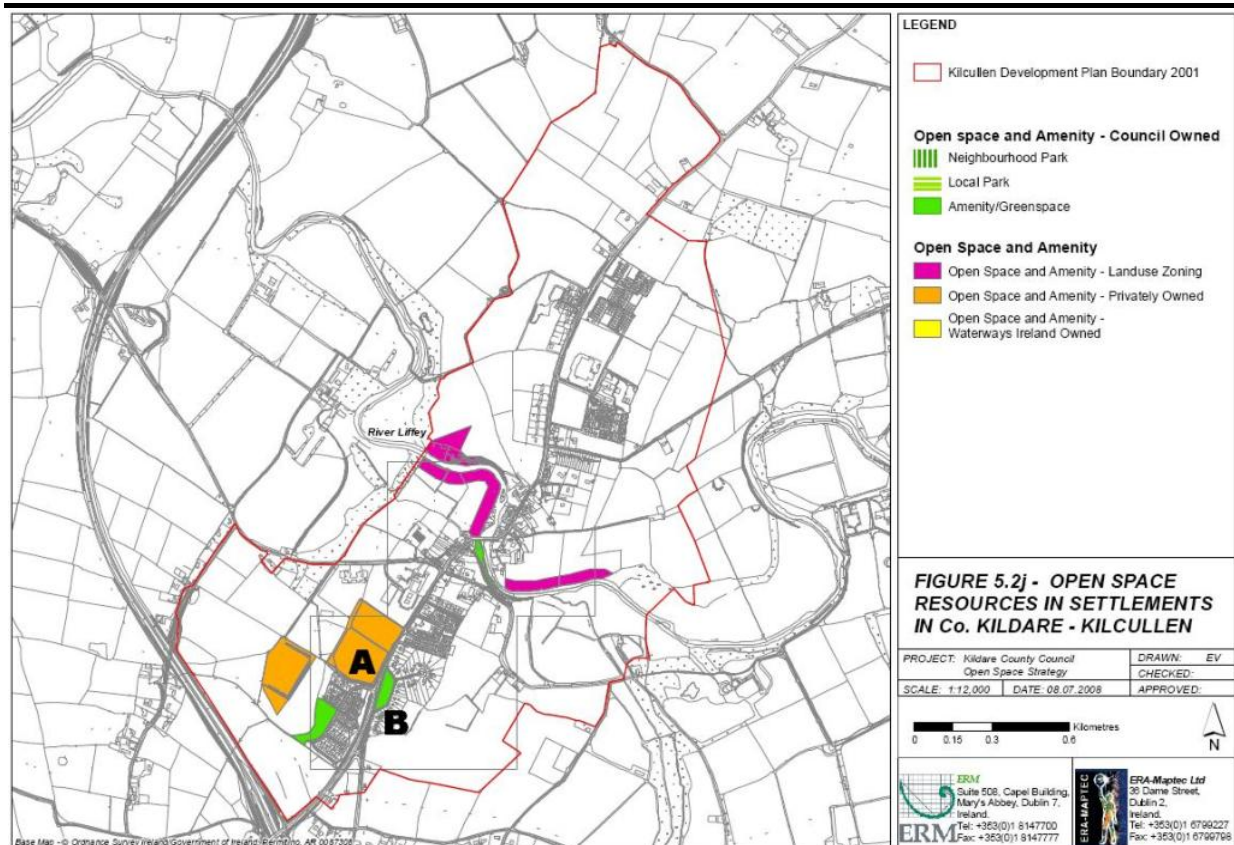
- While the open space at location A is predominantly open grassland, there is a playground which appears to be very well used. This park is in use by local residents.
- There are no facilities in this open space for teenage or adult users, at location A and a cargo container currently detracts from the amenity of this area.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- It would be beneficial for future open spaces to be linked with the Royal Canal Corridor, in order to form an overall open space network thereby enhancing the recreational value of these future spaces.
- At location A the cargo container should ideally be removed and a review of current facilities should consider the needs of teenage and adult users.
- Open spaces should, where possible, be accessible on foot or by bicycle from adjacent residential areas. Currently people drive and park on the open space at location A. Secure bicycle parking facilities could be provided in order to encourage this.

5.5.12 Kilcullen

Figure 5.10 Kilcullen Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Kilcullen A



Photograph of Kilcullen B

Description

The town of Kilcullen has two small areas of amenity greenspace located adjacent to residential areas. There is also some land zoned as open space along the banks of the River Liffey, which flows through the town. There are no neighbourhood parks or local parks within the town of Kilcullen.

Key Findings

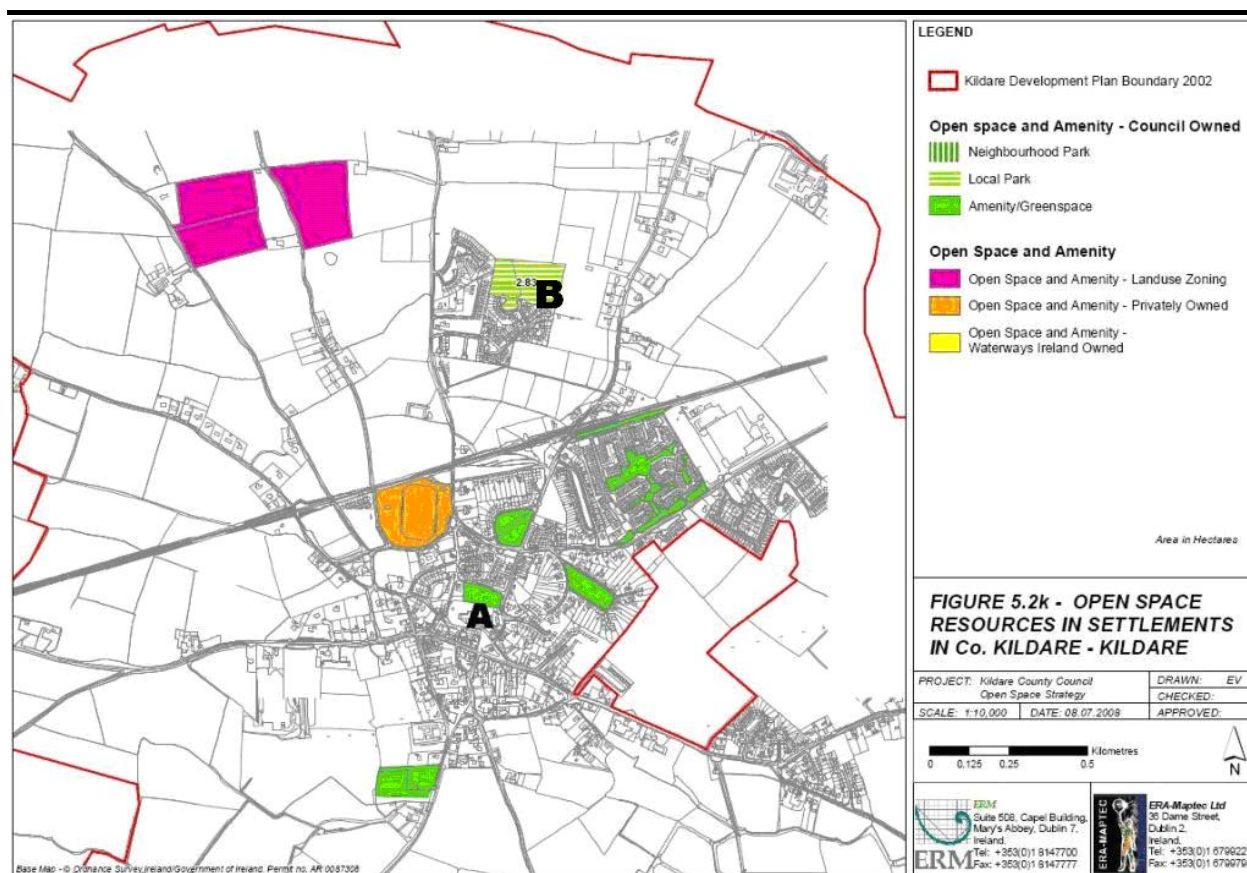
- The open space at location A, is an active recreation open space. It consists of a football pitch, an all-weather football pitch and the associated facilities. This is an excellent amenity and serves the needs of some of the local population. The majority of the open space is accessible to the public and is available for other pursuits.
- The amenity open spaces, located adjacent to residential areas are of a high quality generally. At location B the setting of the amenity open space is enhanced with mature trees. Facilities include footpaths and benches.
- There is a marked difference in the supply of open spaces between the northern and southern areas of the town.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- The residential areas of the north of the town, in particular are likely to benefit from the provision of further open space..
- cycle-ways where developed could be designed to provide access to or go through existing and future planned open spaces.
- The potential of the River Liffey corridor for use as a linear open space with facilities for walkers remains to be explored. Its central location is likely to give rise to opportunities to link this space with other existing and future open spaces in the area thereby increasing the amenity value of same. maximising the existing natural green corridor of the River Liffey.

5.5.13 Kildare

Figure 5.11 Kildare Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Kildare A

Description

There are two parcels of land to the north west of the town that are zoned as open space. These are adjacent to an area that is zoned for residential development. There are a number of open spaces in public ownership in the town. There is a privately owned open space on the western side of the town used by Round Towers GAA club.

Key Findings

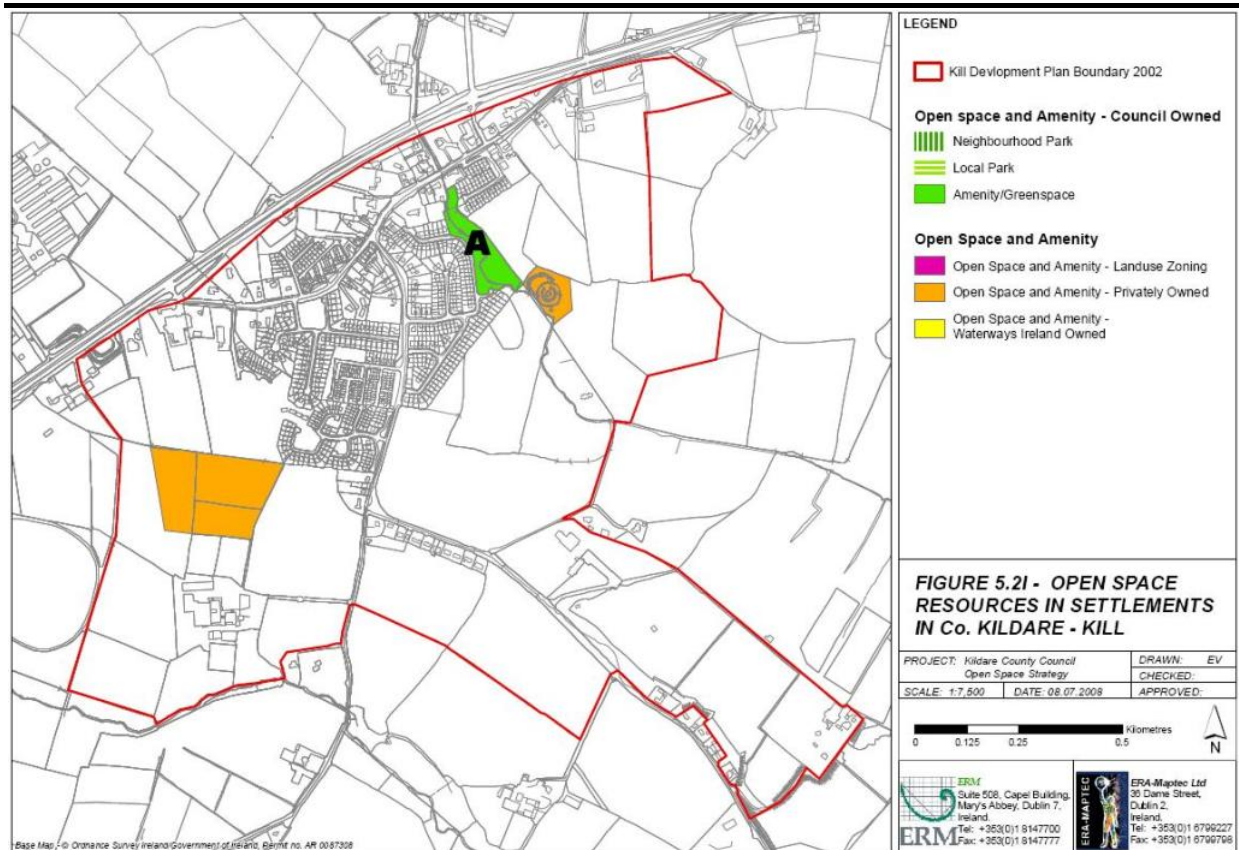
- The local park open space to the north of the town, at location B, is currently inaccessible. The usefulness of this area as a recreational open space needs to be assessed and consideration given to the opening up of these lands for use by the public..
- The open space at location A is of excellent quality. It appears to be well used and serves the needs of a large number of users. While the playground serves the needs of children and the garden serves the need of older users there are no facilities in the open space which would be of use to teenage or young adult users.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- There is likely to be a need for open spaces of a larger size category to serve the needs of the town especially the residential areas located to the south of the town.
- Existing open spaces should be linked by pedestrian paths and cycleways which also connect with the public transport facilities of Kildare town, such as the train station.
- There may be a need to provide open spaces that cater more for teenagers and young adults, including facilities such as skate-parks, outdoor gyms, etc.

5.5.14 Kill

Figure 5.12 Kill Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Kill A

Description

Kill, which is a relatively small settlement, contains two areas of open space which are privately owned. There is one public open space and several areas of amenity greenspace (not marked in the above map) located adjacent to residential areas throughout.

Key Findings

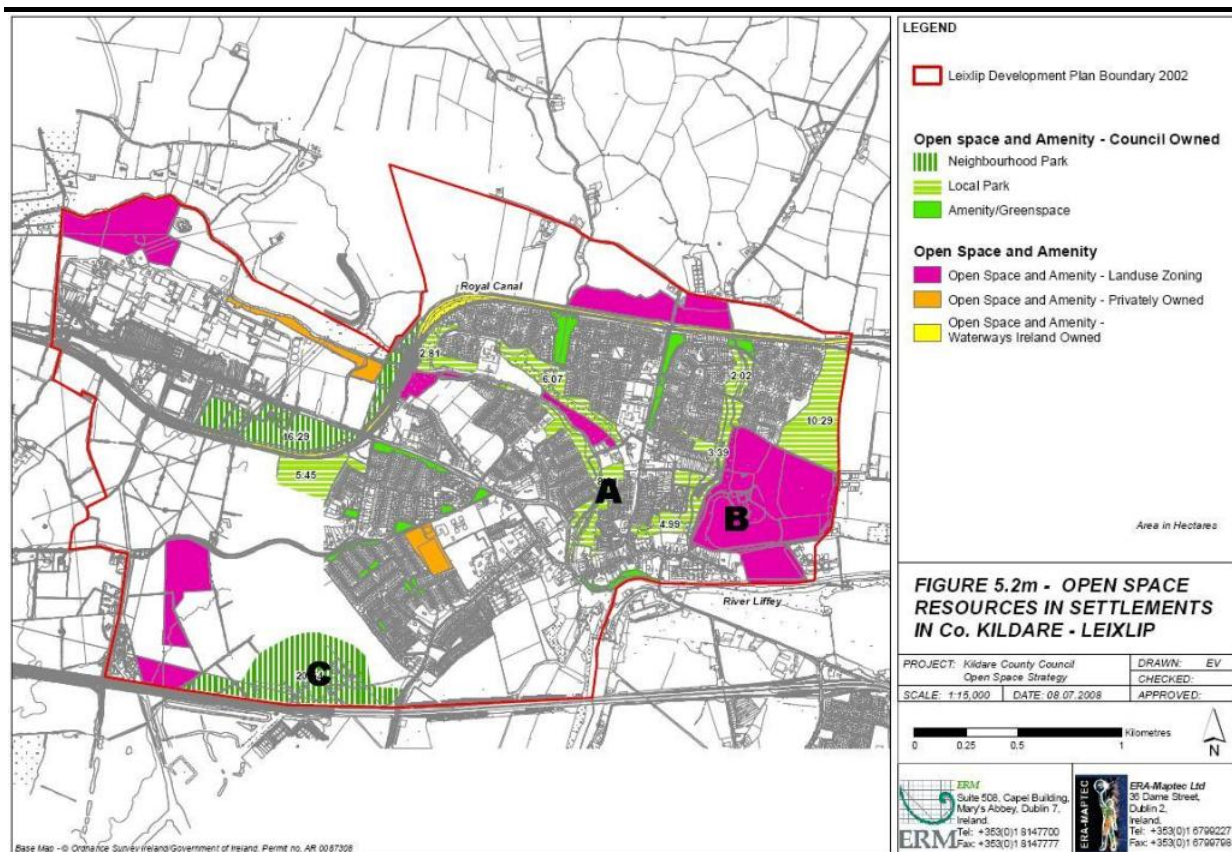
- The amenity greenspace, at location A, which is predominantly an area grassland, provides for visual amenity primarily and has no facilities .
- The size, outline shape and the gradient or slope of the ground at location A is such that it is unsuitable for use for ball games.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- Open space should be developed to serve the future developments on the southern fringe of the town with linked access to the existing town and residential areas.
- There is likely to be a need for public open space in the future , with space allocated for both passive and active recreation.

5.5.15 Leixlip

Figure 5.13 Leixlip Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Leixlip A



Photograph of Leixlip B



Photograph of Leixlip C

Description

There is a diversity of sizes of open space within Leixlip. There are neighbourhood parks, local parks and numerous amenity greenspaces adjacent to residential areas. There is also areas of land zoned as open space on the edges of the town. There are open spaces, owned by Waterways Ireland, along the banks of the Royal Canal. There are two open spaces in private ownership, one of which is a sports ground. There is a large park, St. Catherine's park, on the eastern side of the town.

Key Findings

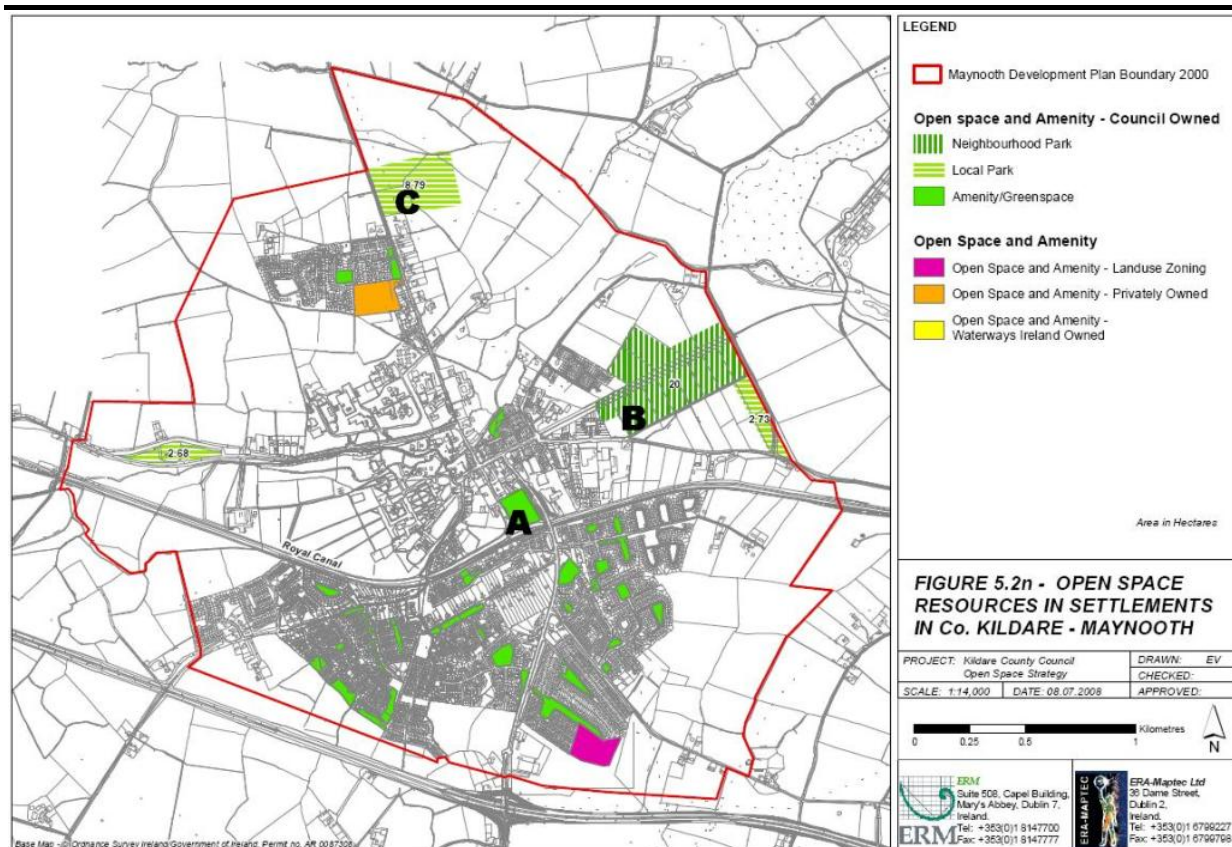
- There is good provision of open spaces in Leixlip town. Natural corridors have been utilised by the provision of open spaces, there are open spaces along the banks of the Royal Canal and the River Liffey.
- There is a good mix of both passive and active open spaces, there are several sports clubs which use the open spaces throughout the town and there are numerous high quality passive open spaces, especially along the River Liffey and at St. Catherine's Park.
- The open space at location A is of high quality, is well maintained and caters for passive users primarily.
- There is a large park, St. Catherine's Park at location B. This 20 ha open space caters for both passive and active users and contains various paths for walking as well as various other facilities for passive recreation.
- At location C there is a large expanse of grassland that contains no facilities and appears to be used for passive recreation only.
- The Royal Canal is a valuable recreational resource equipped with towpath for use by walkers.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- Opportunities ought to be taken to provide access to the Royal Canal corridor to and from existing and future public open space. The River Liffey corridor has potential for use as a recreational amenity in a similar way to the Royal Canal. Both corridors are ideally located for maximum use and access by users from the centre of town and from users in some of the residential areas further from the town centre.
- It must be ensured that all future residential areas are allocated adequate open space and that this is easily accessible.

5.5.16 Maynooth

Figure 5.14 Maynooth Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Maynooth A



Photograph of Maynooth B



Photograph of Maynooth C

Description

There is a mix of different sizes of public open space in Maynooth town. There are local parks to the north and west of the town. There are numerous amenity greenspaces throughout the town, adjacent to residential areas. There is also a large district park, the Carton Estate, to the north east of the town, directly accessible from the main street of the town.

Key Findings

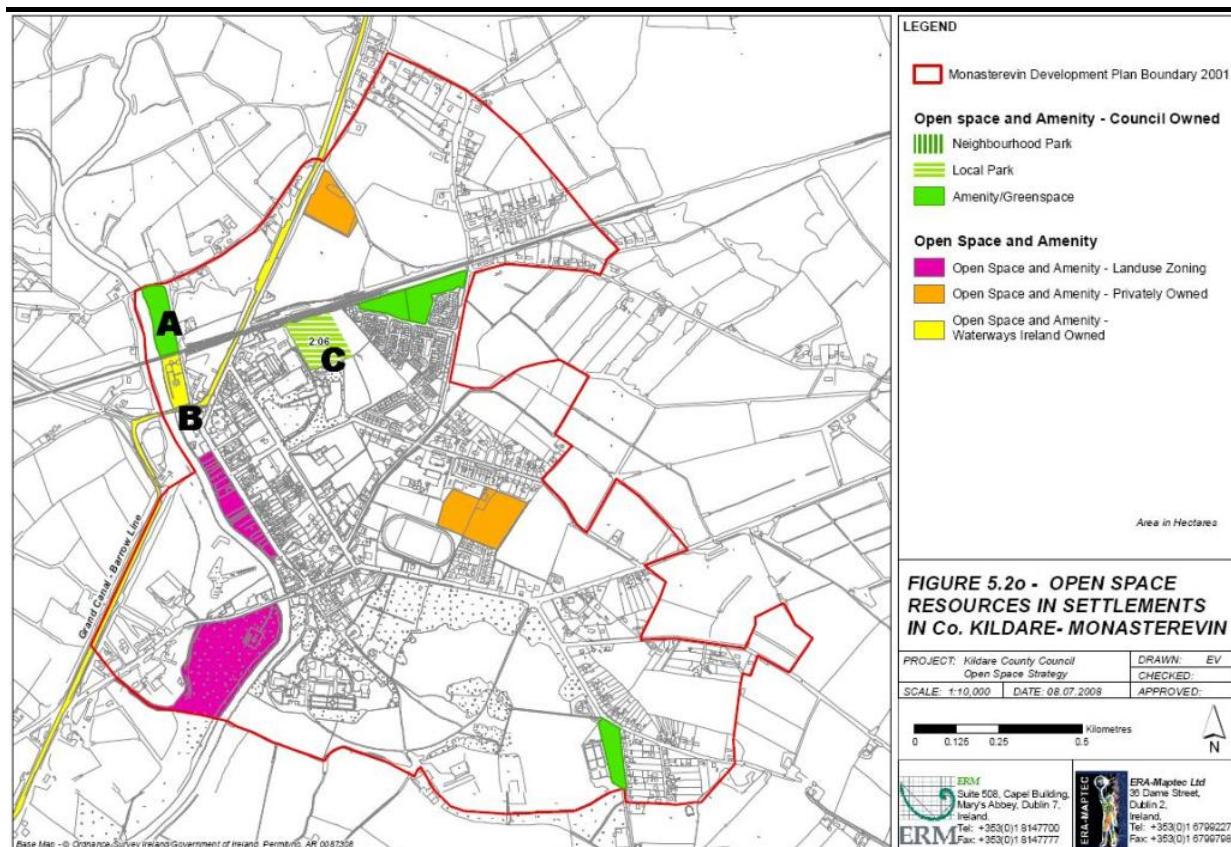
- At location A there is a large playground and sports pitches. This facilitates use by a large proportion of the population of the town. The playground is of good condition and appears to be well used.
- The Carton Estate, location B, is the primary open space that is used by residents of Maynooth and attracts visitors from further afield because of its historic and heritage importance nationally.
- The open space at location C consists of a sports pitch and some surrounding scrubland and provides for both passive and active recreation for residents of the northern end of the town.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- More could be done to take advantage of the corridor of the Royal Canal which currently has a towpath and is used by walkers.
- Residential areas on the southern side of the town may benefit from open spaces of a larger size than that currently provided for.
- In future developments open spaces should be used to connect the new developments with the existing town and the surrounding residential areas.

