



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: KCC-C55-147

Údar: National Peatlands Park Group

Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht:

National Peatlands Park Group joint submission from
Environment, Conservation and Community organisations

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Peatland Conservation importance in the national context of climate, biodiversity, and human wellbeing

Caibidil: Volume 1 - chapters » 1. Introduction and
Context

Ábhair: 1. Introduction

Summary points

- Welcome leadership of KCC shown in the plan to harness our natural assets for nature, environment and the public good.
- Approximately 72% of the county's population live on 5% of the county's total land area. The importance of maintaining open spaces, **harnessing natural assets** in Kildare for human wellbeing and as a counter-balance to development and habitation pressures on nature and our environment cannot be overstated. We therefore welcome the inclusion of the National Peatlands Park across multiple chapters recognising the centrality of the concept for the local economy, energy, climate, biodiversity, water quality, healthy rivers, flood management, tourism and amenity.
- The once in a lifetime opportunity of rewilding state-owned land held by Bord na Mona creating a **National Peatlands Park of scale**, will not only help Kildare achieve its carbon and biodiversity targets - it also has the potential to transform the lives of rural communities, reconnect people to their landscape and offer sustainable employment for generations to come.
- We welcome the objective to achieve 27%-30% for nature up from 3%
- Welcome the anticipated overall impact of the Plan for people, place, climate and nature.
- The core-corridor-stepping-stone model is a welcome and novel approach in the plan. However, each "core" should encompass a **landscape scale critical mass of habitats** to ensure population recovery and survival, abundance, productivity, genetic diversity and species richness. This model at scale will greatly contribute to reaching our EU Biodiversity Strategy goals in 2030.
- The structure of the plan with aims, objectives and actions for each chapter is welcome. However, in some cases the actions do not match the aims and objectives. It would be helpful if all the actions were assembled together with indicative times and responsibility for each action. This will make the task of **measuring and evaluating implementation** easier as set out in Ch 16.
- The objective of 50% of peatlands to be excluded from development is in conflict with the benchmark set for other extractive industries. Why this figure and not 80% as indicated for quarries? Is this 50% of all the peatlands in Kildare i.e. 5000ha or is it 50% of each bogland area. In the case of the Bog of Allen complex 50% would cover 3500ha. In the case of Kilberry bog, 50% of this much smaller but high nature value bog would put the bog

beyond natural recovery or rehabilitation. We welcome the proposals for biodiversity after-use of post industrial sites in the extractive industry. The figure of 80% of former quarries for nature should also be used for peat extraction bringing a **consistent and predictable after-use planning guideline across all extractive industries** (mining, quarrying and peat extraction)

Eochairfhocail:

water

peatlands, Biodiversity, amenity, climate, extractive industry, scale, quality

Main opinion:

We welcome the pivot towards valuing and preserving natural assets, landscape and environmental amenities in this Draft County Development Plan. However, we have identified some inconsistencies and discrepancies where the ambition can be better reflected in the policies and actions

Main requests:

Chapter 1 : 1.8.1 Overarching Guiding Principles Add new Guiding principle : Protect and enhance natural assets to improve environmental and conservation outcomes and contribute to biodiversity recovery

Main reasons:

Under the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, EU