5.5.17 Monasterevin

Figure 5.15 Monasterevin Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Monasterevin A



Photograph of Monasterevin B



Photograph of Monasterevin C

Description

There is some diversity in size and type of open spaces in the town of Monasterevin. There are three open spaces marked in the above map that belong to the category of amenity greenspace. These are located adjacent to residential areas. The majority of the open spaces are located on the northern and north-western fringes of the town.

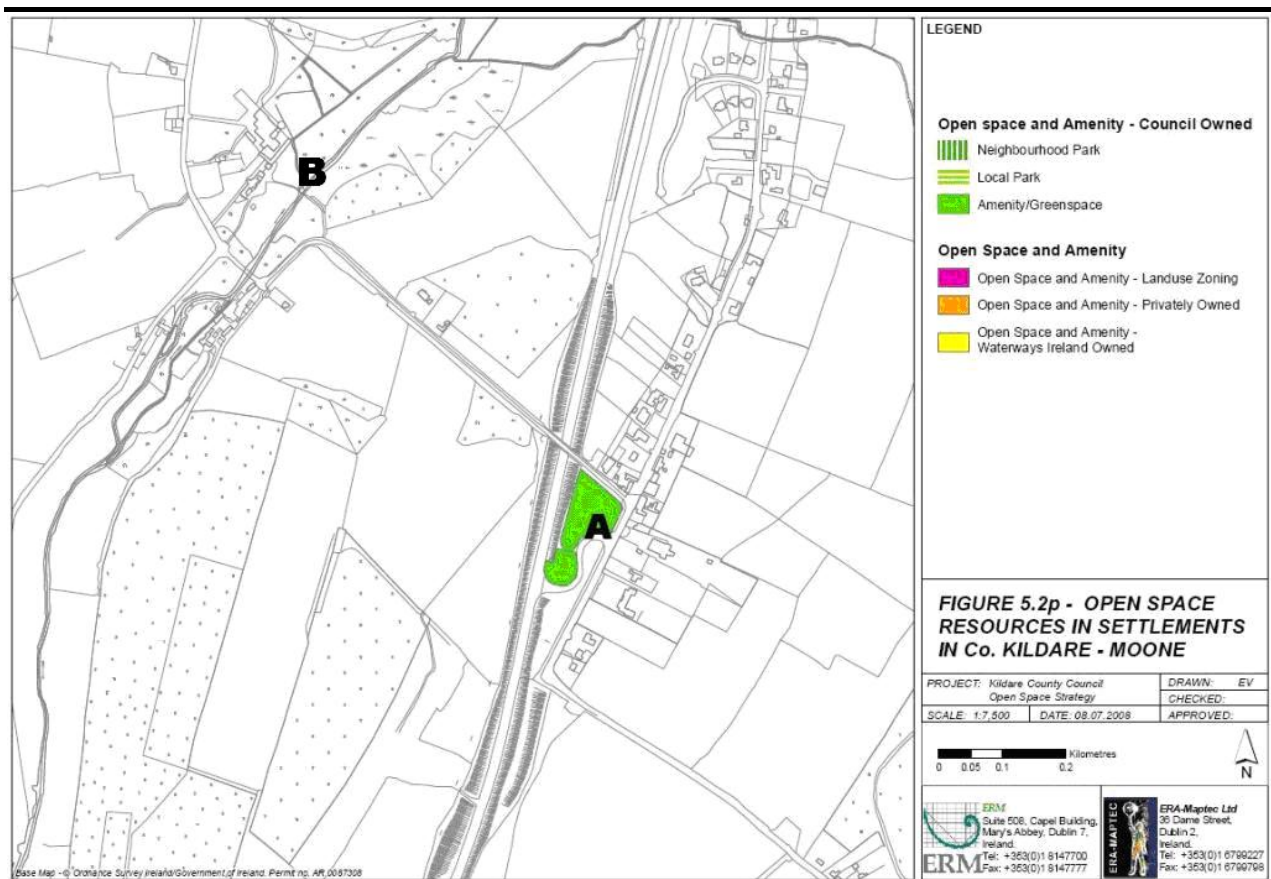
Key Findings

- The open space at location A is currently inaccessible to the public.
- At location B, there is an open space associated with the Grand Canal, which is owned by Waterways Ireland. This open space is of high quality and appears to be well used.
- At location C, which meets the size category of local park, the open space is currently inaccessible to the public.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- All areas of public open spaces which are currently inaccessible should be reviewed for their amenity potential and then consideration should be given to opening up these lands for use by the public. The provision of facilities, such as benches and sports facilities will then be considered. Access to open spaces from local residential areas could be improved through the provision of cycleways and footpaths.
- The Grand Canal corridor has footpath facilities and is currently used passively as a linear open space. The potential to provide linked access to this facility should be considered in the provision of public open space in the future.
- The River Barrow corridor, although not currently used for walking has recreational potential similar to that of the canal which ought to be explored.

Figure 5.16 *Moone Open Space Audit*



Location of Audit



Photograph of Moone A

Description

Moone is a small town with one existing public open space containing a playground.

Key Findings

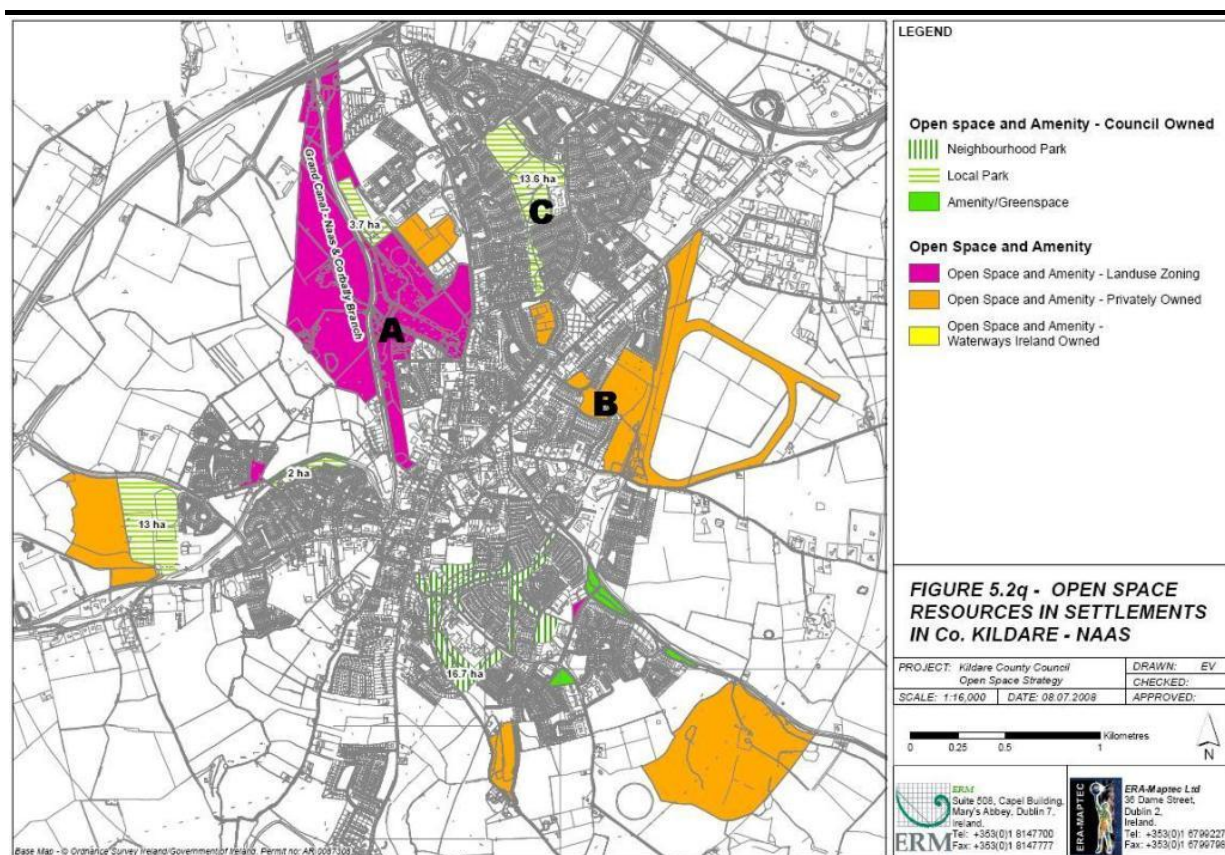
- The open space at location A in Moone is of a size that matches the amenity greenspace category and the playground equipment is of high quality. The open space is enclosed by trees and hedgerows which shelter it from the nearby roads and provide an enhanced setting.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- This open space is of high quality and serves the needs of the residents of Moone as well as possibly those from the surrounding area.
- The amenity open space is too small to cater for the needs of individuals seeking space for active recreation. It may be necessary to provide a space within Moone to serve the needs for active recreation. Further passive open spaces are available in the lands surrounding Moone, notably at Mooneabbey.
- Future residential developments should include quality amenity open spaces.

5.5.19 Naas

Figure 5.17 Naas Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Naas A



Photograph of Naas B



Photograph of Naas C

Description

There is a diversity of size of public open space in Naas. There are both local and neighbourhood parks. There are a number of amenity greenspaces adjacent to the residential areas. There is also a large amount of open space in private ownership, as well as a large tract of land zoned as open space on the north-western fringe of the town associated with the Naas and Corbally branch of the Grand Canal.

Key Findings

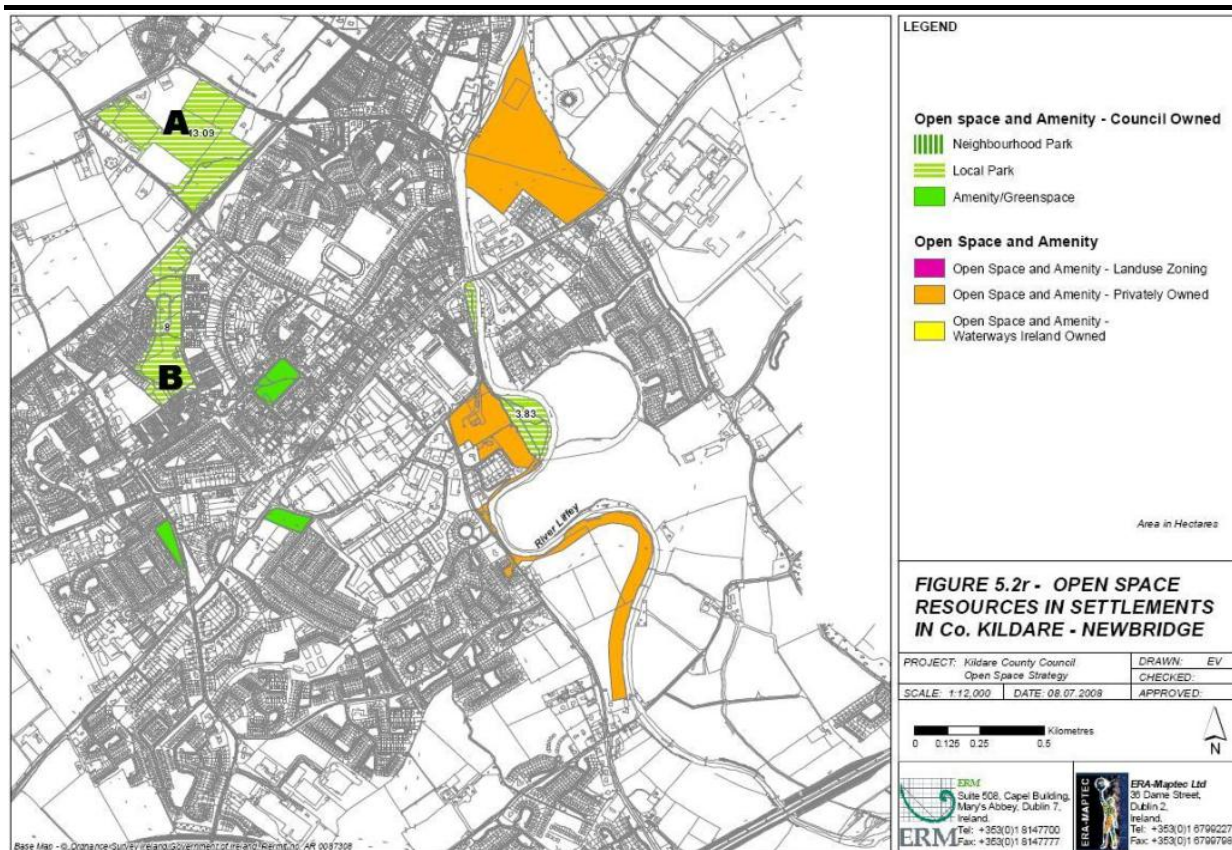
- At location A, there is a large tract of land zoned as open space, along both sides of the Grand Canal – Naas Corbally branch. The open space on the western side of the canal is inaccessible and serves as a natural wildlife space. The land on the eastern side of the canal is directly accessible from the town centre and is well provided with facilities such as footpaths, benches, etc.
- The open space at location B is located within a residential area. It features a large open area used for informal games. This open space appears to be frequently used. Although privately owned some open space is contained within the residential areas and is available for use by the public. The remainder of the land is fenced off and is unavailable for use by the public.
- There is a large local park at location C, which is at the centre of a very large residential area. This park contains a playground. This park is at the centre of a residential area and its benefits are most felt by those living adjacent to it.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- The area zoned as open space at location A should be maintained in a manner that is sensitive to the ecology of the Grand Canal Corridor.
- The Grand Canal corridor is well developed with waterside footpaths and is a valuable amenity. Opportunities for linked access to this resource ought to be considered in the development of future open space in this part of Naas.
- On open spaces, such as at location B, it was noted during the survey that the residential populations are relatively older. It would be worthwhile to consider the inclusion of appropriate facilities for these residents including perhaps community gardens, allotments, tone zones, etc.

5.5.20 Newbridge

Figure 5.18 Newbridge Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Newbridge A



Photograph of Newbridge B

Description

There are three local park open spaces in Newbridge. There are no neighbourhood parks. There are a number of amenity greenspaces throughout the town. There is a large amount of privately owned open space along the banks of the River Liffey and on the northern side of the town.

Key Findings

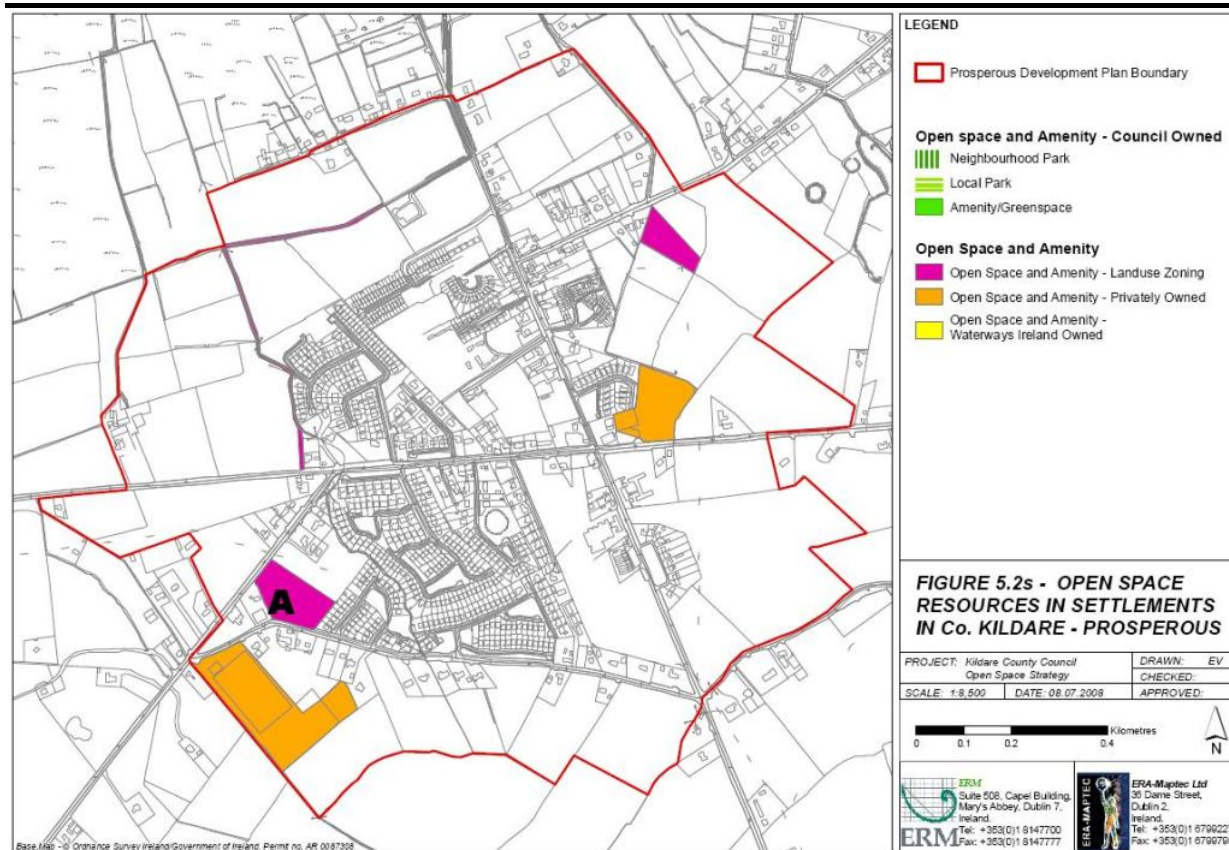
- At location A, a large proportion of the lands classified as open space are currently the subject of construction works.
- Sarsfield GAA club is at location A; There are also soccer pitches and all-weather pitches at location A. The local park is primarily comprised of open space that is used for active recreation.
- At location B, the local park, is at the centre of a large residential area. There is a pond within the local park. It appears that the park is frequently used by the local residents and is in good condition. The facilities provided include footpaths, litter-bins and benches. This local park is used primarily for passive recreation.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- At location A the open space is relatively inaccessible and a large proportion of the area is being used to facilitate the construction of residential properties. The open space should be opened up and the fences removed. There is currently a fence around the entire perimeter of the lands classified as a local park.
- The open space at location B is of good quality and serves the needs of the surrounding residential area. It would be worthwhile to consider alternative uses, such as community gardens, allotments, tone zones etc. at this location.
- There is a marked absence of public open spaces in other areas of Newbridge, particularly the eastern area of the town. Open space should be provided to connect and serve residential areas.
- Where possible advantage will be taken of the setting of the River Liffey as an attractive and ideal setting for linear open space to include riverside walks. Opportunities will also be taken to link future public open space to the river corridor.

5.5.21 Prosperous

Figure 5.19 Prosperous Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Prosperous A

Description

There are no Council owned local or neighbourhood parks within the town of Prosperous. The presence of numerous small open spaces adjacent to the residential areas within the town (not marked on the above map) were observed during the survey. There are two areas of land that have been zoned open space on the western and eastern edges of the town. There are two privately owned open spaces within the town, a pitch and putt course on the eastern side and a GAA sports ground on the western side.

Key Findings

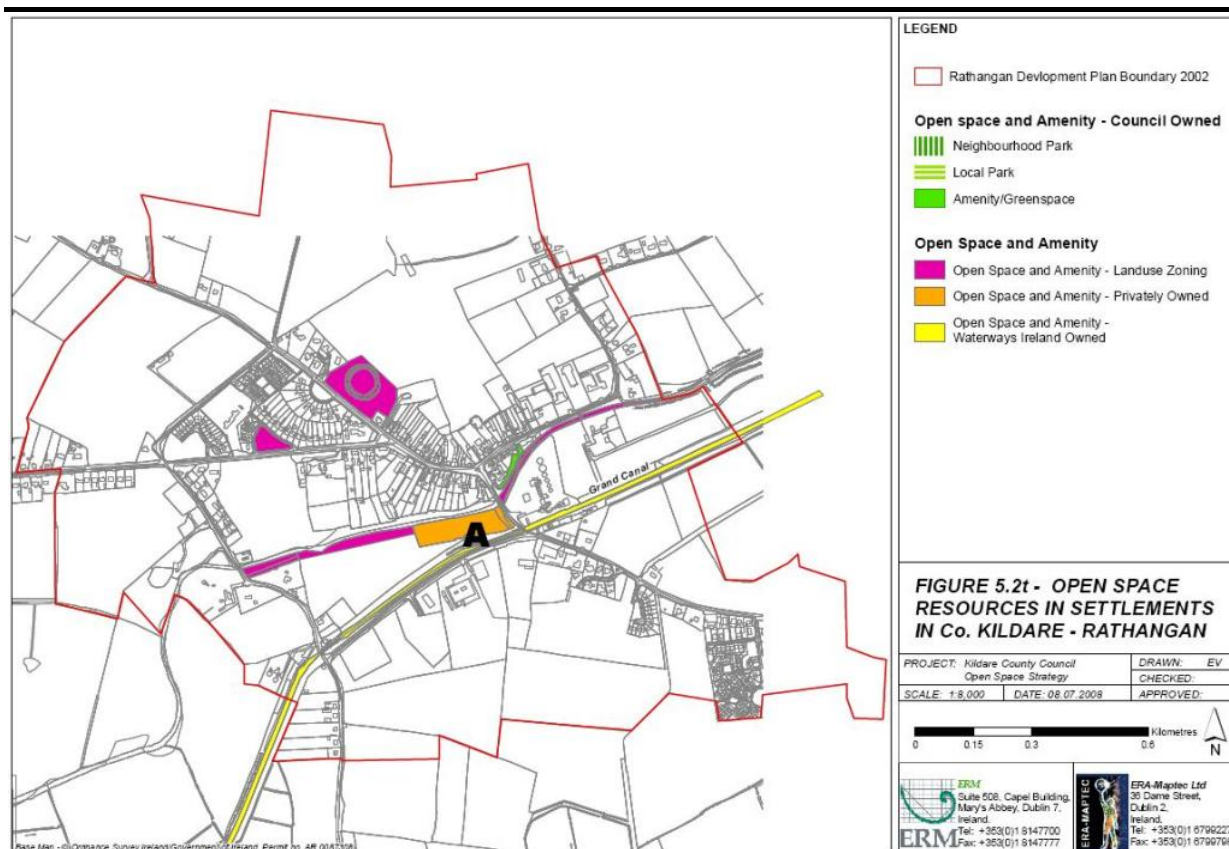
- The land at location A , is currently being used for agricultural purposes, and there is no apparent public access to this land.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- There is a need for public open space to facilitate both passive and active recreational needs.
- Future provision of open spaces should be designed to enhance, serve and connect existing residential areas in the town.

5.5.22 Rathangan

Figure 5.20 Rathangan Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Rathangan A

Description

Within Rathangan, there are no Council owned local or neighbourhood parks. Limited open space in the 'amenity greenspace category' is located adjacent to residential areas. There are three main areas of land that are currently zoned as open space, such as the hill fort/rath on the northern side of the town. There is also a strip of land along the Grand Canal that is owned by waterways Ireland. There is an open space, location A, adjacent to the bridge over the Grand Canal that is in private ownership.

Key Findings

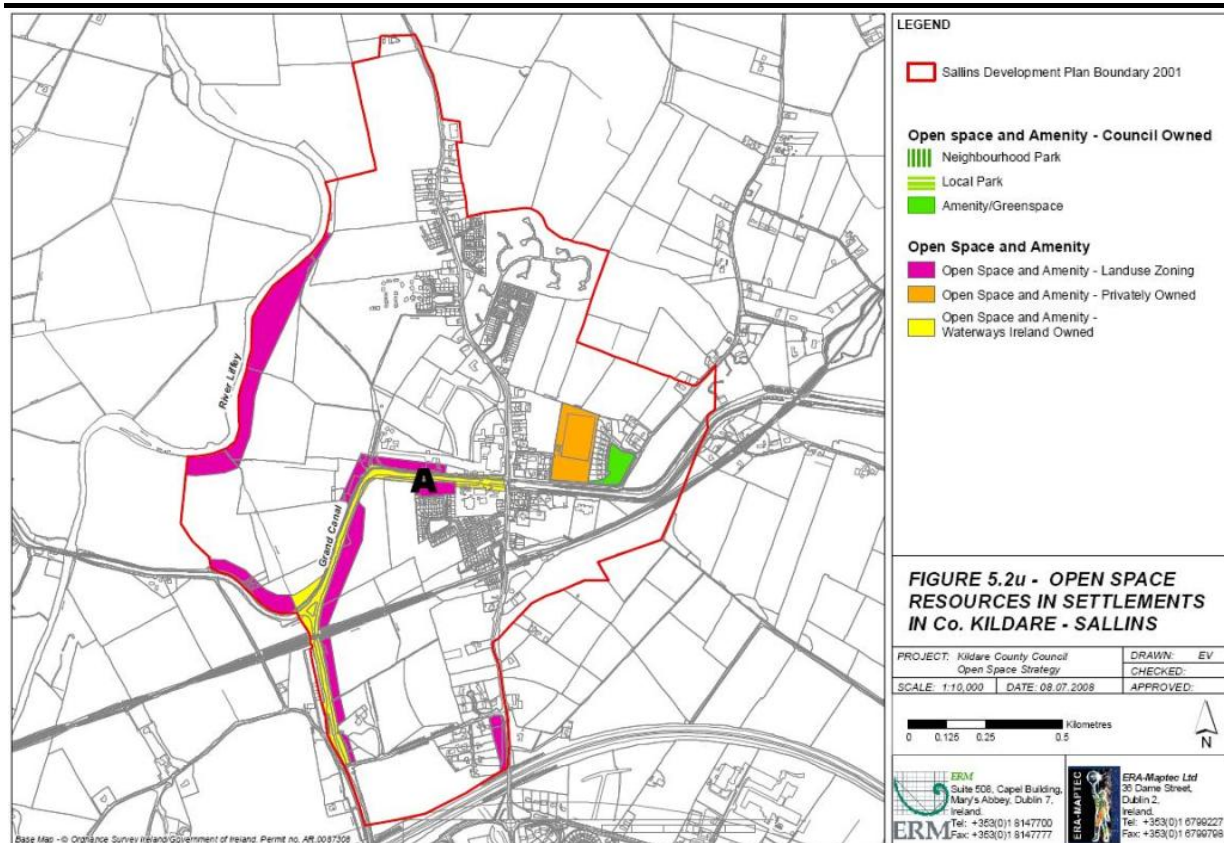
- The open space at location A on the banks of the Slate River provides the town with a passive recreational facility. It is of good quality with adequate provision of seating areas. It appears to be well maintained, accessible to the public and frequently used.
- The lands owned by Waterways Ireland, along the Grand Canal provide for passive recreation. The canal towpath provides for passive recreation (walking).
- The residential areas on the southern side of the town are lacking in open space.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- The provision of open space should not just satisfy quantity standards but should be designed to satisfy the needs of the residents. Opportunities to link future open spaces with the Grand Canal corridor ought to be taken. Consideration of the potential of the River Slate as a setting for future recreational open space will be considered.
- There is likely to be a real need for open space to cater for active recreation.

5.5.23 Sallins

Figure 5.21 Sallins Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Sallins A

Description

There are no Council owned local or neighbourhood parks in Sallins town. One amenity greenspaces is located adjacent to a residential area around the town. There is a GAA sports ground on the eastern side of the town which satisfies some of the active recreational needs of the local population. To the west of the town there are lands zoned as open space associated with the River Liffey corridor. No obvious access to these lands was currently available. There are also lands owned by Waterways Ireland along the Grand Canal, such as at location A. There is an objective to develop a town park on the north western fringe of the town.

Key Findings

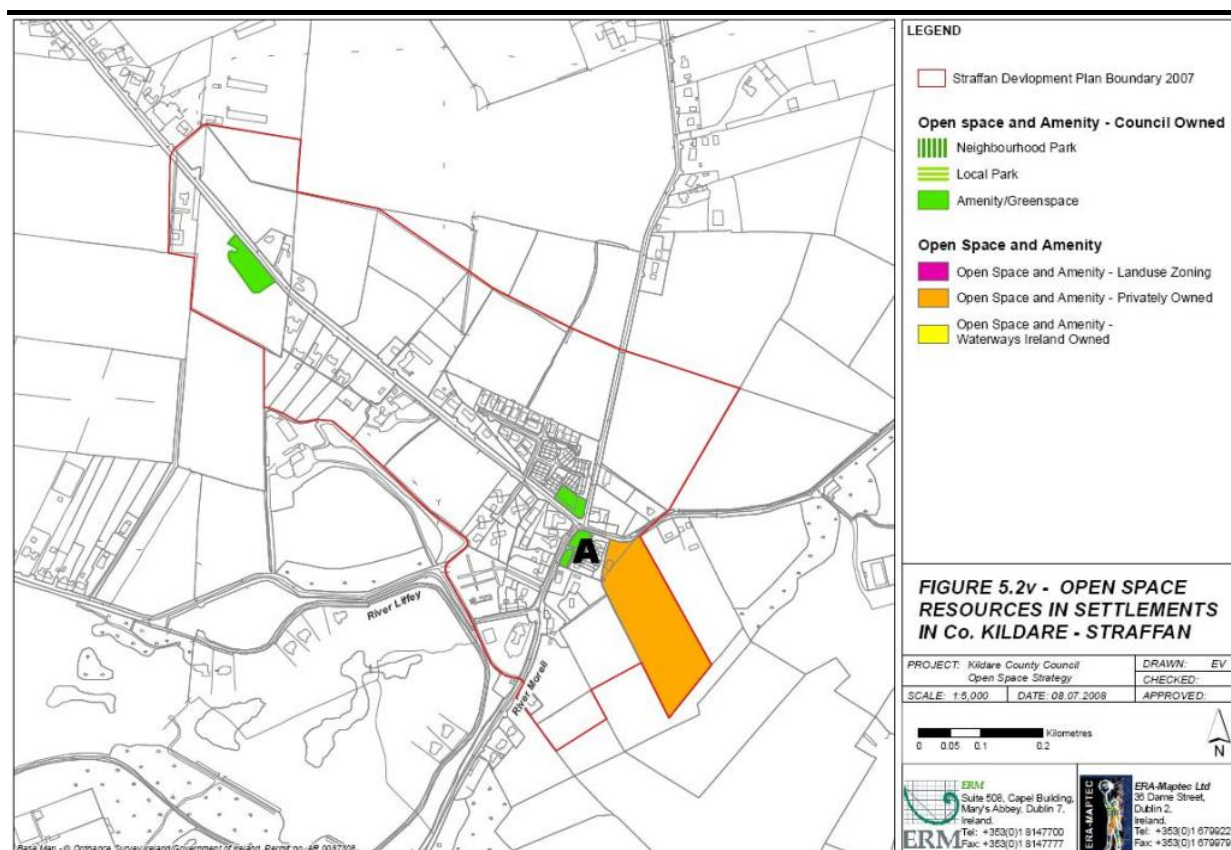
- The banks of the Grand Canal provide for passive recreation in an attractive and scenic setting. The facility is well used and is in reasonably good condition
- The residential areas in the northern, western and southern parts of the town have no access to quality open spaces suitable for active or passive recreation.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- The canal corridor should be maintained and where required, improvements made to it as a recreational facility in a manner that is sensitive to it as an ecological resource.
- The objective of developing a park on the north western corner of the town should be re-considered. The position of the park could be closer to the town centre and should, where possible, be linked to the Grand Canal corridor.
- There is potential to develop a part of the River Liffey corridor also as a linear park which could be linked to future open space in residential areas.
- Future open space provision should be used to connect public transport hubs, namely the train station, with residential areas and the town centre.
- Open spaces should not solely be used to buffer industrial/warehousing areas but should be used to integrate all significant features of the town.

5.5.24 Straffan

Figure 5.22 Straffan Open Space Audit



Location of Audit



Photograph of Straffan A

Description

Straffan, which is a very small town, has open space at the centre of the town. There are open spaces which meet the size criteria of amenity greenspace, which are extremely well maintained, at the main crossroads, location A. Just south of the town centre there is the GAA sports ground, which caters for active recreation. There are no Council owned local or neighbourhood parks within the town of Straffan.

Key Findings

- The amenity greenspaces, adjacent to the residential area at the centre of the town, are well maintained and provide for passive recreation. The facilities at location A are very good and facilitate passive enjoyment of the open space.
- There are other amenity greenspaces throughout the town, which cater for passive amenity.
- There are no open spaces within the town which cater for informal play.

Initial recommendations arising from the survey findings

- It is necessary that all future residential developments are provided with amenity greenspace, and local parks that will cater for both passive and active recreation.
- There is a large potential for future open space provision to take advantage of the setting of the Rivers Liffey and Morell, connecting open space with the town with future riverside walkways.

The guidance contained in PAN 65 outlines three different approaches to identifying open space requirements which are appropriate for different types of open space. These are the 'supply led', 'demand led' and 'standards based' approaches.

6.1 *SUPPLY LED ASSESSMENT*

This approach is most suited to urban parks and gardens, civic spaces, woodlands and other natural green spaces. Such open spaces are usually supplied as a planning requirement for new housing developments. This should assess the existing size and distribution of spaces against their current and future role and allow for the formulation of a strategy that protects and enhances these spaces.

6.2 *DEMAND LED ASSESSMENT*

This approach is suited to those spaces for which a quantifiable demand can be identified, for example, sports facilities, green corridors and other functional spaces such as cemeteries and allotments (outside the scope of this study). This allows the local authority to consult with relevant user groups or carry out necessary survey work in order to establish the demand for facilities. Sportscotland's Guide to the Preparation of Sports Pitch Strategies ⁽¹⁾ gives more guidance on strategies for this type of open space.

6.3 *STANDARDS BASED ASSESSMENT*

Where the need for a type of space is broadly the same everywhere, or where the demand for a particular use is difficult to quantify, for example when attempting to predict the future community's needs in a new housing area, it may be appropriate to use a standards-based approach. However, any standards should be carefully tailored to the circumstances of the area and a single standard will not be suitable for all parts of the County. Very different standards are also likely to be required for different functions such as play areas for children and teenagers and informal recreation areas.

Historically, many local authorities have adopted a standards based approach to open space strategies. It provides a useful indication, based upon projected population growth, of what future open space requirements are likely to be. However, in terms of detailed planning for open space, best practice has shifted somewhat from quantitative, benchmark standards such as the National Playing Fields Association '6 acre' standard, which has often been

used in the past to identify future open space requirements. This recommends 2.4 hectares (6 acres) of play space comprising 1.6 hectares for outdoor sport and 0.8 hectares for children's playspace to be provided per 1000 population. The 6 acre standard was revised and republished in June 2008. Although the new guidance sets out benchmarks for open space provision, it places greater emphasis on local standards ⁽²⁾. The new standard also emphasises the importance of quality and design rather than the quantity of open space and gives recognition to sustainability issues and the opportunities that open spaces provide for sustainable development.

The document entitled '*A Policy for the provision and maintenance of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas by Local Authorities*', Department of the Environment (1987) outlines a quantitative standard of 2ha per 1000 population. Based on this, population units of 10,000 ought to be allocated one neighbourhood park (16 ha) and two local parks (each 2 ha).

The use of quantitative standards is a useful starting point in assessing current and future needs for County Kildare, this will however have to be enhanced with qualitative standards in recognition of best practice guidance on open space strategies.

6.4

CURRENT DEMANDS IN KILDARE COUNTY

In terms of meeting current demand, the open space audit highlights towns and villages that currently have no open space provision. A number of towns and villages also feature only the small open spaces of less than 2ha size which could be categorised as amenity green space. The presence of a full complement of open space types (within a hierarchy) from Neighbourhood Parks (16ha size DOE Standards 1987) and Local Parks (2ha size DOE standards 1987) to amenity greenspace is only available in some towns including Leixlip, Maynooth, Naas and Athy. However, in a number of settlements and urban conurbations, the size of the local population means that provision of a full suite of different open space types is not feasible. In smaller settlements, it may be possible to replicate several of the functions of having a hierarchy within one or two well designed parks. Therefore an alternative approach may be adopted in such areas.

It is important that the available open spaces offer amenity value to as wide a section of the accessible population as possible. This may be achieved by having discreet multi purpose open spaces offering facilities for children's play, basic sports provision, such as a grass five-a-side sized playing field as well as landscaping and park benches for passive recreation. The function and design of such parks should take into account the demographic characteristics of the locale although the opportunities that variety in quality open space provision can play in maintaining demographic integration should

(1) Guide to the Preparation of Sports Pitch Strategies, Sportscotland, September 2004

(2) Pers Comm, Fields in Trust.

be considered (for example, young families may be attracted to villages or neighbourhoods with a high proportion of elderly residents where play areas and recreational facilities are present) Park designers may should make safety a primary consideration for design, not only in the facilities that are present, but in the layout of open spaces themselves. The Scottish Government publication, PAN 77 *Designing Safer Places* highlights the positive role that planning can play in helping to create attractive well-managed environments which discourage antisocial and criminal behaviour and is a useful resource to draw on when considering the design elements of new or regenerated open spaces.

6.4.1 *Existing and future population – County Kildare*

Data from the census 2002 ⁽¹⁾ indicates that the population of County Kildare was 163,944. Census 2006 ⁽²⁾ indicates the population for Kildare at 186,335. This represents an increase of 22,391.

Population data for towns and villages included in the open space strategy is presented below as taken from the County Development Plan 2011-2017. The data for 2006 is provided together with the projected population data for the year 2017 as contained in the County Plan.

Some of the population forecasts for the year 2017 have been calculated based on Policies for settlement growth cited as follows from the County Development Plan 2011-2017:

- VRS 2: To facilitate sustainable population growth of the identified villages with growth levels of up to 25% over the Plan period to cater primarily for local demands.
- VRS 3: To facilitate the sustainable population growth of the identified Rural Settlements with growth levels of up to 20% over the Plan period to cater primarily for local demands. Local demand for rural settlements is defined as persons residing for a period of 5 years within a 10km radius of the site.

Table 6.1 *Population Data for settlements in Kildare*

Location	Pop. 2006	Pop. 2017
Allenwood	667	834 (25% increase on 2006)
Athgarvan	1,300	1,555
Athy**	7,943	10,679
Ballymore Eustace	725	907 (25% increase on 2006)
Castledermot	887	1,109
Celbridge	17,262	25,084
Clane	4,968	5,939
Derrinturn	1,138	1,362
Kilcock	4,100	5,956
Kilcullen	2,985	4,014

(1) Central Statistics Office Ireland (2002) Census 2002.

(2) Central Statistics Office Ireland (2006) Census 2006.

Location	Pop. 2006	Pop. 2017
Kildare	7,538	10,176
Kill	2,510	3,001
Leixlip	14,676	21,326
Maynooth	10,715	15,897
Monasterevin	3,017	4,056
Moone	429	537 (25% increase on 2006)
Naas	20,044	27,933
Newbridge	17,042	23,245
Prosperous	1,939	2,315
Rathangan	1,718	2,055
Sallins	3,806	4,550
Straffan	439	549 (25% increase on 2006)

The relationship between population data and current open space provision is provided in Table 6.2 below. Further detail on the calculation of open space provision based on population data and using quantitative standards is provided in Annex E: Calculation of open space requirements for settlements.

Table 6.2 *Settlement Compliance with Quantitative Open Space Standards*

Settlement Name	NPFA Achieved 2006 (%)	NPFA Achieved 2017 (%)	DOE Achieved 2006 (%)	DOE Achieved 2017 (%)
Allenwood	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Athgarvan	130.51	109.11	156.62	130.93
Athy**	245.87	182.87	295.04	219.45
Ballymore Eustace	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Castledermot	205.00	163.96	246.00	196.75
Celbridge	104.33	71.80	125.19	86.15
Clane	88.9	74.37	106.68	89.24
Derrinturn	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kilcock	198.47	136.62	238.16	163.94
Kilcullen	161.22	119.89	193.47	143.87
Kildare	78.88	58.43	94.65	70.12
Kill	129.83	108.59	155.80	130.31
Leixlip	269.86	185.71	323.83	222.85
Maynooth	195.80	131.97	234.96	158.37
Monasterevin	153.70	114.33	184.44	137.19
Moone	86.54	69.13	103.85	82.96
Naas	321.50	230.70	385.8	276.84
Newbridge	140.37	102.91	168.44	123.49
Prosperous	116.58	97.64	139.89	117.17
Rathangan	38.00	31.77	45.61	38.13
Sallins	42.73	35.74	51.27	42.89
Straffan	291.48	233.08	349.77	279.69

A comparison was made between population data for each town and the quantity of open space present both privately owned and council owned. This analysis identified that in several of the towns in Kildare, the levels of open

space provision for the current and future populations are not being met in accordance with the quantitative NPFA standards (2.4 ha per 1000 population) or the Department of the Environment Guidelines referenced above (2 ha per 1000 population).

Currently there is no public or privately owned open space in Allenwood, Ballymore Eustace, or Derrinturn as indicated in red in *Table 6.2*.

Adequate areas of open space are currently in place to meet 2017 population demands in the 12 settlements highlighted in green (Athy, Athgarvan, Castledermot, Kilcock, Kilcullen, Kill, Leixlip, Maynooth, Monasterevin, Naas, Newbridge, and Straffan). Prosperous meets the DOE standards but fall slightly short of the NPFA 6 acre standard.

In the cases of Kildare, Rathangan and Sallins there is insufficient existing provision to meet the requirements of the current population under both the DOE 1987 standards and the NPFA 6 acre standard. Therefore, these areas, alongside Ballymore Eustace, Allenwood and Derrinturn should be considered for further investigation relating to what opportunities there are for informal open space access within areas not included in this study (for example local arrangements with landowners for open recreational access). If there is no access to open spaces not accounted for in this study, appropriate types of open space should be provided to address the hierarchy of typologies in the larger towns and options should be considered in the smaller settlements for the creation of quality local /neighbourhood parks that provide community facilities that are representative of the resident population.

The findings of this analysis are illustrated in *Figure 6.1 : Assessment of current and future needs*.

6.4.2 Public engagement

In order to assist with the assessment of current and future open space needs for Kildare County, the public and other stakeholders and were engaged to complete a questionnaire survey on open space provision in their local area. The survey findings are summarised in *Annex D: Public consultation*.

The survey yielded a limited response (a total of 33 completed questionnaires) and therefore the value of the findings in terms of informing the strategy, are somewhat limited. These are summarised below.

- The majority of respondents stated that there was inadequate provision of open space.
- The majority of respondents are prepared to walk a distance of under one kilometre to access open space. At distances greater than 1km, car travel was preferred.
- The majority of respondents valued open for walking, play, family activities and sport.

- User satisfaction was assessed in relation to specific categories of open space and the survey findings are presented in *Table 6.3* below.

It is likely that in order to inform any future changes in the current maintenance and renewal regime, a detailed audit that records qualitative information relating to the physical and social attributes of each open space is undertaken and the results are confirmed by a comprehensive survey where a representative sample of local residents are approached and their views sought on the supply and functionality of accessible open space locally and county-wide.

Table 6.3 *User satisfaction of open spaces*

Open space type	Survey findings
Parks	Almost half of the respondents were satisfied with the accessibility, tidiness and appearance attributes of the parks that they use. The majority of respondents however, considered the facilities were inadequate and that vandalism and anti social behaviour is a problem.
Playgrounds	More than half of those who responded were satisfied with the tidiness, appearance and accessibility of the open spaces available to them. The majority of those who responded however considered that vandalism and antisocial behaviour was an issue.
Sports Pitches	The majority of those who responded were satisfied with the tidiness, appearance and accessibility of the facilities available to them. More than half of those who responded were dissatisfied with the facilities in respect of vandalism and antisocial behaviour.
Golf Courses	An overwhelming majority of respondents were satisfied with the facilities available to them.
Rivers and Canals	The majority of respondents were satisfied with the appearance of the facilities available to them. The majority of respondents were dissatisfied with the facilities in terms of tidiness, safety, accessibility and vandalism or antisocial behaviour.
amenity greenspace	Over half of the respondents were satisfied with the facilities in terms of their appearance, public safety and accessibility. A large majority of respondents however were dissatisfied with the facilities in respect of vandalism and antisocial behaviour

7.1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to present a strategic approach to the planning and delivery of public open space in County Kildare. The initial section presents the hierarchical open space typology identified as appropriate for the County and then summarises the current situation regarding council owned open space therein. In turn, settlements that require action are prioritised and presented again in hierarchical format. Thereafter a Strategic Action Plan is presented outlining key objectives, detailed actions and appropriate agents required to deliver the Open Space Strategy.

7.2

OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGIES FOR COUNTY KILDARE

A hierarchy of public open space is identified for the County which includes three categories as follows:

- Areas of open space within settlements;
- Areas of open space that serve a number of settlements; and
- Strategic areas for open space within the county.

These three categories represent a hierarchy developed for Kildare County in which sub categories or a sub hierarchy of open space is identified in *Table 7.1* below using the typologies referenced in *Planning and Open Space PAN 65*, (Scottish Government, 2008 and *A Policy for the provision and maintenance of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas*, Department of the Environment 1987).

The regional park typology is sourced from '*Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance*, A Joint Consultation Draft by the Mayor of London and CABI Space, 2008.

Table 7.1 *Open Space Typologies*

County hierarchy of open space provision	Typology	Purpose
Areas of open space within settlements	Amenity green space (PAN 65)	Small areas of open space associated with housing developments.
	Local Park (DOE Standards 1987)	Small Park (≥2 ha) located within settlement for local use for passive recreation.
	Neighbourhood Park (DOE Standards 1987)	Large Park (≥16ha) located within settlement for local use to contain facilities for active recreation. Small areas of open space associated with housing developments.
Areas of open	Regional Park (Mayor of	Large areas, corridors, or networks of open

County hierarchy of open space provision	Typology	Purpose
space that serve a number of settlements	London and CABE Space 1988 draft)	space, the majority of which will be publicly accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits.
Strategic Areas for open space within the County	Country park (DOE Standards 1987)	Large facility of high scenic quality accessible to the public to which users may travel some distance by car usually seeking a family day out.
	Green Corridors (PAN 65)	Linear green spaces such as canal and river corridors which are accessible to the public.
	Natural / Semi Natural green spaces (PAN 65)	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with habitats such as woodland or wetland areas which are accessible to the public.

7.3 *CURRENT STATUS OF OPEN SPACE PROVISION IN COUNTY KILDARE*

An outline audit of facilities currently available and an assessment of current and future needs based on population data revealed a number of shortcomings in open space provision as summarised below.

7.3.1 *Open Space Audit*

The open space audit highlighted **strategic areas** within the County which currently fulfil a role as public open space. These include 'green corridors', namely publically accessible sections of the canals and rivers together with sites which could be considered as 'country parks' such as Castletown House. There are also several large forest sites owned and managed by Coillte that can be categorised as 'natural and semi-natural greenspaces'.

In regard to both, **areas of open space that serve a number of settlements** and **areas of open space within settlements**, the open space audit reveals a number of key deficiencies in current provision as follows.

- There is a marked absence of large parks that contain a range of passive and active recreation facilities that would serve the needs of a number of settlements.
- A general absence of a diversity of open spaces of various sizes representing an overall hierarchy of open space in many of the settlements. In some cases open space is provided in the form of large tracts of grassland with no facilities contained therein. Many of the open spaces are parcels of lands located between residential areas which in some cases are not accessible and therefore are of limited usefulness to adjacent residents. In this regard, these open spaces tend to separate residential areas. Improvements are required to maximise the use of

existing open space by improving access and providing pedestrian and cycleway linkages between spaces and river and canal corridors.

- There are few open spaces that meet the size criteria of 'Neighbourhood Park' (Table 7.1) in the county. Athy, Kilcock, Leixlip, Maynooth and Naas are the only towns in which they exist. The field survey highlighted the fact that the majority of these 'Neighbourhood Parks' consist of vast expanses of grass which can be used by kick about users, joggers, dog-walkers, etc. However the potential of these open spaces is yet to be harnessed in terms of the delivery of sporting facilities, play areas and areas for passive recreation that would be associated with the requirements for a neighbourhood park in the DOE guidelines.
- Open Spaces that meet the size criteria of 'Local Park' (Table 7.1) are only present in Athy, Celbridge, Kildare, Leixlip, Maynooth, Monasterevin, Naas and Newbridge.
- Many of the settlements feature only small areas of open space which could be defined as amenity greenspace. In some cases, these spaces appear to be 'left over' after building of the dwellings, and may not be designed to meet the amenity needs of the local populations. In these towns there is a need for the provision of alternative open spaces to cater for both passive and active recreation that are directly accessible to the public, and are accessible from numerous points of entry. Ideally these would be connected with other open spaces and waterway corridors in order to enhance their amenity value.

7.3.2 *Assessment of current and future needs*

The assessment of current and future needs used population data for 2006 and predicted population data for 2017. This data for each town was assessed against quantitative standards taken from Department of the Environment guidelines entitled, *A Policy for the provision and maintenance of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas, 1987* and the NPFA '6 acre' standard. It was found that 12 of the towns and villages were found to have adequate areas of recreational open space to meet population needs up to the year 2017, although Athgarvan, Kill and Newbridge were borderline in terms of meeting the NPFA 6 acre standard for 2017. These are Athy, Athgarvan, Castledermot, Kilcock, Kilcullen, Kill, Leixlip, Maynooth, Monasterevin, , Naas, Newbridge and Straffan (see *Section 6.4.1*).

7.4 *STRATEGY*

The strategy is thus outlined with reference to the hierarchy developed for the county set out in *Table 7.1* which identifies the three broad categories of open space as follows;

- Areas of open space within settlements

- Areas of open space that serve a number of settlements
- Strategic Areas for open space within the County

7.4.1 *Areas of open space within settlements*

The open space audit and has shown several shortfalls in open space provision in settlements in particular. In three settlements, there is no council or privately owned open space and a general lack of a hierarchy that is based purely on the size of open spaces is apparent throughout many settlements. The function of many of the existing open spaces, in many cases, is to provide for visual amenity. Whilst the provision of facilities, such as sports pitches and seating areas do enhance open spaces, these needs are not always met by the current provision. Therefore, the primary objectives of this strategy is to identify a means for addressing these current open space deficiencies.

Open space needs are identified with reference to the Department of the Environment, *A Policy for the provision and maintenance of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas by Local Authorities*, 1987 which set out the numerical standard of 1 neighbourhood park ($\geq 16\text{ha}$) and two local parks ($\geq 2\text{ha}$) per 10,000 population. Reference is also made to the NPFA 6 acre standard which sets out a requirement of 2.4 ha open space to be provided per 1000 population. Research into open space planning undertaken by other local authorities in Ireland revealed that whilst the DOE standards are available for use as a basis for identifying public open space needs, similar standards such as the NPFA 6 acre standard are also used for calculating open space needs.

It is recommended that Kildare adopts the DOE standards 1987 as a minimum requirement for open space provision, but also considers the NPFA 6 acre standard.

It is important to note that the use of quantitative standards in the planning and provision of future open space is only the starting point towards meeting the needs of particular settlements and areas within the county and that current best practice, including the revised NPFA standard places increased emphasis on the quality and design of open spaces.

In addition to providing appropriate sizes of good quality open space, it is also important to ensure that accessibility for local residents is considered in locating such facilities. In addition to this, an understanding of the detailed needs of the local population in each settlement must be gained in order to implement regeneration of existing facilities or create new open spaces within the county effectively. The age profile of the local population also serves as a guide as to the types of facilities that are appropriate for inclusion in public open space design. With this in mind, indicative open space requirements are outlined for settlements in Kildare County based on quantitative standards and future population projections to 2017. These estimated requirements are described in order of priority of action required and illustrated on *Figure 7.1*.

Priority one – settlements with no open space facilities

The following settlements are considered to be highest priority, as they currently have no open space provision in accordance with either the DOE or the NPFA standard. Based on population projections for 2017 and quantitative standards for open space provision referenced in 7.3.2 above, guidance is given for the type and area required to meet these future needs. The area required is described in terms of the equivalent number of neighbourhood parks (16ha) or local parks (2ha) required as defined in the DOE standards 1987.

Allenwood

The 2006 population of 667 is expected to rise to 834 by 2017. The DOE standards indicate that in 2006 this population would justify 1.3 ha of accessible open space which would rise to almost 1.7 ha to meet the projected 2017 population. Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 would be 2.0 ha. The setting of the Grand Canal should be considered for the provision of open space of a high landscape quality with linkages with other public spaces via the Grand Canal Way which runs east-west through the County. There is also likely to be a need for active recreation facilities. Additional public consultation prior to the design and construction of any such areas will ensure that their design is aligned with local priorities.

Ballymore Eustace

Under the DOE standards, Ballymore Eustace ought to have 1.5 ha of open space at present, with a supply of 1.8 ha to meet the projected 2017 population. Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 would be 2.18 ha. At present there is no public open space provision. Consideration may be taken of the setting of the River Liffey where possible in order to provide public open space of a high landscape quality. Currently some land along the River Liffey corridor on the north western side of the town are zoned for open space as illustrated in *Figure 5.2d open space resources in settlements in Co. Kildare – Ballymore Eustace*. A relatively narrow corridor of land is allocated and, apart from riverside walkways, these areas may not be capable of accommodating other park based facilities such as sports pitches or play areas. The natural corridor of the River Liffey should be opened up and access to this facility from the surrounding residential areas could be provided. Further engagement with the local community is recommended in order to inform any designs taken forward for these areas.

Derrinturn

The 2006 population of Derrinturn was 1138, justifying the provision of 2.3 ha of open space, and has been projected to rise to 1362 by 2017 which would require 2.7 ha in order to meet DOE standards. Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 would be 3.27 ha. At present there is no public open space provision. There is an obvious need for recreational open space including a requirement for some active recreation facilities. The

provision of open spaces should consider linking the various community features of the town of Derrinturn, i.e. the school, the commercial area, the residential areas. Facilities should be provided that would allow for the maximum use of open spaces.

Priority two – settlements with insufficient open space facilities

A number of settlements have been identified as having insufficient open space. *Table 5.3* gives data on the types of public open space available (owned by the county council) that meet the size criteria of neighbourhood park and local park (eg: Celbridge currently has enough open space to support 7 local parks but this land may not actually have appropriate facilities or maintenance regimes in place to be formal open spaces).

Kildare

Kildare is slightly under the DOE standards for the 2006 population and is likely to require the development of over 6 additional ha to meet the projected 2017 population demands. Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 should be 24.42ha. There is likely to be a need for open spaces of a larger size category to serve the needs of the southern side of the town in particular. Future open space provision should consider the needs of outlying settlements with the town. Cycleways, connecting residential areas and public transport be routed through open spaces. There is likely to be a need for open spaces that cater for the needs of teenagers and young adults.

Rathangan

Rathangan is currently has poor provision of public open space. The existing provision represents 45% of the DOE standards for 2006 population needs and 38% of the projected 2017 population requirements. This equates to a requirement of 3.4 ha and 4.1 ha of open space to meet 2006 population demands and future 2017 population projections respectively.

Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 should be 4.93 ha. There are no Council owned local or neighbourhood parks within Rathangan. A small quantity of amenity greenspace is located adjacent to the residential areas within the town. However, there is a quality open space adjacent to the bridge over the Grand Canal that is in private ownership. The lands owned by Waterways Ireland, along the Grand Canal also provide for passive recreation. There is a marked absence of open spaces serving the residential areas on the southern side of the town. There is a real need for open spaces to cater for passive recreation within Rathangan. The banks of the River Slate and the Grand Canal also offer the potential of further developing passive recreational areas.

Sallins

Sallins has very little open space provision. Existing open spaces deliver approximately 50% of the DOE requirements for the 2006 population and 42.9% for the 2017 population. Therefore, in order to meet these standards,

7.6 ha and 9.1 ha are required in total to comply with DOE standards for the 2006 population and projected 2017 population. Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 should be 10.92 ha. There is good potential to enhance the canal banks on the western side of the town and to provide facilities such as seating areas to improve the amenity of the open space. The north and western area of the town is lacking in suitable open space provision.

Clane

Clane has sufficient open space provision to meet 2006 standards, but requires an additional 1.2 ha of open space to meet population growth projections to 2017 in accordance with the DOE 1987 standards. Under the NPFA standard, open space provision for the year 2017 should be 14.25 ha.

Areas surrounding the River Liffey provide opportunities for the creation of parkland in the south of the town which would provide public open space in an attractive setting. Some land along the line of the river is currently zoned for open space as illustrated in *Figure 5.2g, open space resources in settlements in Co. Kildare - Clane*. The land currently zoned is a relatively narrow corridor which is likely to be too constrained to accommodate formal sports facilities such as football pitches. However, riverside land is likely to be appropriate for passive recreation activities such as walking. This area may benefit from the development of facilities such as accessible footpaths (of appropriate dimensions and surfacing to accommodate wheelchairs) benches and possibly cycle paths. The exact specifications should be determined with local priorities in mind following public consultation including the involvement of community council to help identify what facilities will deliver the greatest community benefit.

Moone

Moone currently has insufficient open space to meet the NPFA requirements for the population as measured in 2006. It has just enough open space to meet the DOE standards. In order to meet population forecasts for 2017, 1.07 ha of open space provision will be required to meet the DOE standards. In order to meet NPFA standards, 1.29 ha will be required.

Celbridge

Currently there is adequate open space to meet demands of the 2006 population figures under both DOE and NPFA standards. The future requirement for the year 2017 will be 50.1 ha and 60.2 ha under both DOE and NPFA standards respectively.

Prosperous

Prosperous currently meets the quantitative standard set out on the DOE guidelines 1987 and the NPFA standards. Prosperous also has sufficient open space to provide for the future to 2017 according to the DOE standards. the

current provision falls slightly short of that required to meet future demand in 2017 according to the NPFA standard.

Open space facilities are available privately for both pitch and putt and for GAA sports. The only public open spaces are small areas of incidental space not mapped in figure 5.2s. There is likely to be a need in the future for open space that meets the size category of local park, which should be designed to cater for both passive and active recreation.

Priority three – settlements with sufficient open space facilities

Table 7.2 **Settlements with Sufficient Areas of Open Space**

Settlement	Population 2017	Open space currently available in Council ownership.	Open space requirements
Athgarvan	1,555	Open space of the 'amenity greenspace' category is present.	There is a lack of diversity of sizes of open space with only the amenity greenspace typology being present. Future needs could include larger scale open space types that meet the size criteria of the local park that being at least ≥ 2 ha . Facilities such as sports pitches and childrens play areas are likely to be of benefit to this area. In addition, advantage will be taken of the setting of the River Liffey in the future planning of open space.
Athy	10,679	A diversity of size of public open space is available in Athy	The quality of public open space in Athy is generally good. Advantage ought to be taken of the setting of the River Barrow and Grand Canal for the provision of high quality open space. Existing open space could be enhanced by the provision of linked access to the waterway corridors.
Castle dermot	1,109	Only two small areas of public open space are currently available that meet the size criteria of 'amenity greenspace'	Whilst an adequate overall area of open space is available to meet future population needs, there is no diversity of open space in terms of size. An open space that meets the size criteria for a 'Local Park' (≥ 2 ha) is likely to be of benefit. Sport and childrens play facilities may also be accommodated in such a space.

Settlement	Population 2017	Open space currently available in Council ownership.	Open space requirements
Kilcock	5,956	Currently one large public open space is present which meets the size criteria of 'Neighbourhood Park'	Whilst the current facility meets population needs in terms of area, There is likely to be a need to provide smaller sized open space facilities in different locations in the town to serve the residential areas in a range of locations. In this regard the need for local parks (≥ 2 ha) is likely to be of benefit. Ideally some of the future open space will be planned to be linked to the green corridor associated with the Royal Canal.
Kilcullen	4,014	Throughout Kilcullen there are a number of amenity greenspaces. These are located adjacent to residential areas and along the River Liffey.	There is likely to be a need for open space to cater for residential areas located to the north of the town. There is good potential for lands along the River Liffey to be used for this purpose. It will also be necessary, as the town grows to allocate open space that can be used for active recreation and to consider the need for open space of a larger size than that currently provided to cater for active and passive recreation.
Kill	3,001	Currently there is one large amenity greenspace located on the periphery of the town within a residential area	Whilst sufficient area of open space is provided for according to quantitative standards, it must be noted that current available public open space is located to the north west of the town. The need for facilities for active recreation and for residential areas located to the south west of the town centre ought to be explored.
Leixlip	21,326	Public open spaces of varying size are currently available.	Leixlip currently has a diversity of size of open space. In addition, local users may also be benefitting from the open space associated with the Castletown House facility located further afield. Whilst it appears that sufficient areas of open space are available, many of these are located near or adjacent to waterway corridors and are therefore unsuitable for active recreation. Any future open space planning will take account of the possible need to provide more sporting facilities to meet local needs.

Settlement	Population 2017	Open space currently available in Council ownership.	Open space requirements
Maynooth	15,897	Public open spaces of varying size are currently available.	While there is sufficient provision to meet quantitative standards, it is necessary that the open spaces are provided at a quality which also matches the needs of the users. In this regard, large residential areas to the south of the Royal Canal are currently provided with small isolated pockets of open space which are unlikely to fulfil active recreation needs. Thus, public open space of a larger size may be required in this part of the town. Advantage also ought to be taken of the setting of the Royal Canal for passive recreation.
Monasterevin	4,056	There is a mix of different open space types in Monasterevin. One of these meets the size category of local park and also linear shaped lands along the Grand Canal are available owned by Waterways Ireland	The available public open space is predominantly located on the northern edge of the town and a requirement for further open space to serve residential areas located to the south of the railway line is likely to be a requirement in the future.
Naas	27,933,	Currently, there are open spaces of varying sizes available in Naas. These include one neighbourhood park and four local parks in addition to numerous amenity greenspaces within the residential areas of the town.	There could be further benefit gained from providing open spaces along the existing natural corridors, such as the Gran Canal – Naas & Corbally Branch. It would also be to the towns advantage to provide open spaces that connect with existing open spaces and with residential areas. There are two playgrounds in Naas. It may also be necessary to provide open space that facilitates the needs of older age groups.
Newbridge	23,245	There are a number of amenity greenspaces available in Newbridge, predominantly located in residential areas. There are also three separate open spaces that meet the size category of local park.	In order to serve the large amount of residential development in the town it is necessary that both active and passive recreational open spaces are provided of a high quality and that are easily accessible and integrated with the existing open spaces. Attention needs to be given to increase the quality of existing open spaces. Advantage is to be taken of the setting of the River Liffey for the provision of open space in an attractive setting.

Settlement	Population 2017	Open space currently available in Council ownership.	Open space requirements
Straffan	549	Currently there are three small areas of public open space that meet the size criteria of 'amenity greenspace'	Whilst current and future population needs may be met in accordance with quantitative standards, it is likely that in the future, a local park would be of benefit to residents to add to the existing facilities which are very small in size. Sport and children's play facilities may be accommodated in such a space. Future open space will be planned to take advantage of linked access to the River Liffey corridor where feasible.

7.4.2 *Areas of open space that serve a number of settlements – towards a regional park network for the county.*

The current population of the County is over 186,000 people. On the basis of the most recent projections available this is likely to grow to approximately 234,422 by 2017.

It is valid in the context of development plan policy to recommend that the policy approach of the adjoining Councils be reflected in an approach by Kildare County Council to planning for public space provision given the level of service in counties that are currently of a population level that will apply by 2017 in Kildare. (See *Table 7.3* below).

Table 7.3 *Population Level in County Kildare 2006*

Local Authority	Population 2006
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	194,038
South Dublin County Council	246,935
Fingal County Council	239,992

In addition, in setting the parameters for public space development, the strategy has to have regard for the need to deliver a parks and public space service generally which will meet existing and future expectations of the population of the County. Such expectations will not just be informed by the existing national guidelines for open space provision. They are, more likely to be informed by what they see being provided currently by their neighbouring local authorities, principally those in the Greater Dublin Region.

In the Greater Dublin Area, each Local Authority has developed a number of Regional Parks as set out in the *Table 7.4* below.

Table 7.4 Regional Parks in Greater Dublin Area

Local Authority	Regional Park	Area	Services Available
Fingal County Council	Ward Valley	89 Ha.	Linear park south of Swords, located on site are: Swords Castle picnic sites public playground sports pitches tennis courts looped walks woodland habitats wetlands viewing points
	Tolka Valley	121 Ha.	Currently under development connecting Blanchardstown, Mulhuddart and Corduff
	Newbridge Demesne	150 Ha.	18th Century landscape park, located on site: Newbridge House and Farm playground sports pitches regional playground walled gardens picnic areas looped walks coffee house and glass-houses
	Ardgillan Demesne	81 Ha.	18th Century landscape park, located on site: Ardgillan Castle walled garden museum victorian conservatory coffee house picnic areas viewing points looped walks sports pitches wild woodland
	Malahide Demesne	109 Ha.	18th Century landscape park, located on site: Malahide Castle walled garden restaurant museums crafts centre regional playground 9 hole par 3 golf course 18 hole pitch and putt course sports pitches cricket ground exercise trail boules area tennis courts
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Marlay Demesne	100 Ha.	Masterplan to be implemented to include: active recreation passive recreation conservation of landscape and biodiversity play concert field ornamental theme gardens
	Cabinteely	45 Ha.	18th century landscape park, located on site

Local Authority	Regional Park	Area	Services Available
	House and Park		includes: cabinteely house viewpoints horticultural training Centre youth arts centre
South Dublin County Council	Corkagh Park	120 Ha.	18th Century landscape park, facilities located on site include: house and rose garden wetlands and river valley wildlife habitat looped walks caravan and camping viewing points
	Griffeen Valley Park	81 Ha.	Linear park including 18th Century landscape park, facilities located on site include: Lucan House and Demesne industrial archaeology viewpoints looped walks Eiscir Riada
	Dodder Valley Linear Park	100 Ha.	Fragmented parkland and remnant countryside extending over a distance of 6 km, facilities on site include: industrial archaeology riverside habitat riverside walks viewpoints

On the basis that the future provision of open space in the County must, as earlier noted in the Strategy Document, meet a level of quality provision which can be benchmarked against existing best practice and service quality, while at the same time satisfy the policy objectives of the current County Development Plan, the Strategy is recommending that the Council adopt, in addition to the Hierarchy as suggested by the Department's Guidelines, a policy of developing a number of Regional Parks. These Parks should complement the development of similar parks in the greater Dublin Area.

The Parks should be developed to contain a range of facilities. Detailed Masterplans will be developed for each in line with the practice in the Greater Dublin Authority Local Authorities.

Location of Parks

It is recommended that the Council commence a process of procurement which over the life of the Strategy would result in the development of three Regional type parks, similar to those outlined above in the greater Dublin area.

The Parks should be located as follows and as set out in the attached Map.

Regional Park Priority No. 1-Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood triangle

This Park should be the focus for immediate consideration and development over the lifespan of the new County Development Plan. It should be placed within the triangle to connect with the existing and potential canal/river path/cycleways in the area to allow for the creation of a central focus in the County for recreation and amenity activities. The area is identified as the first priority as it is, and will remain, the primary development area in the County thus presenting the area with most need in recreation service expectations. In line with the regional parks in Greater Dublin, the area of the proposed Park should be of the order of 150 hectares with a range of amenity and recreation services similar to those in Greater Dublin.

Regional Park Priority No. 2- Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip Triangle

As for the first priority, the planned growth of the Celbridge/North Kildare area generally would justify the development of a similar scale regional park. The area has the benefit of an already well developed Castletown House. Nonetheless the current population of North Kildare would benefit from the provision of a specific regional park in this triangle. The proposed park should be circa 140 hectares in size with a similar range of amenity services to those in Greater Dublin.

Regional Park Priority No. 3 Athy

In order to provide a similar range of amenity and recreation services in the south of the county it is recommended that a small scale regional park be developed near Athy. This facility should be a part of the wider network of recreation facilities by connecting it into the Canal/River network of paths. The park should be circa 26 hectares in size with provision for both passive and active recreation.

7.4.3 *Strategic Areas for Open Space within the County Generally*

In terms of identifying opportunities for public open space provision throughout the county generally, account must be taken of the waterways that permeate the county and the benefit or value that these bring to any planned future open space.

There is an extensive network of waterways which are distributed throughout the county and many of these, in particular the canals are accessible to the public by towpath. In planning for future development of open space, opportunities to locate open spaces for passive recreation, walking, cycling and biodiversity along or adjacent to the canals and rivers ought to be considered. In such way, the design of the open spaces will be able to draw on the existing attractive landscape and help to retain the ecological benefits of the canals, rivers and their associated terrestrial habitats.

The Liffey Valley Strategy, which is supported by Kildare County Council, sets out as a principal aim the development of a chain of public open spaces

along and around the setting of the River Liffey. By achieving this aim within County Kildare, riverside open space facilities will be provided for the benefit of the more densely populated part of the county through which the Liffey flows. The planned development of public open space around the river at Donaghcumper near Celbridge and the potential to create public open space on the riverside to serve the towns of Naas, Sallins and Newbridge would, in part, deliver the objectives of the Liffey Valley Strategy for Kildare County. It is envisaged that this open space would be managed as a formal landscape for passive recreation with avenues linking to the Castletown estate.

Further opportunities should be explored in order to extend the necklace of riverside public open spaces along all sections of the river.

In regard to the forested sites owned and run by Coillte, opportunities for use of these facilities for recreation ought to be further explored and put into action. This is likely to require the collaborative efforts of both the County Council and Coillte.

7.5 *STRATEGY ACTION PLAN*

In developing a strategy for the County Council to meet open space needs for a 25-30 year period, it must be recognised that aspects of the strategy developed may apply over a shorter timescale than that specified above. This applies in particular to the strategy developed for the settlements for which population projections were only available to the year 2017.

In this regard, it is essential that the strategy is reviewed and revised every 5 years in order to respond to changing needs and changes to the available open space.

The majority of the objectives set out below are applicable to the 25-30 year timeframe and beyond albeit subject to review at intervals.

7.5.1 *Objective One – Open space partnership*

Meeting the immediate requirements of the settlements and indeed open space requirements for the County generally requires the input and collaboration of:

- County Council parks department;
- Forward Planning Section of Kildare County Council;
- Local Area Committee Representatives; and
- Community Representatives.

It is recommended that a specific Strategic Policy Committee be given responsibility for open space provision with the following aims.

- To provide a leadership and coordinating role for the delivery of open space requirements.

- To raise the profile of open space issues and benefits within the County Council.
- To establish a framework for the detailed delivery of the open space strategy.
- To direct the development of an action plan and oversee actions contained therein.
- To direct the detailed qualitative open space audit.
- To formulate of policy objectives on open space for forthcoming County Plans and Local Area Plans.

7.5.2 *Objective 2 - Open space quality audit*

This Strategy has concentrated mainly on the quantitative provision of Open Space and, as the preceding sections demonstrate the assessment has identified future and current open space requirements for settlements in Kildare based upon population and area data only. Quantitative standards are used to understanding area requirements of functional open space provision to serve local communities specifically with particular regard to recreational playing fields and play areas for children. Such standards do not relate to larger 'regional' or 'county' parks when such facilities are located in areas of the countryside that are only inaccessible by car. This is because these standards have been developed to ensure that people living in urban developments or smaller settlements such as villages have appropriate facilities that are accessible to their houses. Larger open space developments, such as regional parks also play an important role in providing a high quality of life to the residents of the region in question, but their area need not have a direct relationship with the size of the local population. Their location should be determined in the light of such considerations as the proximity to large populations and the existing land management practices in place (*i.e.* there may be formal estate grounds nearby, managed floodplain or existing wilderness areas that can serve the desired open space function with a change in management and maintenance, or even simply by negotiating access rights, without the need to start from scratch by replacing agricultural land)

However, within urban open spaces, such as local parks, the quality of open space is an equally important consideration in open space planning. In this regard, quality open space should, through good design, be safe, appropriately located, fit for purpose, readily accessible, well maintained and be part of a network of opens spaces amenable to a range of users, accounting for factors such as local demographics to understand local user needs.

Any requirements for improvements in terms of open space quality can only be understood following a comprehensive and detailed open space audit which will enhance the summary quality audit presented in section 5.5 of this strategy. In undertaking a full detailed quality audit, visits to every identified open space are carried out and a detailed audit of each is undertaken against a pre-defined set of criteria including those detailed above. This may be complemented by a target survey undertaken within each urban area /

settlement to gather responses from a range of park users, and other members of the public (non-park users).

The open space audit is a useful mechanism by which the future planning of open space can be achieved. In summary the audit should:

- assess the quality of each existing open space;
- identify the accessibility of open space and where appropriate, identify measures to be undertaken to provide and improve access;
- identify surpluses and deficiencies of open space provision across settlements;
- take proper account of the value and usefulness of open space and not just the quantity;
- encourage input from local communities. This could be achieved by setting up workshop meetings located in different parts of the County inviting the local people, residents associations and other stakeholders. The meeting, chaired by a member of the open space partnership, would present data on public open space in the area and seek feedback from the group on a range of issues including the quality of existing facilities; and
- be updated in order to feed into development plan and local area plan reviews.

Further work is recommended to address in detail, the quality, value, maintenance requirements and site specific needs for improving or maintaining existing public open space. The detailed open space audit will become a useful tool which will inform ongoing open space management.

The summary audit undertaken and outlined in section 5.5 comprised the following.

- Open space data provided by Kildare County Council presented on a series of maps for each settlement illustrated in *Figures 5.2a-v* for Kildare County.
- Open space data for the County generally, categorised into broad typologies and illustrated in *Figures 5.1 and 5.3*.
- Open space area data in hectares for settlements in County Kildare presented in *Table 5.2*.
- Summary field survey and audit of a sample of up to 2 open spaces for each settlement presented in section 5.5 and Annex B. This addressed, in summary, issues of quality, access and facilities provided.

Further work on the open space quality audit will comprise the following.

- Quality audit to cover all public open spaces in settlements as a minimum. Data on privately owned open space is also of relevance in terms of the facilities provided therein to sections of the community, for example GAA clubs.
- Detailed description of open spaces to be provided.

- Detailed record of physical site features and site facilities.
- Ongoing assessment of condition to be maintained. Site problems to be identified and layout design to be reviewed and revised where enhancement is required.
- Record of ongoing maintenance operations to be recorded. These to be reviewed and revised to suit open space and needs of local people;
- Opportunities for potential upgrade.
- Local communities and users of open space to be surveyed. Data on frequency of use and user groups to be obtained.
- Priorities to be set for action to be taken on the above.
- Timescale for investment.

The quality assessment can be addressed in a number of ways as follows.

- Quality assessment of condition – this assessment is often used to reappraise operational management practice and assess needs with regard to mowing, litter collection, management of planting and provision of lighting together with a range of other management activities.
- Quality assessment of elements – quality is assessed by looking at specific elements such as footpaths, entrances, play facilities, sports facilities and building condition by description or by assigning a score.
- Quality assessment by criteria or best practice approach – quality is assessed by looking at criteria that indicate the quality of open space using numerical scoring on a scale typically ranging from 1-5.

7.5.3 *Objective 3 – Public Engagement.*

The detailed identification of the needs of local populations can only be achieved by pro actively engaging with these communities. This exercise is crucial to designing future facilities so that they provide appropriate facilities for existing residents as well as maintaining a diversity of functions to allow for future generations and to account for members of the public that presently do not use formal open spaces due a lack of appropriate facilities. An initial public consultation exercise was undertaken for this study included in Annex D. This yielded a limited number of responses however the content of the responses demonstrated some level of interest among the public in the issue of public open space provision.

This strategy proposes that the County Council undertake a number of surveys focusing on the practicably deliverable aspirations of local residents. This may include workshops that would be open to local people, residents associations, local sports clubs and other local stakeholders.

7.5.4 *Objective 4 – Policy making in local area plans.*

A detailed quality audit of public open space owned by the County Council should be undertaken as part of each LAP revision process for each settlement

in County Kildare. In addition to consultation with the local community in the form of the workshops proposed above, this will assist in defining the particular open space needs at a local level and resource allocation.

Whilst the detailed audit and consultation exercise will inform more precisely the open space requirement in terms of appropriate local standards and idiosyncrasies, some important factors to consider are outlined below.

- Proximity to residential areas that they are supposed to serve – Reference existing and draft LAP for zoning details on future residential areas.
- Located in an open setting overlooked by residential areas and streets in the interest of safety and avoidance of anti social behaviour, this being an issue raised by participants in the consultation exercise.
- Sites chosen will be centred around natural features present in the wider landscape setting in order to enhance scenic quality of open space.
- Sites chosen will take advantage of availability of views towards scenic mountain skylines, or locally identifiable hills.
- Sites should incorporate heritage features of interest where possible.

The zoning and investment in open space is most pressing for towns identified as Priority One in 7.4.1 above. As each of the settlements are at different stages in Local Area Plan development or adoption, a review of each is summarised *in*

Table 7.5 and Table 7.6 below and can therefore act as a timeframe for actions in terms of feeding into LAP requirements for open space type and hectarage required.

Priority one – settlements with no open space facilities

Of the settlements which currently have no public open space in the ownership of the county council, an open space quality audit (7.5.2, strategy objective 2) does not apply at present. Quantitative standards suggest a need for public open space in these settlements and this identification of needs will need to be refined by engaging with the public (7.5.3, strategy objective 3). The identification of needs will take account of specific particular objectives in the Local Area Plan for each settlement, the details of which are tabulated below.

Table 7.5 Local Area Plan Timetable for Priority One Areas

Town	Current LAP	Specific Requirements in the current plan
Allenwood	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high standard of open space to be provided in housing schemes. • Design of open space to take account of disabled and mobility impaired. • Open space provision to be between 10 and 15% of provision.
Ballymore Eustace	Village Plan set out on Draft County Development Plan 2011-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the River Liffey Walk through to the west of the village centre. • To maintain, upgrade and extend existing walking routes.
Derrinturn	LAP 2008.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the protection of existing areas of open space in the village. • Future village park and playground to be provided for

Priority two – settlements with insufficient open space facilities

For these settlements, the current open space in council ownership will be subject to an open space quality audit (7.5.2, strategy objective 2). Quantitative standards suggest a need for additional public open space in these settlements and this identification of needs will need to be refined by engaging with the public (7.5.3, strategy objective 3).

The identification of needs will take account of specific particular objectives in the Local Area Plan for each settlement, the details of which are tabulated below.

Table 7.6 Local Area Plan Timetable for Priority Two Areas

Town	Current LAP	Specific Requirements in the current plan
Kildare	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport and active recreational facilities to be provided for the residents of the town. • Lands zoned as open space to be protected from inappropriate development.
Rathangan	2007 action area plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Slate and Grand Canal corridors to be available for amenity purposes, specifically a linear park. • Hierarchy of open space required with pedestrian links to the waterway corridors.
Sallins	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop waterways (river and canal) for recreational use. • To recognise the Liffey Valley Strategy objectives in future management and use of the riverside lands.
Clane	2002 town development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect the amenity and tourist value of the River Liffey, to protect its banks and develop walking routes along the river in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups and to seek an extension of the Liffey Valley Special Area Amenity Order to Clane • To recognise the Liffey Valley Strategy objectives in future management and use of the riverside lands.
Moone	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide for additional amenity areas and pedestrian

		routes, by, for example, developing the riverbank of Griese River as a linear park/ walkway.
Celbridge	2007 action area plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside to be developed as a linear park • To recognise the Liffey Valley Strategy objectives in future management and use of the riverside lands. • To pursue the establishment of the Barrow Valley, the River Liffey Valley and the canals as Areas of Special Amenity, as per section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Priority three – settlements with sufficient Council owned public open space facilities

According to current quantitative standards, there is apparently a sufficient supply of open space in terms of total area available to meet the population needs of these settlements. For these settlements, the current open space in council ownership will be subject to an open space quality audit (7.5.2, strategy objective 2). The open space audit will reveal valuable information about the quality and usefulness of areas of open space currently in the ownership of the county council. This exercise together with the engagement with the local people (7.5.3, strategy objective 3), may well reveal detailed needs that are not currently provided for. This could include knowledge of open spaces which are of no benefit to the local community because of difficulty of access or other reasons relating to the size or shape of such open spaces being inappropriate to meet the particular needs of adjacent residential areas. In these cases the strategy may point towards the need to dispose of or sell inappropriate areas of open space in favour of the acquisition of lands that would best meet local needs.

7.5.5

Objective 5 – Policy making in the County Development Plan.

The current County Development Plan sets out a policy objective relating to the creation of a Liffey Valley regional park. This policy states the following;

LV 1: To progress the implementation of the flagship projects identified in the Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy.

LV 2: To pursue the creation of a Liffey Valley Regional Park together with Fingal and South Dublin County Councils.

It is clear that current policy endorses the creation of a necklace of open space facilities sited around the River Liffey Valley. Similar opportunities to locate public open space in a manner that facilitates linked access to nearby waterways in the county ought to be explored as already outlined in this document. There is scope to include this aspiration in future County Plan Policy. Such new policy would highlight the need for continued enhancement of waterways as public open spaces that match the 'green corridor' typology and to take opportunities to site new local, neighbourhood and district parks adjacent to or around these amenities. The policy would encourage collaboration between the County Council, Waterways Ireland and National Parks and Wildlife Service in achieving these aims. By linking the new open

spaces to the waterway corridors, the value of all such open space is immediately enhanced for the end user.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to present the financial plan for the open space strategy for Co. Kildare. This plan is divided into two main parts. The first part provides indicative estimates for the likely capital costs involved in acquiring the additional open space recommended in the Open Space Strategy, while the second part assesses the likely ongoing implications of this for the maintenance of open space in the county.

8.2 CAPITAL COSTS

Chapter 7 above has provided estimates for additional open space requirements in Co. Kildare up to 2017, based on (a) DoE standards and (b) NPFA standards. This section therefore provides two separate capital cost estimates, based on the different requirements under each of these standards.

8.2.1 Capital Costs – DoE Standards

Under DoE standards, the strategy recommends additional local open space requirements in nine key locations – Allenwood, Ballymore Eustace, Celbridge, Clane, Derrinturn, Kildare, Moone, Rathangan and Sallins – as well as the development of three Regional Parks covering the Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood, Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip and Athy areas. Total additional space requirements under this standard, including local open spaces and Regional Parks, amounts to just under 345 hectares.

Table 8.1 Additional Open Space Requirements – DoE Standards

Settlement	Existing Open Space Privately Owned and Council owned 2010 (Ha)	Needed Open Space 2017 (Ha) DoE Standards 1987	Additional Space Required (Ha)
Allenwood	0.00	1.67	1.67
Ballymore Eustace	0.00	1.81	1.81
Celbridge	43.22	50.17	6.95
Clane	10.60	11.88	1.28
Derrinturn	0.00	2.72	2.72
Kildare	14.27	20.35	6.08
Moone	0.89	1.07	0.18
Rathangan	1.57	4.11	2.54
Sallins	3.90	9.10	5.20
TOTAL	74.45	102.89	28.44
Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood RP	0.00	150.00	150.00
Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip RP	0.00	140.00	140.00
Athy RP	0.00	26.00	26.00
TOTAL	0.00	316.00	316.00
OVERALL TOTAL	74.45	418.89	344.44

Estimates for the likely capital cost involved in acquiring this space (in 2010 prices) have been derived by applying average cost per hectare data to the DoE total space requirements. The average cost per hectare used has been derived from a desk-based review of agricultural land prices quoted by estate agents and auctioneers in Co. Kildare, originally undertaken in 2008, and revised downwards based on land price information available for 2010¹. In addition, two separate average cost estimates are used, depending on where additional space requirements are situated:

- a higher cost estimate for locations in or near the main commuter areas in the north of the county (set at €54,000 per hectare);
- an overall average cost estimate for other locations in the rest of the county (set at €45,000 per hectare).

¹ The original cost per hectare data used were revised downwards based on information available from the Knight Frank Ireland Land Sales Survey for 2010. This showed that average land prices in the Dublin-Kildare-Wicklow area had fallen by about 50% between 2008 and 2010.

Table 8.2 *Capital Cost Estimates – DoE Standards*

Settlement	Additional Space Required (Ha)	Average Cost per Ha (€)	Total Cost (€)
Allenwood	1.67	€54,000	€90,072
Ballymore Eustace	1.81	€45,000	€81,630
Celbridge	6.95	€54,000	€375,084
Clane	1.28	€54,000	€69,012
Derrinturn	2.72	€45,000	€122,580
Kildare	6.08	€54,000	€328,428
Moone	0.18	€45,000	€8,235
Rathangan	2.54	€45,000	€114,435
Sallins	5.20	€54,000	€280,638
TOTAL	28.44	-	€1,470,114
Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood RP	150.00	€54,000	€8,100,000
Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip RP	140.00	€54,000	€7,560,000
Athy RP	26.00	€45,000	€1,170,000
TOTAL	316.00	-	€16,830,000
OVERALL TOTAL	344.44	-	€18,300,114

On the basis of these estimates, the additional local space in nine key locations would cost just under €1.5 mn to acquire. On top of this, investment of €16.8 mn would be required to acquire nearly 320 hectares for the three proposed Regional Parks, giving a total capital cost of €18.3 mn.

8.2.2 *Capital Costs – NPFA Standards*

Under NPFA standards, the strategy recommends additional local space requirements in ten key locations – Allenwood, Ballymore Eustace, Celbridge, Clane, Derrinturn, Kildare, Moone, Prosperous, Rathangan and Sallins – as well as the proposed three Regional Parks. Total additional space requirements under this standard, including local spaces and Regional Parks, amounts to 365 hectares.

Table 8.3 *Additional Open Space Requirements – NPFA Standards*

Settlement	Existing Open Space Privately Owned and Council owned 2010 (Ha)	Needed Open Space 2017 (Ha) NPFA Standards	Additional Space Required (Ha)
Allenwood	0.00	2.00	2.00
Ballymore Eustace	0.00	2.18	2.18
Celbridge	43.22	60.20	16.98
Clane	10.60	14.25	3.65
Derrinturn	0.00	3.27	3.27
Kildare	14.27	24.42	10.15
Moone	0.89	1.29	0.40
Prosperous	5.43	5.56	0.13
Rathangan	1.57	4.93	3.37
Sallins	3.90	10.92	7.02
TOTAL	79.88	129.02	49.14
Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood RP	0.00	150.00	150.00
Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip RP	0.00	140.00	140.00
Athy RP	0.00	26.00	26.00
TOTAL	0.00	316.00	316.00
OVERALL TOTAL	79.88	445.02	365.14

Capital cost estimates for acquiring this level of space (in 2010 prices) have been derived by applying the same average cost per hectare data used earlier to the NPFA total space requirements. On the basis of these estimates, the additional local space in ten key locations would cost just under €2.6 mn to acquire. Again, investment of €16.8 mn would be required to acquire the three proposed Regional Parks, giving a total capital cost of €19.4 mn.

Table 8.4 *Capital Cost Estimates – NPFA Standards*

Settlement	Additional Space Required (Ha)	Average Cost per Ha (€)	Total Cost (€)
Allenwood	2.00	€54,000	€108,086
Ballymore Eustace	2.18	€45,000	€97,956
Celbridge	16.98	€54,000	€916,898
Clane	3.65	€54,000	€197,294
Derrinturn	3.27	€45,000	€147,096
Kildare	10.15	€54,000	€548,230
Moone	0.40	€45,000	€17,901
Prosperous	0.13	€45,000	€5,895
Rathangan	3.37	€45,000	€151,425
Sallins	7.02	€54,000	€378,918
TOTAL	49.14	-	€2,569,700
Naas-Newbridge-Allenwood RP	150.00	€54,000	€8,100,000
Celbridge-Maynooth-Leixlip RP	140.00	€54,000	€7,560,000
Athy RP	26.00	€45,000	€1,170,000
TOTAL	316.00	-	€16,830,000
OVERALL TOTAL	365.14	-	€19,399,700

8.2.3 *Sources of Funding*

Sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.2 above suggest that the capital cost for acquiring the open space needed in Co. Kildare by 2017 will be between €18.3 million and €19.4 million, depending on whether the DoE standard or the NPFA standard is applied.

The likely main sources of funding for this investment would be Kildare Co. Council's receipts from development contributions and development levies and income from Exchequer, EU and other sources. However, it should be noted that Kildare Co. Council already has a detailed capital programme in place for funding community facilities and recreational amenities between 2010 and 2013, which targets investment of more than €16.3 million across a range of candidate projects. In addition, delivery of the Council's overall capital programme is contingent on the ability to raise about €17.8 million in development contributions in the period as well as acquiring sufficient levels of funding from other sources.

Other possible sources of funding might include certain schemes under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-13, which might incorporate funding for open space. These include:

- the Enhancement of Environment and Countryside Sub-programme, which can fund afforestation projects with public amenity objectives;
- the Sports Sub-programme, which can fund sporting and recreational facilities at local level for sports clubs and community groups;
- the Community Infrastructure Sub-programme, which can fund urban and village renewal projects.

Funding sources and funding potential, however, must also be viewed within the context of the severe economic downturn that has gripped Ireland since 2008, and the dramatic negative impact that this has had on the public finances. This downturn, which has led to a significant fall-off in development activity, has a knock-on effect on the local authority's ability to raise development contributions. Similarly, the effect of the downturn in the public finances has serious implications for all public expenditure, including Council income from Exchequer sources and the funding of the NDP and its potential funding sources for this strategy.

8.3 *MAINTENANCE COSTS*

Estimates for future maintenance costs are based on information available for the existing parks improvement budget of Kildare Co. Council. At present, the Council has an annual maintenance budget for parks and open spaces of €281,000. This money is spent on grass maintenance, tree planting, tree surgery and miscellaneous landscaping, and about €240,000 of the budget would be spent on Council-owned open spaces.

Table 8.5 *Maintenance Budget - Parks and Open Spaces*

	Total Budget (€)	Open Spaces Budget (€)
Grass Maintenance	€50,000	€50,000
Tree Planting	€30,000	€10,000
Tree Surgery	€30,000	€10,000
Miscellaneous Landscaping	€171,000	€171,000
TOTAL	€281,000	€241,000

Additional maintenance costs for both grass maintenance and other maintenance are dealt with separately below.

8.3.1

Grass Maintenance

The €50,000 budget for grass maintenance applies to only 36 hectares, which is about 10.4% of the total Council-owned open space of 345 hectares. The average cost per hectare for grass maintenance is therefore €1,389. Grass maintenance on the remaining open space, where it is needed, is provided for by local town councils or by residents associations.

Tables 8.1 and 8.3 above show that the additional open space requirement under this strategy is between 344 hectares and 365 hectares, depending on whether the DoE standard or the NPFA standard is used. Assuming that the Council would only bear the maintenance cost for 10.4% of this space, as is the case for existing owned lands, means that grass maintenance would be required for between 36 and 38 additional hectares. On this basis, the additional annual cost to the Council for grass maintenance would be between €49,750 and €52,750.

Table 8.6 *Grass Maintenance – Additional Cost Estimates*

	DoE Standard	NPFA Standard
Additional open space required (ha)	344.44	365.14
% of space maintained by Kildare Co. Council	10.4%	10.4%
# of space maintained by Kildare Co. Council (ha)	35.82	37.97
Average cost per hectare (€)	€1,388.89	€1,388.89
TOTAL COST (€)	€49,750.04	€52,736.15

8.3.2

Other Maintenance

Excluding grass maintenance, Kildare Co. Council also spends another €191,000 on maintaining open spaces through tree planting, tree surgery and miscellaneous landscaping (see Table 8.5). This spending is spread across the entire Council-owned open space of 345 hectares, which gives an average cost per hectare of €554.

Again, open space requirements under this strategy are between 345 hectares and 365 hectares, depending on whether the DoE standard or the NPFA standard is used. On this basis, therefore, the additional annual cost for other maintenance would be between €191,000 and €202,000.

Table 8.7 ***Other Maintenance – Additional Cost Estimates***

	DoE Standard	NPFA Standard
Additional open space required (ha)	344.44	365.14
Average cost per hectare (€)	€553.85	€553.85
TOTAL COST (€)	€190,768.09	€202,232.78

8.3.3 ***Maintenance Costs - Summary***

In summary, the additional maintenance cost arising from the additional open space required under this strategy would be between €241,000 and €255,000, depending on which open space standard is used.

Table 8.8 ***Maintenance – Additional Cost Summary***

	DoE Standard (€)	NPFA Standard (€)
Grass Maintenance	€49,750.04	€52,736.15
Other Maintenance	€190,768.09	€202,232.78
TOTAL COST	€240,518.13	€254,968.93

However, these figures also assume that Kildare Co. Council would only have to bear the cost of grass maintenance on about 10% of its space, so maintenance costs would obviously increase if this was to rise.

An open space strategy was prepared for Kildare County for the purpose of enabling the County Council to begin to adopt an organised approach towards analysing open space supply and planning for current and future open space requirements to meet recreational and amenity needs.

A policy background is outlined and criteria and standards for open space provision are outlined with reference to the Department of the Environment Guidelines entitled '*A policy for the provision and maintenance of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas by local authorities 1987*' together with Scottish guidance (Planning Advice Note No 65) and the UK NPFA standard.

An open space audit was conducted which comprised a desk based study of open space in the county generally and this was supported by a field survey audit for sample open spaces in settlements in Kildare. Initial strategy recommendations based on the field survey are presented

Population data was gathered for the settlements and an assessment of current and future open space needs were calculated in accordance with quantitative standards set out in the DOE guidelines and also with reference to the NPFA standards given the age of the Irish guidance (over 20 years old).

The quantitative standards were applied in the strategy in order to give an indication of the adequacy of provision of open space in any given settlement in terms of number of hectares. A total of three settlements, Allenwood, Ballymore Eustace and Derrinturn were found to have no open space in accordance with the standards applied. A further 3 settlements, Kildare Rathangan and Sallins were found to be underprovided for according to the standards applied. In the case of both Celbridge and Moone, these will have insufficient open space by the year 2017. Prosperous will have insufficient open space in 2017 according to the NPFA standards.

Opinion was sought from the public via a questionnaire which yielded a very limited response. Along with the pursuit of a detailed open space quality audit, the strategy recommends that a representative sample of residents for each settlement will have to be approached in order to ascertain their views on the supply, functionality and location of open spaces in their area.

The strategy addresses categories of open space as follows:

- **Areas of open space within settlements** which addresses open space needs in quantitative terms are set out for settlements in order of priority for action;
- **Areas of open space that serve a number of settlements – towards a regional park network for the county** which identifies the potential for

the development of regional parks to serve three specific areas of the county; and

- **Strategic areas for open space within the county generally** which addresses the potential for recreation and amenity facilities along waterway corridors and forested sites such as those owned and managed by Coillte.

A strategy action plan is outlined and includes the following objectives:

- Open space partnership to be formed;
- Open space quality audit to be undertaken in detail to enhance the summary audit presented in this strategy. The audit will be updated at regular intervals;
- Public engagement to be sought for the purposes of ascertaining users needs;
- Further strategy objectives arising out of the actions listed above ought to inform future Local Area plans;
- Policy making in the County Development Plan will take account of the value in harnessing natural waterway resources for recreation and amenity including the River Liffey, the strategy for which is already endorsed by the County Plan.

Finally the financial plan presents estimate costs for the provision of open space in the settlements of highest priority together with estimates for meeting strategy objectives in terms of regional parks. The financial plan also addresses maintenance costs.

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- Mid East Regional Authority (2007) Update on Regional Planning Guidelines, April 2007.
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- 3.2 DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT - A POLICY FOR THE PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES (1987)
- 3.3 DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT – RESIDENTIAL DENSITY GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES (1999)
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- Kildare County Council (2007) *Donaghcumper Lands / Celbridge Town Centre Action Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2007) *Rathangan Action Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2004) *Leixlip Wonderful Barn Action Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2006) *Maynooth Harbour Action Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2006) *Maynooth (Carton Avenue) Action Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2008) *Allenwood Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2007) *Athgarvan Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2003) *Newbridge Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2002) *Celbridge Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2008) *Derrinturn Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2008) *Kilcullen Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2002) *Rathangan Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2007) *Prosperous Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2002) *Kildare Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2002) *Leixlip Local Area Plan*
- Kildare County Council (2008) *Monasterevin Local Area Plan*
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- Kildare County Council (2008) *Sallins Local Area Plan*
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- Kildare County Council (2002) *Maynooth Town Development Plan*

Annex A

Policy Background

A1 ANNEX A POLICY BACKGROUND

A1.1 NATIONAL POLICY

A1.1.1 *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020*

The *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2002) gives details of the planning framework for the coming years. Its aim is to provide a plan for the distribution of development across the nation. It sets out a strategy for development which supports the country's overall economic, social and environmental development. It maintains that a balanced regional development is reliant on local plan use policies. Ultimately, in order to ensure that future populations are provided with adequate access to amenities at both regional and local scales, including open space, current spatial planning is required to be based on accurate data and developed around the principles of sustainability. It suggests creating green settings for cities and towns in order to provide people with opportunities for outdoor recreation within easy reach of their homes.

Open spaces can also be used effectively when planning for consolidation to break up the urban fabric in a physical context while also allowing its connection in other ways. In order to do so, the *National Spatial Strategy* (2002, p. 115) suggests that regional and county level plans and strategies be drawn with the following objectives:

- to prevent urban sprawl
- to reduce the loss of agricultural and other land to urban uses
- to protect rural identity and reduce disruption to farming by keeping rural-urban distinctions as clear as possible
- to create a green setting for cities and towns which will provide people with opportunities for outdoor recreation within easy reach
- to conserve and, where appropriate and possible, enhance biodiversity
- to protect buildings, structures and other physical elements of cultural heritage interest.

A1.1.2 *Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1999*

The 1999 *Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, also details the standards of public open space provision. It recognises that public open space is a key element in defining the quality of the residential environment, provides for passive as well as active amenity, and has important ecological and environmental aspects. In order to achieve higher densities, with a higher standard of residential environment, the provision of higher quality public open space is essential; suggesting that lower quantitative standards can only

be accepted in cases of increased qualitative standards (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1999).

A1.1.3 *National Sustainable Development Strategy, 1997*

The environmental and ecological benefits of public open space are mentioned in the *National Sustainable Development Strategy* (1997, p. 151); open spaces can ‘fulfill various environmental functions in terms of surface water management, maintenance of biodiversity and improved air quality. Accordingly, from a sustainability perspective, there is need for a new emphasis on the environmental and ecological, in addition to the traditional social and amenity, roles of open spaces within the urban fabric’.

A1.2 REGIONAL POLICIES

A1.2.1 *Regional Planning Guidelines – Greater Dublin Area, 2004*

The Mid East and Dublin Regional Authorities (*Regional Planning Guidelines – Greater Dublin Area, 2004*) suggests that planning authorities should identify areas within urban centres, particularly those selected for future developments in the settlement strategy, for the provision of public open spaces for informal recreation. Apart from recreation, the provision of public open spaces must also address one or more various functions, including; extending the open space network, enhancing biodiversity, protecting heritage interests, etc. According to the *Regional Planning Guidelines*, Planning Authorities should:

- Ensure that the provision of future residential developments, or mixed use schemes with a residential element, should take account of the policies and recommendations of the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities with regard to the quantity and quality of public and private open space provision.
- Have a presumption in favour of the retention of existing sports and recreation facilities.
- Have proposals for the enhancement of such facilities and the provision of new facilities in all major residential developments.
- Identify areas within urban centres, particularly those selected for future development in the settlement strategy, for the provision of public open spaces for informal recreation which can address one or more of the following:
 - Extend and enhance the existing open space network.
 - Secure landscape and biodiversity enhancement.
 - Enhance the setting of features of heritage interest.
 - Improve access to the coast, river valleys and canals.
 - Secure the reclamation of derelict and contaminated land.
 - Improve the environment of the urban fringe.
 - Provide a setting for other sporting facilities.

- Examine ways to improve access to the countryside for informal recreational purposes such as walking, cycling and horse riding. It is envisaged that the creation of recreational opportunities and the provision of open space in rural areas will contribute to the rural economy and importantly, further contribute to the social and community infrastructure in rural towns and villages thus enhancing the quality of life of the residents and other rural dwellers.
- Where appropriate, in association with relevant Government Departments, ensure the provision of an adequate range of both outdoor and indoor recreational facilities in centres to cater for expected population demand.
- Locate areas of open spaces, recreation and sports facilities, especially such facilities in urban locations, within easy access by walking and cycling.
- Locate larger facilities likely to attract significant numbers of people and to be intensive trip generators, on routes well served by public transport.

Finally, in relation to accessing open space, recommendation 9.1 states the following;

‘Where possible, future leisure and recreational facilities should be located where they can be served by public transport. The relative importance of recreational facilities will increase in the future and it will be important to ensure that adequate recreational facilities are available throughout the Greater Dublin Area in conjunction with, or even ahead of, new housing development. In particular, provision will require to be made for local and regional scale parks, incorporating active and passive recreation and placed on access by public transport’

A1.3 OTHER POLICIES

The following tables highlight the key policies of other national plans, regional/county plans, action area plans, local area plans and town development plans considered during the development of the strategy.

Table A1.1 National Plans

Publication	Key Policies
National Recreational Policy for Young People (September 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher residential densities require that a much greater emphasis be placed on quality (including the location) of communal open space and the ongoing maintenance of such space. High-density developments also need to make specific provision for the play and recreational needs of children and teenagers. • Public parks and open spaces operated and maintained by local authorities are an important part of the environment to the extent that they provide facilities and amenities that are attractive to teenagers. Playgrounds cater primarily for children aged 4-10, but are frequently used by older children in the absence of facilities more appropriate to their age.

Publication	Key Policies
Ready, Steady Play! A National Play Policy (March 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the natural and built environment have resulted in a decreasingly child friendly environment, with less open space in which to play and explore. • A key issue to be addressed is the need for accessible areas for children to congregate and socialise freely • The NPI (2002), conclude that areas which facilitate the highest range of play activity and satisfaction are those with footpath networks, cul-de-sac layouts, public open spaces as well as play areas.
National Biodiversity Plan	No direct reference to open space
National Heritage Plan	No direct reference to open space
New Horizons for Irish Tourism – An Agenda for Action (September 2003)	No direct reference to open space
National Health Promotion Strategy 2000 – 2005 (2000)	Findings: two thirds of younger boys reported participating in vigorous exercise 4 or more times per week this had declined to just over half of all boys in all social classes in the 15-17 year old age group. A similar pattern was observed with girls, but in the 15-17 year age group only one in four reported this level of activity. Overall 42% of adult respondents engaged in some form of regular physical exercise. Rates declined markedly with age. Nearly one third of those over 55 took no exercise at all in a typical week. A social class gradient existed in most age groups for both males and females. No direct mention of open space

Table A1.2 *Regional/County Plans*

Publication	Key Policies
Towards a Liffey Valley Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the River Liffey is accessible through the public parks and spaces along the maximum extent of the Liffey Valley Park. • Protect, conserve and enhance the natural resources of the Liffey Valley in the interests of maintaining a diverse biodiversity and for the benefit of future generations. • Ensure the preservation, enhancement and continued use of the Liffey Valley's cultural heritage assets.
County Kildare Walking Routes Project (October 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the routes are in public ownership and therefore benefit from regular maintenance and development. • No direct reference to open spaces

Publication	Key Policies
Donaghcumper Lands / Celbridge Town Centre Action Area Plan (June 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair, consolidation, improvement and development of public spaces. • Network of public spaces linked by streets and paths • A scheme of enhancement should be implemented for the existing Main Street/English Row Area. • Donaghcumper Lands – Riverside should be used to protect the eastern bank of the River Liffey. • Donaghcumper Lands – Town Centre Extension network of open spaces for pedestrians and cyclists. • Donaghcumper Lands – Designed Landscape Parkland, 12.1 Ha, related to Castletown/Donaghcumper Demesnes • Donaghcumper House Area with wooded area to the south-east of the house. • Residential areas should be linked with the Town Centre via a network of open spaces.
Rathangan Action Area Plan (February 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conserve and re-use protected structures. • To enhance amenity of the River Slate and Grand Canal. • To retain tree line along the River Slate. • To promote the Grand canal as a valuable amenity resource. • A linear park which shall run along the length of both the River Slate and the Grand Canal and shall be up to ten metres in width from the edge of either water body. • Requires a hierarchy of public open spaces with a pedestrian link route from the linear parks along both the River Slate and the Grand Canal to incorporate existing natural vegetation between both water-bodies, a central, functional and accessible areas of public open space, and a significant element of pedestrian space.
Leixlip Wonderful Barn Action Area Plan (May 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated parklands of approximately 21 Ha west of Celbridge Road and north of M4, in council ownership. • Approximately 5 to 10% of the residential areas should be used for open space. • Hard surface open spaces used due to proximity to large parkland.
Maynooth Harbour Action Area Plan (Feb 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open spaces should be well linked with residential areas • High quality, safe pedestrian and cycle routes should be provided in open spaces. • Approximately 5 – 10% of the residential area should be used for the provision of dedicated open space.
Maynooth (Carton Avenue) Action Area Plan (July 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands located adjacent to the Limewalk Parklands will be utilised to meet local needs and accommodate playing pitches and grass amenity areas. • There is to be the provision of 9.4 Ha of passive open space and an additional 10.5 of active open space. • Within residential areas open space will be provided at a rate of approximately 5 – 10%.

Table A1.3 Local Area Plans

Publication	Key Policies
Allenwood Local Area Plan (April 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is objective to ensure that open spaces and recreational facilities are accessible to all citizens of Kildare. • To ensure a high standard of open space provision in new housing schemes in terms of size, location and landscaping and to improve existing open space areas in housing which has been taken in-charge by the Council. • Open spaces associated with developments must be designed with the needs of the disabled and mobility impaired in mind. • In greenfield sites, the minimum area of open space that is acceptable is 15% of the total site area, while in all other cases, public open spaces should be provided at the rate of 10% of the total site area.
Athgarvan Local Area Plan (December 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the area there should be an open space hierarchy with (a) pedestrian link routes connecting residential with commercial, (b) a central functional, accessible and adequately overlooked public open space, and (c) smaller areas of useable, functional, accessible and central areas of open space throughout the area. • To ensure high quality open spaces in housing schemes and development of new amenity open space in the village and particularly along the River Liffey. • Open space associated with development shall be designed with the needs of the disabled and mobility impaired in mind. • In Greenfield sites, the minimum area of open space that is acceptable is 15% of the total site area. In all other cases, public open space should be provided at the rate of 10% of the total site area.
Newbridge Local Area Plan (October 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the upgrading of facilities, including their relocation to more appropriate lands within the town. • Co-operate with sports clubs, schools, community organisations and individuals in the provision of sports recreational facilities to serve the residents of Newbridge. • Extend and develop linear park along both sides of the Liffey from the Dominican College to the motorway and to continue the development of the riverside park system in accordance with the Boylan report. • The Council will welcome the provision of playgrounds as part of larger development proposals.
Rathangan Local Area Plan (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-operate with sports clubs, schools and community organisations in the provision of sports and recreational facilities to serve the residents of Rathangan. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development.
Prosperous Local Area Plan (December 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grand Canal, Ballinagh Lake, Donadea Forest Park and the Millennium Maze are local passive and active recreation resources. There is a current lack of passive recreational space in Prosperous town. • Open space should be provided in accordance with the standards of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005-2011.

Publication	Key Policies
Celbridge Local Area Plan (June 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of open space is in private ownership, a total of 25 acres of open space are in the ownership of recreational groups in the town. There are additional areas of open space located along the River Liffey, in the grounds of Celbridge Abbey and in the vicinity of schools and housing estates as well as Castletown Demesne. • A total of six outdoor recreational groups operate in the town. • To enhance the amenity value of the Liffey to Celbridge by acquiring lands and developing them as open space. • To improve access to the river banks and to maximise use of the riverside areas. • To create separated pedestrian cycle ways linking open spaces, residential areas and the town centre.
Derrinturn Local Area Plan (May 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the protection of existing areas of open spaces in the village. • The development of the village centre expansion shall incorporate a village park and playground.
Kilcullen Local Area Plan (May 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote the development of the river-side and walking routes and the designated amenity areas. • To ensure a high standard of open space provision in new housing and improve existing open space areas in housing development. • Develop playgrounds and play opportunities within the town in conjunction with the local community. • Facilitate the development of a new public park in Kilcullen along the River Liffey. • Public open spaces must be designed carefully as an integral part of the layout and should be addressed and initial design stages. • In Greenfield sites, the minimum area of open space that is acceptable is 15% of the total site area. In all other cases, public open space should be provided at the rate of 10% of the total site area.
Kildare Local Area Plan (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with sports clubs, schools and community organisations in the provision of sports and recreational facilities to serve the residents of Kildare Town. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development.
Leixlip Local Area Plan (February 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with sports clubs, schools and community organisations in the provision of sports and recreational facilities to serve the residents of Kildare Town. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development.
Monastervin Local Area Plan (May 2008) Ballintore, Crookstown, Timolin and Moone Local Area Plans (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional 11.8 Ha of open space is zoned in the LAP. • It is important that any improvements or additions to public spaces be carried out in a sensitive manner.
Sallins Local Area Plan (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sallins GAA playing fields are located within the town boundary and are a valuable resource within walking distance of the town's inhabitants. The Grand Canal and the River Liffey are major assets for the town and they should be protected and enhanced with appropriate land use zonings. • Areas of open space are to be used to connect residential areas and the commercial areas of the town.
Straffan Local Area Plan (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mention

Publication	Key Policies
Allenwood Local Area Plan (April 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue the development of the canal-side walking routes and the designated amenity area in conjunction with the relevant bodies. • To improve existing open space areas in housing that has been taken in-charge by the Council. • In greenfield sites, the minimum area of open space that is acceptable is 15% of the total site area. In all other cases, public open space should be provided at the rate of 10% of the total site area.

Table A1.4 *Town Development Plans*

Publication	Key Policies
Athy Town Development Plan (April 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed to intensify the use of the open space by developing a sports, leisure and performing arts space at the Edmund Rice Square and Landmark site. • The protection of existing and provision of new open space in the town is critical in providing an improved quality of life for the residents of Athy. It is proposed to intensify the use of the open space to the north of Duke Street, by developing sports and community facilities. The provision of a new park to the north of Duke Street comprising mainly of active open space, together with the existing passive open space area of People's Park, will provide valuable amenity assets for the residents of Athy.
Naas Town Development Plan 2005-2011 (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is intended to provide a public park for passive recreation on land located between the Harbour, Abbey Bridge and the canal to construct a skateboard park and playgrounds in Naas, to provide a town centre park located in the gardens of St. David's Castle and to develop a small public park on land which is in the Council's ownership at Millbrook and to connect this with the strip of open space running east along Friary Road to join with the proposed pedestrian access to Sundays Well housing development at the road bridge across the disused railway line. • There are also plans to complete the development of a 12.14 hectare District Park at Monread, to facilitate the completion of the public open space area at Lakelands/Sundays Well/Lacken View/Cleevaun, and to provide for the development of a 0.8 hectare (2.0 acre) park at the junction of the Craddockstown Road and the proposed distributor road linking the Ballymore Road to the Craddockstown Road for active and/or passive recreation. • The Plan stipulates that a large Green Belt/Future Park along the Grand Canal has the potential to develop into a strategic green lung for Naas and Jigginstown Castle has also been designated as a Green Belt/Future Park.
Castledermot Town Development Plan (January 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with sports clubs, schools and community organisations in the provision of sports and recreational facilities to serve the residents of Castledermot. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development.
Clane Town Development Plan (January 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with local sports organisations in the provision of sports facilities and active recreation space. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development.

Publication	Key Policies
Kilcock Town Development Plan (January 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with local sports organisations in the provision of sports facilities and active recreation space. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development. • The Council supports the proposals to develop the Royal canal as set out in the Royal Canal Corridor Study, Spencer Dock to Allen Bridge; Strategy and Proposals (1995) and will work with local community groups and sports associations in developing the recreational and tourism potential of the canal in partnership with Waterways Ireland.
Kill Town Development Plan (February 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with local sports organisations in the provision of sports facilities and active recreation space. • The Council will protect lands zoned as open space from inappropriate development.
Maynooth Town Development Plan (April 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek the provision of suitable sports and recreational facilities for schools, sports and social clubs in the town. • To acquire and develop the Harbour Field as a recreational facility for the town. • Seek the restoration of Lime Avenue and the development of parks adjacent to Carton Estate and to the south east of the town, off the new road linking the Straffan and Celbridge roads. • Seek the development of additional recreational facilities and sports fields as the town grows. • To protect land zoned as open space from inappropriate development. • The Council supports the proposal to develop the canal as set out in the Royal Canal Corridor Study, Spencer Dock to Allen Bridge; Strategy and Proposals (1005) and will work with local community groups and sports organisations in developing the recreational and tourism potential of the canal in partnership with Waterways Ireland.

Annex B

Open Space Audit of Settlements – Tabulated Results

Figure 1.1 Open Space Audit Form

Town _____		Number _____		Photo No. _____	
Open Space Type		Country Park <input type="checkbox"/>	District Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Local Park <input type="checkbox"/>
Open Space Sub-type		Amenity Greenspace <input type="checkbox"/>	Playspace <input type="checkbox"/>	Sports Area <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Green Corridor <input type="checkbox"/>	Natural / Semi-natural Greenspaces <input type="checkbox"/>		
Percentage of Site covered in		Grassland _____	Woodland _____	Waterside _____	
		Hedgerow _____	Scrub _____	Ruderal _____	
Who does the open space serve?		Local Neighbourhood <input type="checkbox"/>	Entire town <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Wider County/Regional catchment <input type="checkbox"/>			
Is the Open Space the only such area identified in the settlement/town?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Does it serve the needs of a variety of users?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Does it appear to be well used?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Rating of facilities (i.e. are the needs of the intended users met by the facilities provided)					
		Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
Aspect (i.e. the visual quality of the open space)					
		Very Unpleasant <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly Unpleasant <input type="checkbox"/>	Pleasant <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Pleasant <input type="checkbox"/>
Does it appear to be a safe place for children?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Inventory of material features present in open space					
Benches <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscaping features (e.g. fountains)/flower beds <input type="checkbox"/>				
goal-posts <input type="checkbox"/>	Footpaths <input type="checkbox"/>				
playgrounds <input type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife areas <input type="checkbox"/>				
litter bins <input type="checkbox"/>	Other? please specify: _____				
Where is the open space located (i.e. in residential area, shopping area, industrial area), and what are the adjacent land/building uses?					

Where is the open space located?					
		Out of town <input type="checkbox"/>	Edge of town <input type="checkbox"/>	Within a built-up residential area <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other? please specify: _____			
Is the open space accessible by foot, bicycle, public transport, or by car?					
		Foot <input type="checkbox"/>	Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/>	Public transport <input type="checkbox"/>	Car <input type="checkbox"/>
What condition are the open space and the associated facilities in?					
		Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
What existing features require improvement (e.g. grass, planting, landscaping, facilities, etc.)? (if any)					

What is needed, i.e. improvements to the existing and replacements of existing features/facilities?					

Table B1.1 Open Space Audit Results

Open Space	Open Space Type									Land Cover Type					Intended Users			Frequency of Use			Rating of Facilities					Aspect	Inventory of material features present											Adjacent landuses	Location of Open Space			Accessibility				Condition of Open Space																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																									
	Country Park	District Park	Neighbourhood Park	Local park	Amenity Greenspace	Playspace	Sports Area	Green Corridor	Natural Greenspace	Grassland	Woodland	Waterside	Hedgerow	Scrub	Ruderal	Local Neighbourhood	Entire Town	Wider Catchment	Only open space in town	Serves variety of users	Appears to be well used	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Very Unpleasant	Unpleasant	Pleasant	Very Pleasant	Benches	Goalposts	Playgrounds	Litter-bins	Landscaping features	Footpaths	Wildlife areas		Other	Out of town	Edge of town	Within the town	By foot	By bicycle	By public transport	By car	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
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Open Space	Open Space Type		Land Cover Type					Intended Users		Frequency of Use		Rating of Facilities		Aspect		Inventory of material features present										Adjacent landuses	Location of Open Space			Accessibility			Condition of Open Space																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
	Country Park	District Park	Neighbourhood Park	Local park	Amenity Greenspace	Playspace	Sports Area	Green Corridor	Natural Greenspace	Grassland	Woodland	Waterside	Hedgerow	Scrub	Ruderal	Local Neighbourhood	Entire Town	Wider Catchment	Only open space in town	Serves variety of users	Appears to be well used	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good		Very Good	Very Unpleasant	Unpleasant	Pleasant	Very Pleasant	Benches	Goalposts	Playgrounds	Litter-bins	Landscaping features	Footpaths	Wildlife areas	Other	Out of town	Edge of town	Within the town	By foot	By bicycle	By public transport	By car	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
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Annex C

Baseline Studies

A summary of the County landscape character assessment is presented below. An indication of the settlements that are located within and are accessible to particular landscape character areas are specified.

C1.1**UPLANDS****C1.1.1****1. Eastern uplands – Oughterard**

An upland landscape comprising a chain of foothills to the Wicklow Mountains located in the adjacent County of the same name. These foothills occupy a relatively narrow elongated landscape corridor on the eastern county boundary. This represents the most elevated landscape in the County and as such presents a skyline that is clearly visible from within lowland areas of the County located further west.

This area is rural in character. Scenic views from a number of vantage points are available and these capture the lowland landscape located further west together with the hill range associated with the chair of Kildare. Views associated with the river valleys (Liffey) are generally enclosed or localised as a result of the screening effect of vegetation. The presence of scattered small villages may hint towards a relatively low population density.

The settlements that are relatively local to this landscape include Ballymore Eustace and Moone

C1.1.2**2. South Eastern Uplands – Corballis Hills**

The south eastern upland landscape comprises both the Corballis and Hughstown hills and represents a relatively small landscape character area located in the south eastern tip of the county. These hills also present as foothills to the Wicklow Mountains in the adjacent county of the same name. As this is an elevated landscape, the hills present as a visually prominent skyline and the coniferous plantations on the summit of Corballis hill further draws attention to this landmark. Natural vegetation groups are associated with Hughstown hill.

This landscape character area contains a relatively high density of rural housing and this could be an indicator of population growth.

C1.1.3**3. Northern Hills – Newtown Hills**

This is a relatively small landscape character area located in the north of the County. It comprises an upland area defined by two principal hills located in the townland of Newtown. The hills are visible from the surrounding low

lying landscape and present visually as a distinctive or unique skyline. An extensive local road network provides access to the upper slopes or summits of these hills. Scenic views of the lower lying landscapes and sections of the Royal Canal can be obtained from these hilltops. The landcover in this area comprises largely pasture and an intact and well maintained hedgerow pattern is present.

C1.1.4 4. Central Uplands - Chair of Kildare - Red Hill, Dunmurry Hill, Allen Hill

This is an upland landscape located in the middle of the County and is so defined by the semi circular chain of hills bearing the names referenced above. The highest of these is Dunmurray Hill and this together with the ridgelines of Grange Hill, Red Hill, Boston Hill and Allen Hill present as a prominent and unique skyline from the surrounding central lowland landscapes. The principal landuse is pasture although some tillage is also present. Coniferous forestry is present and it together with native species woodland features on Allen and Dunmurray Hill. Parts of this landscape are significantly affected by man made activities, for example, Allen Hill and Boston hill are altered by activities associated with mineral and sand and gravel extraction whilst a telecommunications mast is the dominant feature on Red Hill. Vegetation, present largely in the form of hedgerows are managed and cut resulting in a generally open landscape. The hill of Allen itself is of mythological significance being associated with Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna. The hill and surrounding areas functioned as a camp and training ground.

C1.2 LOWLAND AREAS

C1.2.1 Northern lowlands - Naas and environs

This landscape character area comprises an extensive lowland plain which is bisected by the River Liffey. The Royal Canal runs along the northern boundary and the Grand Canal and tributary extends broadly across the middle of this landscape. This is a low lying landscape used largely as pasture. Hedgerows are well maintained and are managed as low cut field boundaries. Scattered mature trees are dispersed throughout these hedgerows. Overall, this vegetation pattern allows for the availability of long range views across this landscape. Views towards the skylines of the eastern uplands, the chair of Kildare and the Newtown Hills are available.

Apart from the pastoral landuses, crops of coniferous forestry are present as are areas of deciduous woodland. Large tracts of bogland are present, some of which are disturbed as a result of peat extraction.

In general, river valleys and canal corridors are enclosed both physically and visually by vegetation.

The settlements that are located within this landscape include the following;

- Naas
- Kill

- Prosperous
- Clane
- Celbridge
- Maynooth
- Leixlip
- Kilcock

C1.2.2 *Southern lowlands*

This lowland landscape features the River Barrow which extends along the length of the western side of this farmed landscape. The grand Canal runs along the north western edge of this area. This is a farmed landscape which is generally flat and open. The low cut managed hedgerows and presence of scattered mature trees means that long range views across this landscape are generally available. Long range views of the skyline of the eastern uplands are available together with the Wicklow Mountains. Other visible distinctive skylines include the chair of Kildare to the north, the Newtown and Hughstown Hills and the neighbouring hills in County Laois.

The principal landuse is tillage and areas of coniferous and mixed forestry are also present. Small patches of woodland and bogland are present.

River valleys and water corridors are generally physically and visually enclosed by the boundary vegetation present.

The settlements that are located within this landscape include the following;

- Rathangan
- Monasterevin
- Athy

C1.2.3 *North-western Lowlands – Cadamstown and environs*

This is a low lying landscape with gentle undulating topography. Significant and visible hills include Carbury Hill. The landuses are largely given over to agriculture with a large scale field pattern usually bounded by hedgerows which are low and well maintained.

This landscape is generally visually open thereby affording long range views in many locations towards the Newtown Hills to the east and Allen Hill to the south east.

C1.2.4 *Central undulating lowlands*

Located in the centre of the County, this landscape is characterised by gently undulating topography. It encloses the landscape of The Curragh, a racing course featuring large expanses of flat grasslands. The field pattern of this agricultural landscape is strongly defined by managed hedgerows featuring some mature trees. A section of the River Liffey river landscape crosses the

eastern part of this landscape character area. The low lying and open nature of this landscape means that views of the eastern Kildare Uplands are available and views of the Chair of Kildare to the west are also clearly available. The settlements that are located within this landscape include the following;

- Newbridge
- Kildare
- Athgarvan

C1.2.5 *Western boglands*

This is a lowland landscape with relatively flat topography. large areas of bogland are present owing to the limited drainage and high water table in the area generally. These boglands confer a distinctive character to the area. Agricultural lands are large in size, open and bounded by unmanaged hedgerows and scattered trees. Generally this landscape is open and long range views are available from many locations to the south to the Chair of Kildare and to the north east to the Newtown Hills. The Grand Canal crosses this landscape character area in an east west direction.

Within this landscape character area, the local area of Robertstown is included and this landscape comprises the canal and bogland landscapes in the vicinity of the villages of Rathangan and Robertstown. Recommendations from a study undertaken by An Foras Forbartha in 1978 include the allocation of lands in this area for recreation. The types of recreation include the creation of lakes for amenity use, the establishment of canal towpaths as linear parks and as part of long distance walking routes and the establishment of a farm interpretation centre together with similar facilities in Lullymore Bog to raise interest and awareness of bogland landscapes.

The settlements that are located within this landscape include the following;

- Derrinturn
- Allenwood

C1.3 *TRANSITION AREAS*

C1.3.1 *Eastern transition lands*

This landscape character area represents the transition between the uplands to the east and the lowlands to the west. It is an elongated area running along the length of the County near to the eastern county boundary. It features an undulating topography and is bisected across the middle by the River Liffey landscape. Significant hilltops include Old Kilcullen Hill, Bulhill, Mullacash Hill, Ninetree Hill and Carrig Hill. These serve as vantage points, affording the viewer panoramic views of the lowlands to the west. Views are also available in this area of the skyline of the eastern uplands and the Wicklow Mountains in part. Towards the west, The Chair of Kildare is visible.

Only the town of Kilcullen is located within this landscape.

C1.4 RIVER VALLEYS AND WATER CORRIDORS

C1.4.1 *River Liffey*

The river occupies the north eastern quarter of the County where it flows in a north east to south west pattern. Towns and villages that have developed along its banks include Leixlip, Celbridge, Clane, Newbridge, Kilcullen and Ballymore Eustace. Views from the river are available towards the skyline of the eastern uplands, the Chair of Kildare and the Wicklow Mountains in part. Much of the river corridor is vegetated with mature deciduous woodlands thus conferring a very high scenic quality on this landscape.

C1.4.2 *River Barrow*

Comprising an extensive river valley, the Barrow navigation flows in a north south direction along the western County boundary. The valley topography is gentle and accessible by road. As a result a number of towns have developed along its banks including Athy and Monasterevin. The gentle river valley slopes are well vegetated with deciduous trees and woodlands and represent overall a very high quality river landscape. Outside of the vegetated corridor, gently undulating pasturelands are present affording views to the Chair of Kildare to the north and the Eastern Uplands to the east.

C1.4.3 *Grand Canal*

This extensive waterway crosses the County in a broadly east west direction. At Sallins it divides into the Naas and Corbally branch. Further west it is divided into three branches, the Milltown Feeder, the Barrow line and the continuation of the Grand Canal into the neighbouring County Offaly. The canal corridor is located within a wider pastureland, and in some areas, bogland setting. The canal is fringed by vegetation in many areas and features distinctive canal locks where this waterway passes through urban areas. Access by road is easily available and the towns that have ready access to it include Sallins, Rathangan and Allenwood.

C1.4.4 *Royal Canal*

This flows in an east west direction across the northern part of the County. it flows through the towns of Leixlip, Kilcock and Maynooth and roads run parallel alongside many sections of it. The canal corridor is fringed in many locations with mature vegetation and it together with the vegetation is usually located in a pastureland setting.

C1.5 *OTHER LANDSCAPE UNITS*

C1.5.1 *The Curragh*

The Curragh is an extensive unenclosed grassland plain which is proposed to be designated and protected as a Natural Heritage Area. The site is bisected by the N7 road and a railway line and includes the town of the Curragh Camp and the racecourse. This 2000 hectare site commands long ranging views albeit detracted from in part by the military camp, the motorway and railway and many powerlines.

C1.5.2 *Pollardstown fen*

Located on the northern margin of The Curragh, Pollardstown Fen is the largest spring fed fen in Ireland. It is located in a localised hollow and can be viewed from adjacent roads and nearby hilltops such as the Hill of Allen. The fen vegetation comprises sedges, reeds and rushes and lacks woody vegetation. Rare plant species are located here.

C1.5.3 *Allen remnant bogs*

Located at the foot of the Hill of Allen, this is a relatively dry bog apart from a line of pools at its southern edge. Being open and relatively flat, this site commands long ranging views. Owing to its unique soil and vegetation characteristics, this site is a unique feature and a unique landscape within the county.

C2 *BASELINE - CULTURAL HERITAGE*

C2.1 *CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES IN COUNTY KILDARE*

C2.1.1 *Introduction*

This section presents an overview of cultural heritage resources identified within the County that are considered to have potential for use as recreational open space. It is informed by discussions with state landowners within the County including the Office of Public Works and Waterways Ireland. Sites used for afforestation owned and run by Coillte Teoranta are also considered. This baseline review has concentrated on identifying open space of sufficient size to cater for active recreation. It is considered that small tracts of land containing a heritage resource may contribute to user conflict if also promoted for recreational activity.

C2.1.2 *Coillte Teoranta Lands*

There exists a range of woodland sites under Coillte ownership and management within the County that contain forest tracks that are used by local walkers. In addition to informally used sites, there are four principal recreational sites within the County, some of which contain cultural heritage features. These are presented below:

- *Donadea Forest Park.* A former estate of the Alymer family until 1935, this forest park contains a variety of associated heritage features. It includes the remains of Donadea Castle, walled gardens, St Peters Church, an ice house and boat house. The original lime planted avenue is also extant. More recently there is a limestone memorial commemorating the victims of 9/11. This is a large property containing 243 hectares of mixed woodland and three walking trails ranging between 0.8 to 5.7km, plus other forest roads. Associated infrastructure including mapboards, signage, parking, café and a lake are present. Coillte aims to construct a family cycle path in 2008 /2009.
- *Killinthomas Wood, Rathangan.* There are no cultural heritage resources identified for this forest site however its mixed hardwood planting has created a diverse ecological resource well suited for use as recreational open space. The whole site comprises 71 hectares of mixed woodland with three trails, mapboard, signage, parking and picnic facilities. This amenity area won the Tidy Towns national award for wildlife conservation in 2001.
- *Mooreabbey, (Hillwood) Monasterevin.* This 100 hectare site of mixed woodlands is associated with Moore Abbey House (now under ownership of the Sisters of Charity). It is thought that the existing Moore Abbey House is sited on the former site of the Cistercian monastery, founded in the twelfth century. Moore Abbey House is not part of this wood but can be viewed from sites within the woodland. The wood comprises mostly beech plantings and there is a good network of forest roads, parking and

picnic facilities. Coillte has applied for funding to upgrade the facilities including paths, signage and to provide a mapboard.

- *Mullaghreeelan, near Athy.* This is a 43 hectare site of mixed broadleaf woodland featuring a ringfort which is designated as a national monument (no.598). There are extensive views from the steep hill across the neighbouring historic and agricultural landscapes of Athy and Castledermot. There are parking and picnic facilities and funding has been applied for the purpose of improving paths, provision of a nature trail and the restoration of the site associated with the ringforts. As such forts date from the Early Christian or early Medieval period and this is regarded as a significant cultural heritage resource.
- *Rahin Wood near Edenderry.* This is a 152.8 hectare site within which an amenity area measuring 68.1ha in size is contained. Facilities include, mapboard, small area for parking and picnic facilities. The 2008 field archery championships are due to be held in this location.
- *Maddenstown, near Nurney.* This 76.5 hectare site is mostly composed of confers and is close to Maddenstown Bog. Contained within the site is a small amount of beech planting associated with Eagle Hill (no data). Currently only containing forest roads, the local community wish to build a small trail. There are currently no other facilities.

C2.1.3 *OPW sites.*

Castletown House and Demense

This is the earliest and largest Palladian house in Ireland, is set in mature parkland through which the Liffey flows. It was built for William Connolly MP (1662-1729), who was Speaker of the Irish parliament.. There are vistas from the house of the celebrated Connolly Folly (1740) and (in winter) of the 'Wonderful Barn', a corkscrew-shaped grain store of 1743. The gateway is a feature with sphinx-like figures designed by Sir William Chambers.

Castletown is now in state ownership. Its contents are owned by, or on loan to, the Castletown Foundation. It is open to the public. The parkland is an important, Irish, example of eighteenth-century landscape gardening, with deciduous trees, radiating avenues and long vistas. The area fronting the house towards the Liffey is open to the public. The farmyard is going to be refurbished and opened to the public. The exterior parkland and walks have significant recreational potential.

Backweston Farm and State Laboratory, near Celbridge

This total site is approximately 150 hectares and the new state laboratory (2005) within the farm measures approximately 37 hectares. There may be opportunities to liaise with the state agency to provide for recreational access within this lands.

Sallins Longtown Demense

This site was purchased by the OPW in the year 2000. It contains a house, a number of gate lodges and measures approximately 156 hectares in size. At the time of sale, there were plans to use this land for farm research but the OPW has to date not confirmed this. The house associated with this demense was built in the 1790s.

C2.1.4 *Kildare County Council Lands*

St Catherines and The Lucan Demesne

Part of St Catherines lies within Kildare county Council ownership. This site is mostly used for playing fields, the overall management of the Park area has been led by Fingal County Council. The Liffey Valley Strategy recommends a more explicit link between St Catherine's and the Lucan Demesne in Fingal, as the two land banks are on opposite sites of the River Liffey.

Lands at Donaghcumper, near Celbridge.

The site for a future public park acquired by Kildare County Council in the former townland of Donaghcumper. The development of this public park, endorsed by this Strategy brings with it the added opportunities to create river based linkages with the historic estate of Castletown.

C2.1.5 *Canals and Towpaths under of Waterways Ireland.*

Discussions with Waterways Ireland have confirmed that generally one towpath is available for public access and walking and these are marked as Way marked Ways on the ordnance survey 1:50,000 Discovery maps. Waterways Ireland's overall focus is on navigation but they are also responsible for keeping way marked ways up to required standards in terms of maintenance and to provide angling stands etc at the request of local angling groups. The usual width of the towpaths is approximately 4m although these can be wider in particular locations..

The cultural heritage features most commonly associated with the Royal and Grand Canals and the Barrow Navigation concern a range of industrial archaeology and heritage built features. These include towpaths, aqueducts, viaducts, locks, millraces and mills. Built for the purposes of transport and communication the infrastructure associated with same represent an important resource nationally for Ireland's industrial heritage. The following section identifies some highlighted heritage features for each canal in County Kildare and are taken from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

Grand Canal

Work on the Grand Canal commenced earlier than the Royal Canal, in 1756. Ardclough, located close to the Lyons Estate was one of the earliest sections to be dug. The 13th lock is a 137 feet double lock and was designed to

accommodate the original canal capacity of 170 ton barges. This was later reduced to 40 ton barges for much of the subsequent stretch of the canal. The lock itself was later reduced but the canal through this lock remains 20ft wide as opposed to 14 feet. The mill and lock yard village complex built by Valentine Lawless in the 1820s is being restored and currently comprises apartments and a restaurant.

The Royal Canal ¹

The Royal Canal Company was established in 1789 to build a canal to link Dublin with the Shannon at Cloondara in County Longford. The Royal Canal was from the outset commercially constrained as it could not offer passenger and freight services for the major populations of Dublin and Limerick and instead could only serve the smaller population centres around the midlands and lower Shannon. Certain sections of the Royal Canal such as the canal around Kilcock and Maynooth are listed on the N.I.A.H. as being of particular social, technical and historical significance. Fine examples of engineering structures include Shaw Bridge (near Kilcock) and Mullen Bridge (near Maynooth). The high quality cut stone used to construct the retaining walls also demonstrate the masonry practiced in these areas.

Barrow Navigation

This runs from Athy in County Kildare to St Mullins in County Carlow. There are a number of industrial heritage features associated with the Barrow navigation in Athy and these include a dry dock, dating from approximately 1790 and a four bay horse bridge over the Barrow with limestone arches.

C2.1.6 *The Curragh*

The Curragh presents a significant cultural and natural heritage resource to the County. Under the Curragh of Kildare Acts, the lands (1,977 hectares) are administered by the Department of Defence Management Branch. In addition to being used for military activity and practice, a significant number of grazing rights exist and of course the area is well known for horse racing. In addition to the above, the plains of the Curragh support a range of historical features including the Gibbet Rath, the ancient road known as the race of the Black Pig. Adjoining sites such as Dun Ailaine (300 BC), the seat of the Kings of Leinster and the Hill of Allen to the north highlight the historical importance of this area.

In addition to the above, Pollardstown Fen, a marsh area of 220 hectares on the northern edge of the Curragh is an important ecological site; the Grand Canal also diverted streams of the fen into channels to form the Milltown Feeder that flows north to join the Grand Canal.

¹ source: Civil Engineering Heritage, Ireland by RC Cox and MH Gould)
(1)

Information on many of the sites listed below was sourced from County Kildare branch of Failte Ireland.

Knockanally House, Donadea, County Kildare

Situated in Donadea, Co. Kildare, Knockanally House is built in what is known as the Italianate style. It is two storeys in height. It has a three bay entrance and commands a superb view from the beautiful central Venetian window which overlooks the gardens. Today it is the clubhouse of the Knockanally Golf Course. It is open to the public with specified viewing times on weekdays. There may be some potential recreational provision around the house.

Carton House, near Maynooth

Carton House is now a luxury hotel and golf course but the house and demesne remain important cultural heritage resources with a five mile long wall and five lodge houses. This is recognised in the Kildare County Development Plan policy CR 6 *'To recognise the importance of Carton House as a tourism facility of national and international significance. The Council will support and encourage further appropriate development of the tourism and recreational facilities at Carton House'*.

Harristown House, Brannockstown

This house is open to the public weekdays from 2 to 6pm. It overlooks the Liffey and contains excellent parklands. The house itself was built in 1740 as the country seat of the La Touche family.

Larchill Arcadian Gardens

Larchill is a splendid example of a mid 18th century Arcadian Garden. Scenic walks through parkland and beech avenues link ten follies including two fairytale island follies on a picturesque 8 acre lake. There is also a formal walled garden with a shell-lined tower and a decorative gothic farmyard housing rare breeds, a tea shop, monthly farmer's market and open-air theatre in the summer.

Open June, July, August, weekends in September, Bank holidays, & pre-Christmas. Entrance charge.

Coolcarrigan Garden, on the edge of the Bog of Allen.

This contains a good collection of rare trees and shrubs and the 8 acre garden is part of a larger farming estate of 1200 acres containing beech avenues, lakes and parkland. There is an entrance charge and access by appointment is also available.

Lullymore Heritage and Discover Park, Rathangan

This family attraction is situated in the heart of the Bog of Allen. The Park consists of gardens, woodland walks, accurate reconstructions of dwellings from Irish history and an exhibition on the 1798 rebellion from the perspective of County Kildare. A large adventure play area provides hours of entertainment along with train trips, crazy golf and the newest addition, the Funky Forest, a fun-packed state-of-the-art indoor play centre. Open year round, entrance charge.

Ballindoolin House and Gardens, Carbury

Ballindoolin is an historic Irish country house with a two acre walled kitchen garden, demesne museum, children's farmyard, and a nature and heritage trail in Ballindoolin's ancient woods. There are afternoon tours around the Georgian house (which dates from 1822) and a café and craft shop. Open May, June, July, entrance charge

Williamstown Garden, Carbury

This site comprises an 18th century walled garden adjoining a Palladian house of 1760. Most noteworthy are some of the original features; the enchanted 18th century beech walk, the sunken grass tennis court and an old orchard and vegetable garden near the house. More recent additions include a box parterre leading up to the summer house, and a tranquil Zen meditation garden. Open by appointment. Entrance charge.

Russborough House, Blessington

Richard Castles designed this house which has been preserved in excellent condition. The grounds and gardens were modelled on the classical garden style. In 2007, a walk in the demesne was opened to the public that lasts approximately one hour. There is a farmers market every Sunday from Easter to September. By prior arrangement, it may be possible to open the house on any day at any time, from Easter to the end of October. The maze and Rhododendron Garden may also be viewed by prior arrangement. Otherwise the House is open to the public daily from May to September. It is managed by the Alfred Beit Foundation. Entrance charge.

Irish National Stud, Japanese Gardens and Saint Fiachra's Garden, Tully.

Guided tours to see thoroughbreds as well as Japanese Gardens created between 1906 to 1910 are available to interested visitors. St Fiachra's garden was created in 1999. the site also includes a horse museum, café, shop and parking. Open February to November, entrance charge.

The Moat of Ardsull

This is a 13th century Norman earthworks and is one of the largest of its kind in Ireland. The site contains the memorial to the Gordon Bennett Motor Race which passed through this site in 1903. Garden and picnic facilities are accessible to the public. No known charge.

Annex D

Public Consultation Results

D1.1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The input of the population of Kildare County who will ultimately be the beneficiaries of this open space strategy is seen as critical to the effectiveness and success of the strategy process. A range of consultation techniques were used and these are outlined below.

A survey questionnaire, provided below, was prepared and uploaded onto the Kildare County Council website. In addition a newspaper notice was placed in the Kildare Nationalist newspaper inviting readers to participate in the questionnaire survey. The consultation process lasted approximately one month and was concluded on 28th November 2007.

In addition to the questionnaire, letters were issued to County Councillors, statutory organisations and other interested parties, inviting their input to the process.

D1.2 RESULTS

A total of 33 questionnaire responses were received from a range of towns and villages and of these, Kilcock yielded the most responses being 15 number. The age category that yielded the greatest response was in the 30-50 year range. The regularity with which particular types of open space are used by the respondents are highlighted for each town in *Figure.1.3*.

In regard to the quantity of available open space, illustrated in *Figure 1.4*, many of the respondents (20 number) indicated that there was insufficient open space available to them whilst 10 respondents indicated that there was just enough open space available to them. Further survey results are described and illustrated below.

Figure 1.1 *No. of Responses Received*

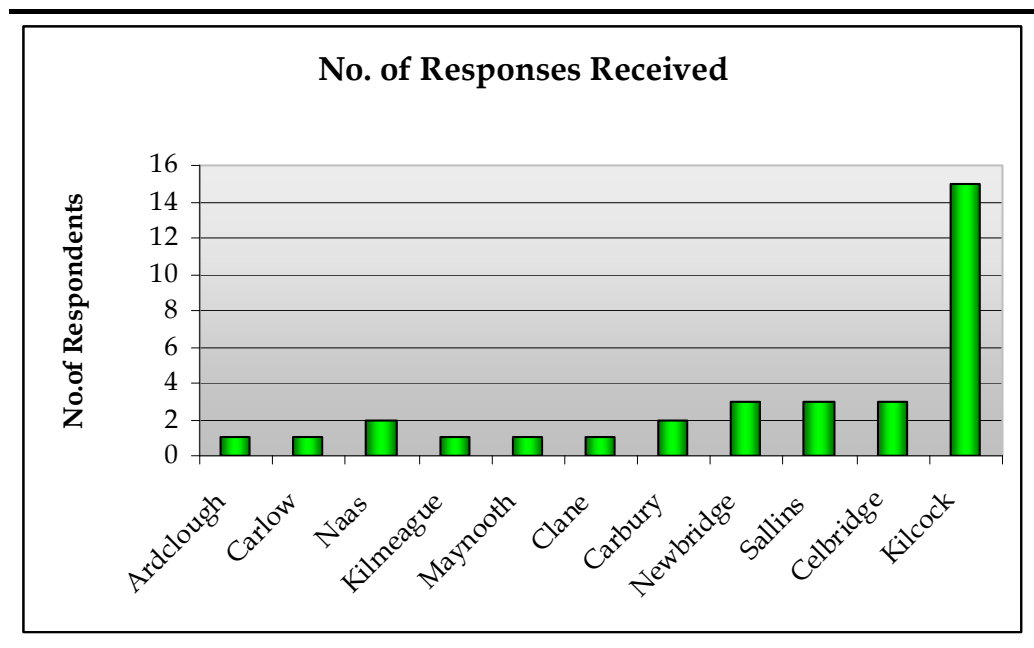


Figure.1.2 *Age Categories of Respondents*

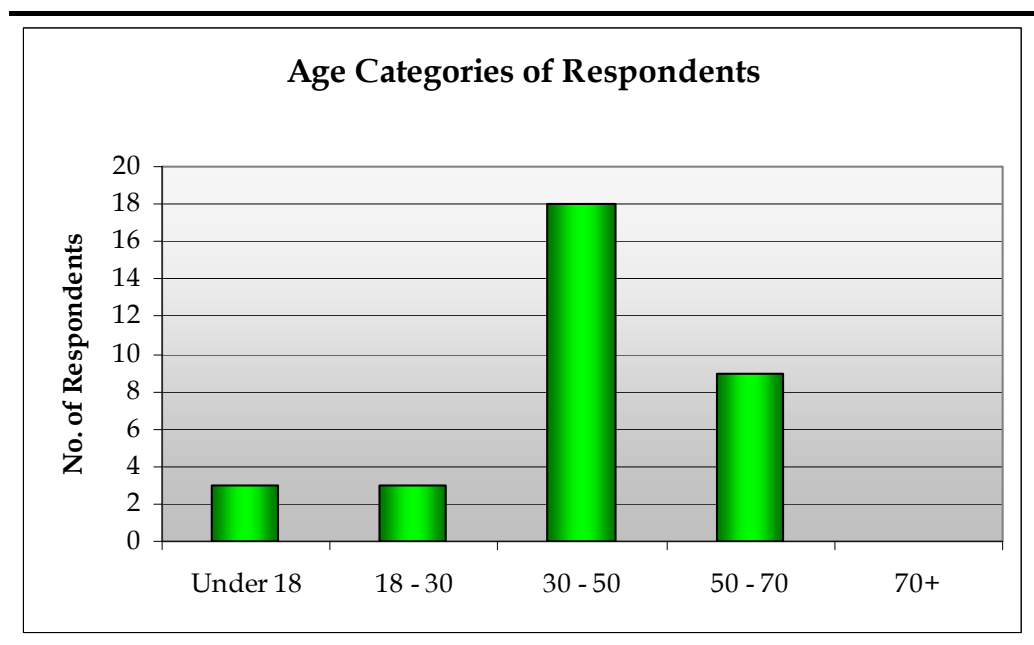


Figure.1.3 *Regular Use of Open Spaces by Respondents*

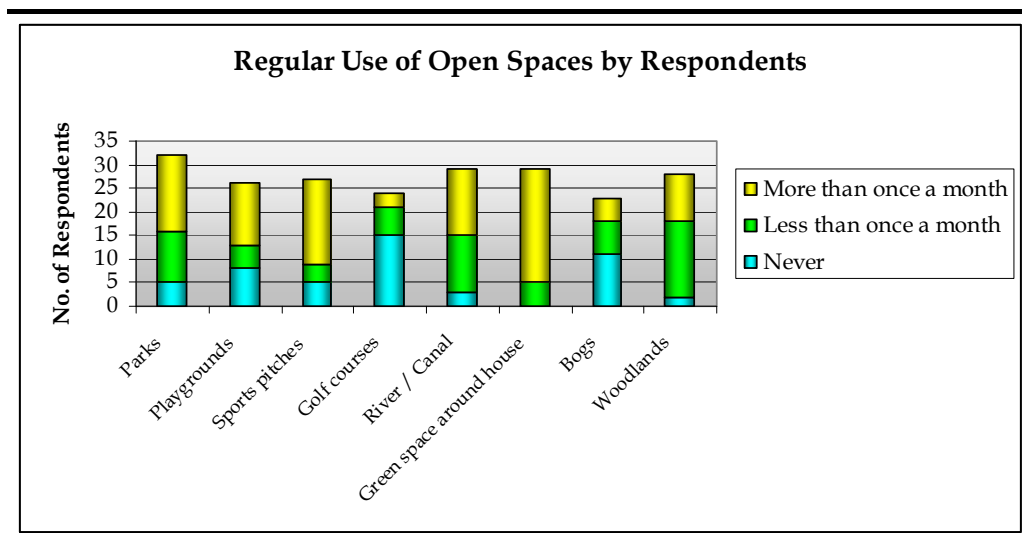
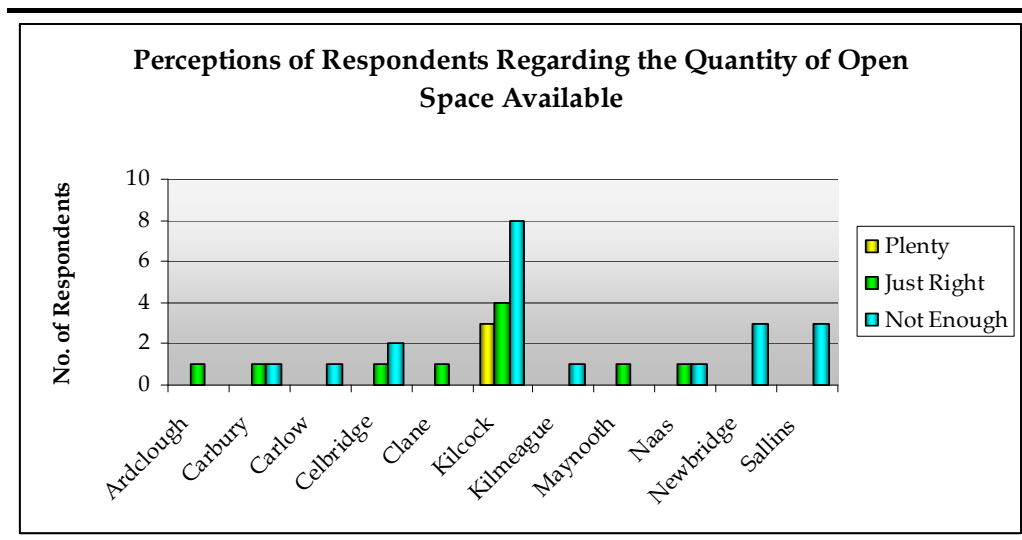


Figure 1.4 *Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Quantity of Open Space Available*



The survey findings revealed that respondents usually access open space on foot up to a distance of 2-3 kilometres. Access to open spaces located at distances of 4-6 Km and greater is usually achieved by car. Public transport was the least popular mode of transport for the purpose of accessing open space. The survey findings on distances travelled and methods of travel are summarised below in Figure 1.5 to Figure 1.8.

Figure 1.5 *Distances Respondents Travel to Use Open Spaces - Walking*

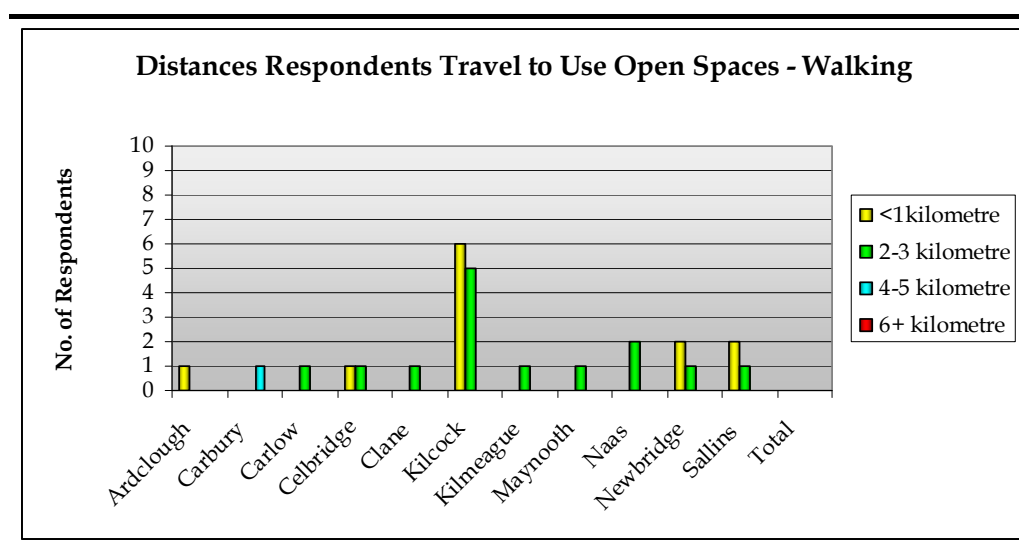


Figure 1.6 *Distances Respondents Travel to Use Open Spaces - Car*

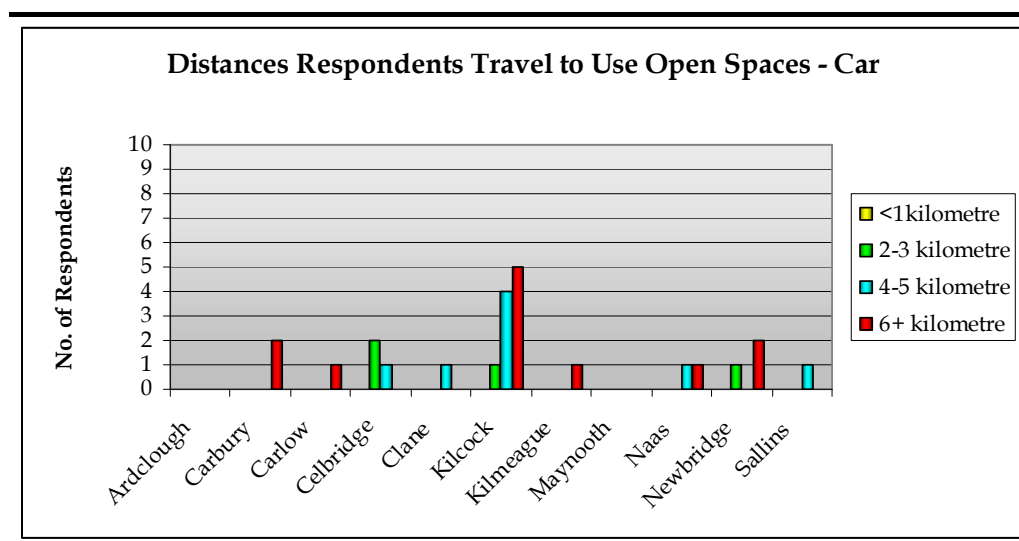


Figure 1.7 *Distances Respondents Travel to Use Open Spaces - Cycle*

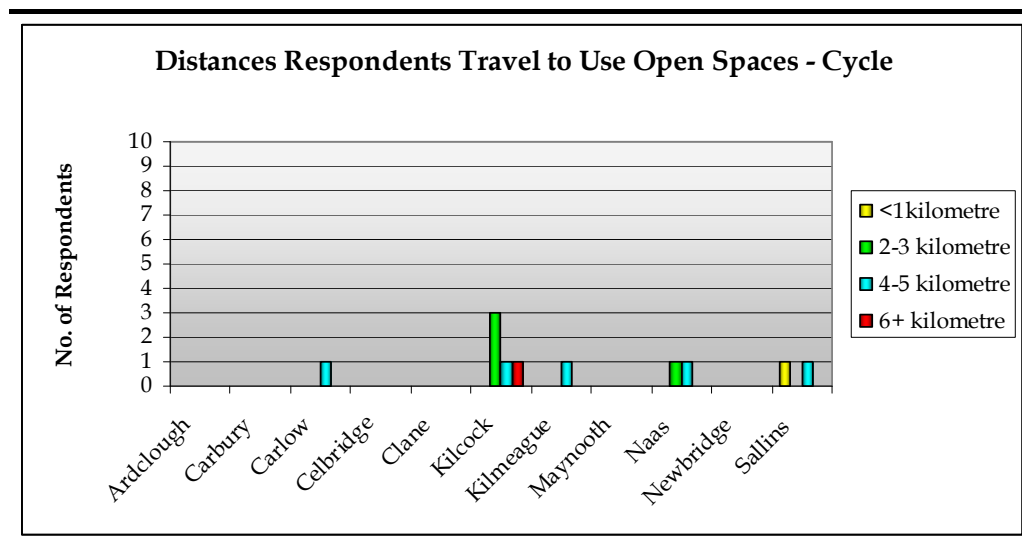
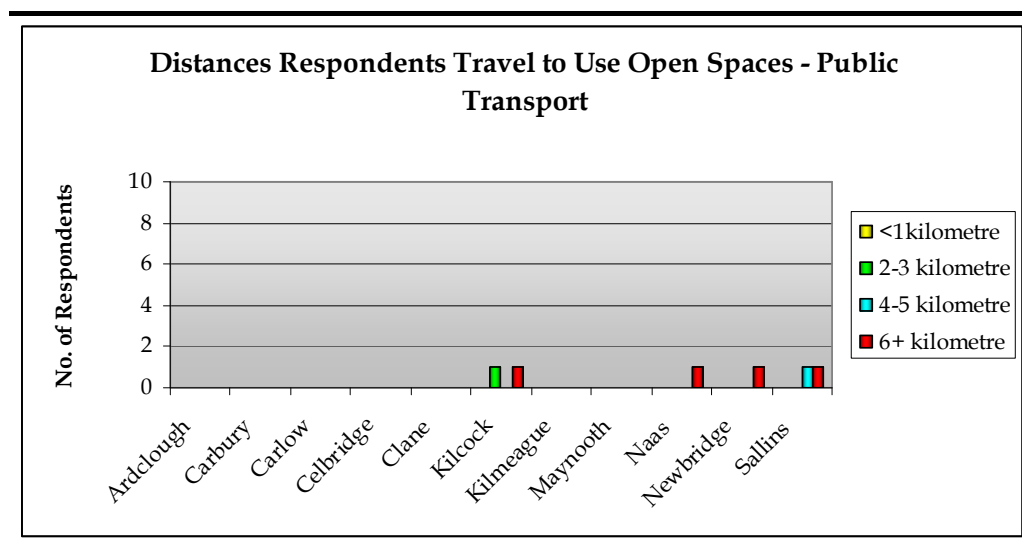
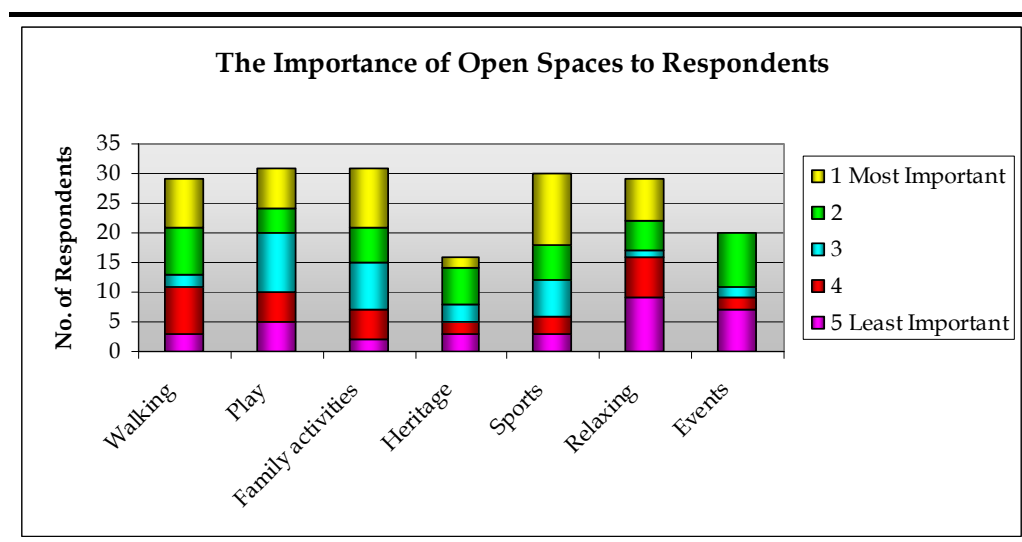


Figure 1.8 *Distances Respondents Travel to Use Open Spaces - Public Transport*



At least one third of respondents ranked the importance of open space at a score of 5 = very important for both family activities and sports. A total of 8 respondents rated open space as being very important for walking and 7 respondents rated open space as being very important for both play activities and general relaxation. The survey results on importance of open space are summarised in *Figure 1.9* below.

Figure 1.9 *The Importance of Open Spaces to Respondents*



The majority of respondents (20 number) recognised the merit in encouraging local wildlife in public open spaces. A relatively small number of respondents had no opinion on this question and

Figure 1.10 *Green Spaces Should be Managed Less to Encourage Local Wildlife*

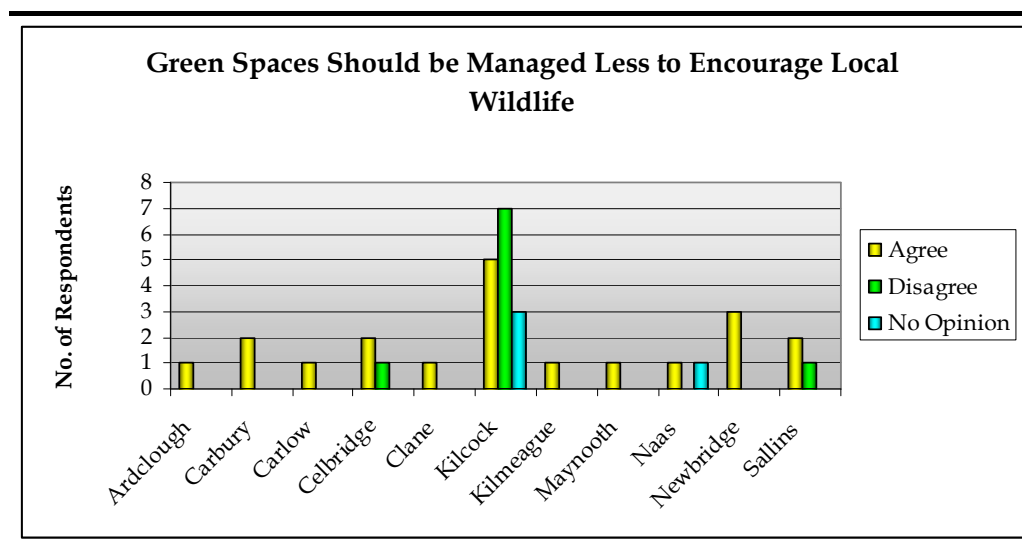


Figure 1.11 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Parks*

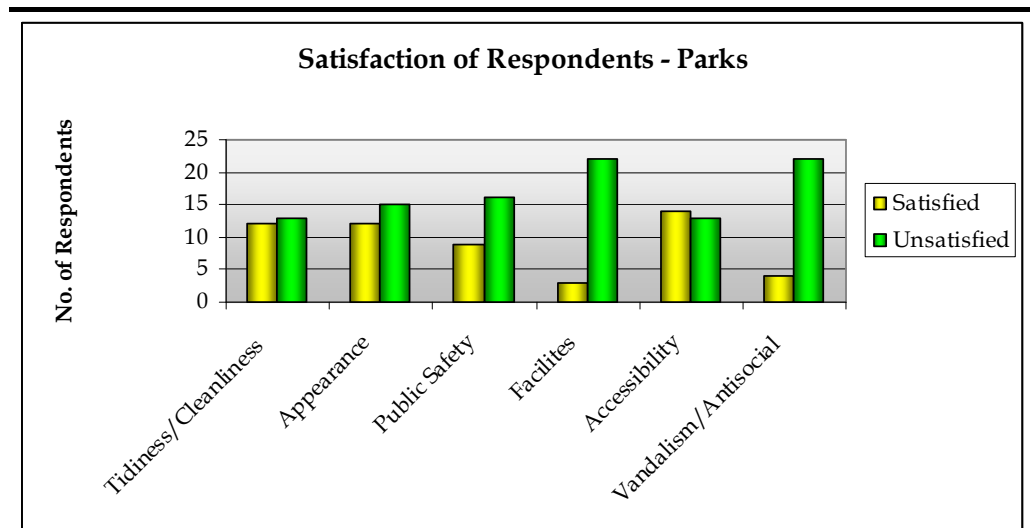


Figure 1.12 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Playgrounds*

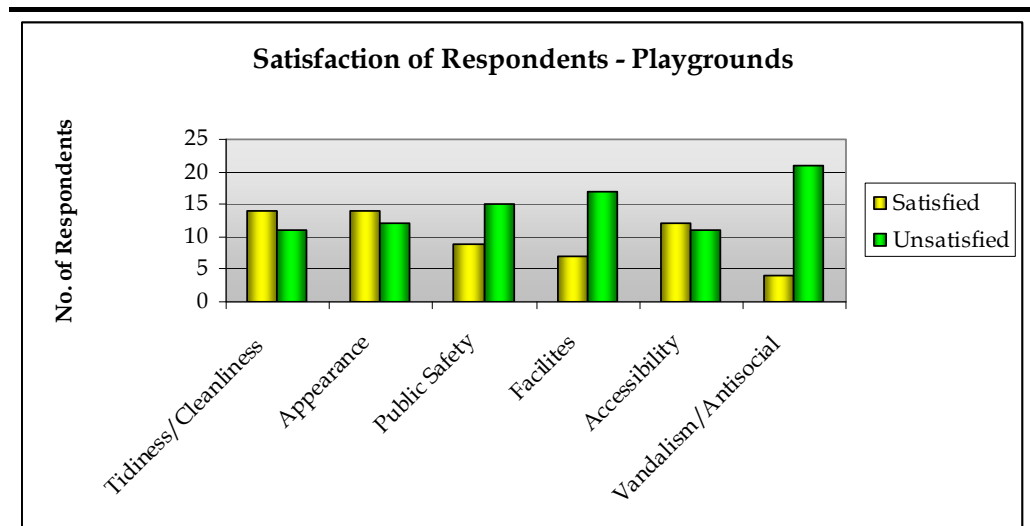


Figure 1.13 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Sports Pitches*

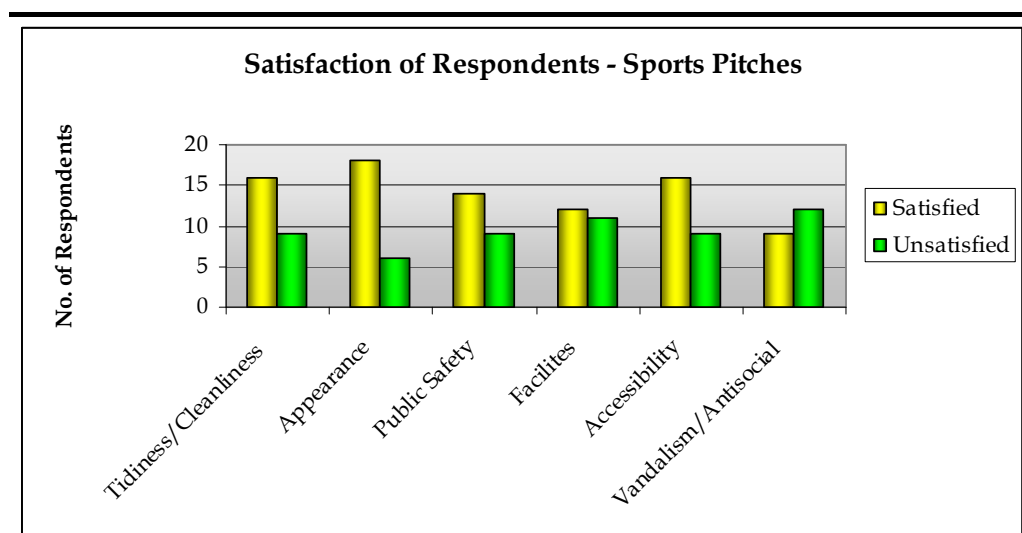


Figure 1.14 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Golf Courses*

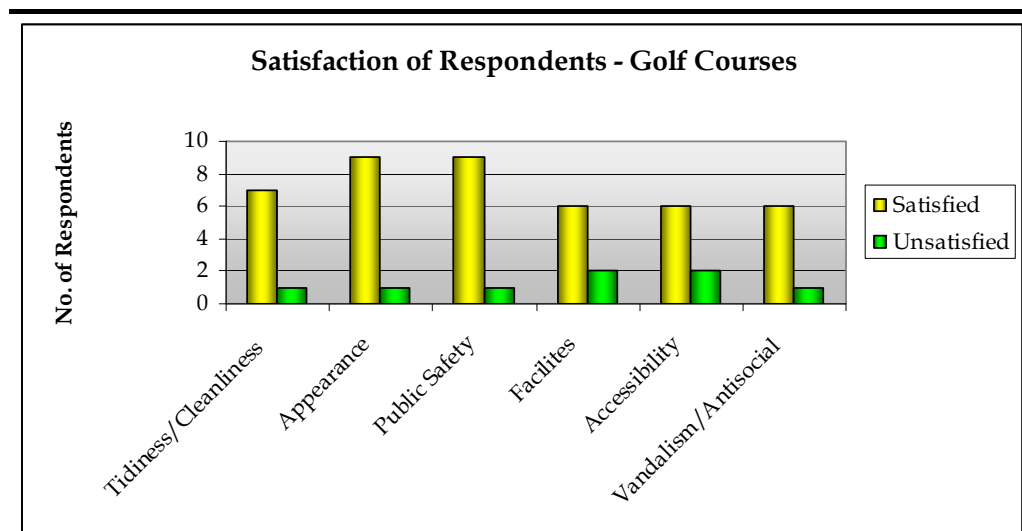


Figure 1.15 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Rivers & Canals*

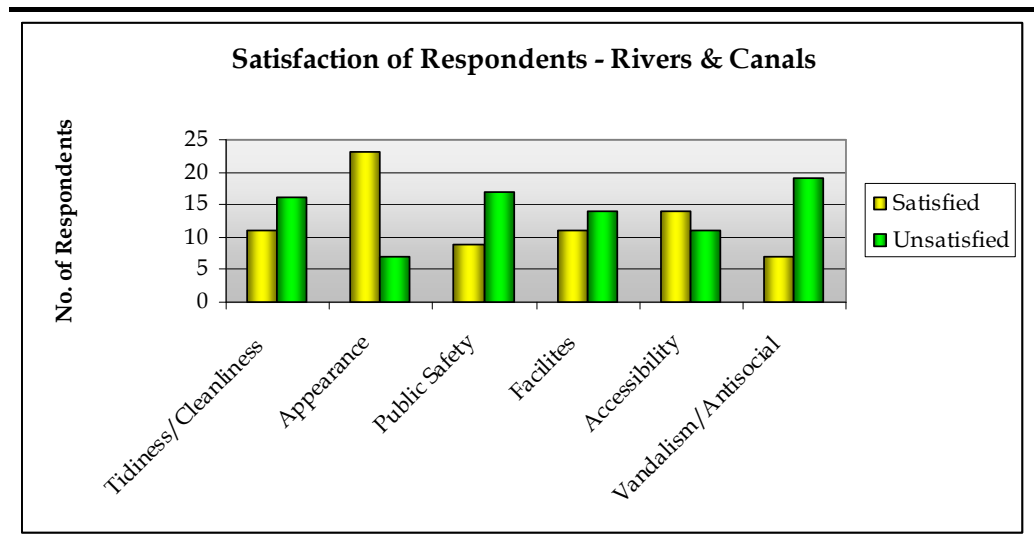


Figure 1.16 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Green Spaces Surrounding Housing*

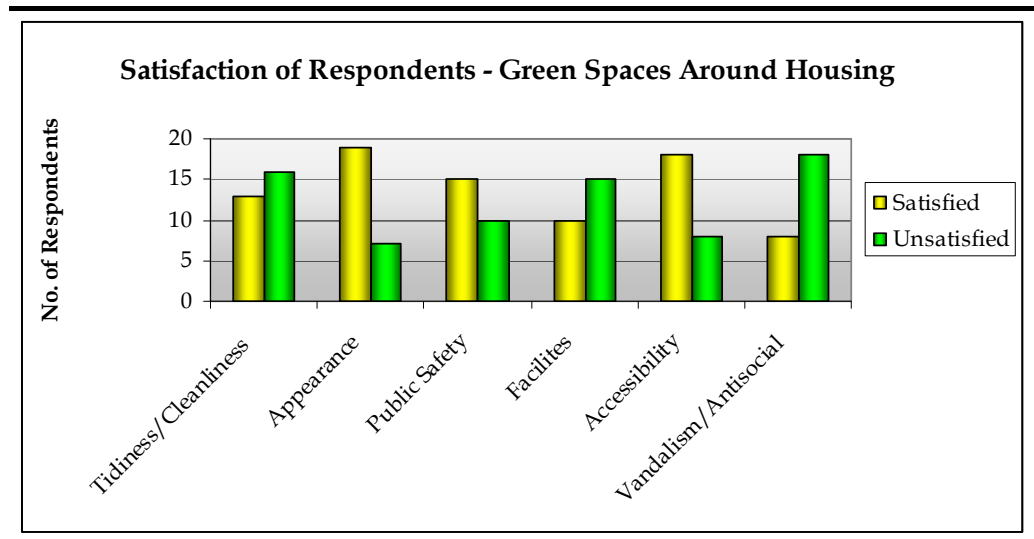


Figure 1.17 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Bogs*

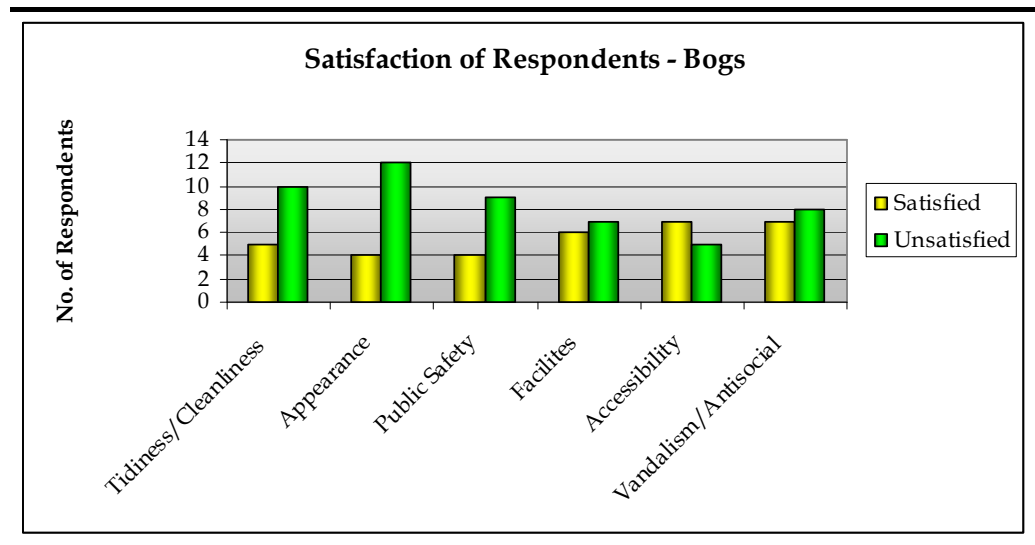
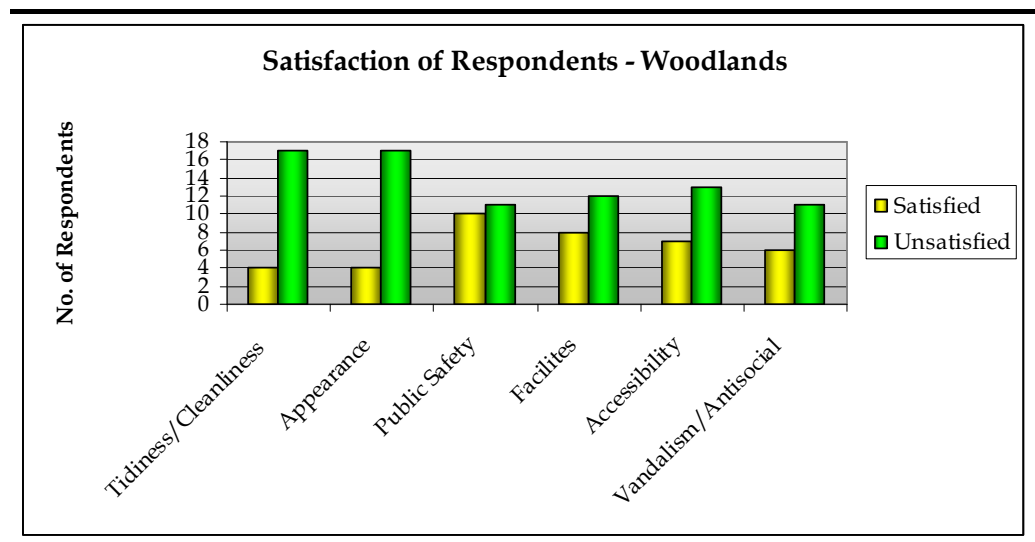


Figure.1.18 *Satisfaction of Respondents - Woodlands*



Annex E

Calculation of Open Space Requirements for Settlements

Table E1 Calculation of open space requirements for settlements

		Privately owned open space	Council Owned open space	Total	Population 2006	NPFA Requirements (Ha) 2006			NPFA Achieved 2006 (%)	Population 2017	NPFA Requirements (Ha) 2017			NPFA Achieved 2017 (%)		DOE Requirements (Ha) 2006	DOE Requirements (Ha) 2017	DOE Achieved 2006 (%)	DOE Achieved 2017 (%)
						Recreational	Childrens Play area	total			Recreational	Childrens Play area	total						
Allenwood				0.00	667	1.07	0.53	1.60	0.00	834	1.33	0.67	2.00	0.00		1.334	1.668	0	0
Athgarvan			4.07	4.07	1300	2.08	1.04	3.12	130.51	1555	2.49	1.24	3.73	109.11		2.6	3.11	156.6154	130.9325
Athy**		6.79	40.08	46.87	7943	12.71	6.35	19.06	245.87	10679	17.09	8.54	25.63	182.87		15.886	21.358	295.0397	219.4494
Ballymore Eustace				0.00	725	1.16	0.58	1.74	0.00	907	1.45	0.73	2.18	0.00		1.45	1.814	0	0
Castledermot		2.08	2.29	4.36	887	1.42	0.71	2.13	205.00	1109	1.77	0.89	2.66	163.96		1.774	2.218	245.9977	196.7538
Celbridge			43.22	43.22	17262	27.62	13.81	41.43	104.33	25084	40.13	20.07	60.20	71.80		34.524	50.168	125.1941	86.15452
Clane		10.60		10.60	4968	7.95	3.97	11.92	88.90	5939	9.50	4.75	14.25	74.37		9.936	11.878	106.6828	89.24061
Derrinturn				0.00	1138	1.82	0.91	2.73	0.00	1362	2.18	1.09	3.27	0.00		2.276	2.724	0	0
Kilcock		4.36	15.17	19.53	4100	6.56	3.28	9.84	198.47	5956	9.53	4.76	14.29	136.62		8.2	11.912	238.1585	163.9439
Kilcullen		9.12	2.43	11.55	2985	4.78	2.39	7.16	161.22	4014	6.42	3.21	9.63	119.89		5.97	8.028	193.4673	143.8714
Kildare		4.30	9.97	14.27	7538	12.06	6.03	18.09	78.88	10176	16.28	8.14	24.42	58.43		15.076	20.352	94.65375	70.11596
Kill		6.18	1.64	7.82	2510	4.02	2.01	6.02	129.83	3001	4.80	2.40	7.20	108.59		5.02	6.002	155.7968	130.3066
Leixlip		6.45	88.60	95.05	14676	23.48	11.74	35.22	269.86	21326	34.12	17.06	51.18	185.71		29.352	42.652	323.8314	222.8524
Maynooth		2.93	47.43	50.35	10715	17.14	8.57	25.72	195.80	15897	25.44	12.72	38.15	131.97		21.43	31.794	234.9603	158.3695
Monasterevin		4.84	6.29	11.13	3017	4.83	2.41	7.24	153.70	4056	6.49	3.24	9.73	114.33		6.034	8.112	184.4382	137.1918
Moone			0.89	0.89	429	0.69	0.34	1.03	86.54	537	0.86	0.43	1.29	69.13		0.858	1.074	103.8462	82.96089
Naas		101.90	52.76	154.66	20044	32.07	16.04	48.11	321.50	27933	44.69	22.35	67.04	230.70		40.088	55.866	385.8012	276.841
Newbridge		29.06	28.35	57.41	17042	27.27	13.63	40.90	140.37	23245	37.19	18.60	55.79	102.91		34.084	46.49	168.4397	123.4911
Prosperous		5.43		5.43	1939	3.10	1.55	4.65	116.58	2315	3.70	1.85	5.56	97.64		3.878	4.63	139.8917	117.1706
Rathangan		1.42	0.15	1.57	1718	2.75	1.37	4.12	38.00	2055	3.29	1.64	4.93	31.77		3.436	4.11	45.60536	38.12652
Sallins		2.98	0.92	3.90	3806	6.09	3.04	9.13	42.73	4550	7.28	3.64	10.92	35.74		7.612	9.1	51.2743	42.89011
Straffan		2.48	0.59	3.07	439	0.70	0.35	1.05	291.48	549	0.88	0.44	1.32	233.08		0.878	1.098	349.7722	279.6903

Annex F

Figures

Figure 5.1	Open Space Resources in County Kildare.
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Figure 5.2d	Open Space Resources in Settlements in Ballymore Eustace.
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Figure 6.1	Assessment of Current & Future Needs:
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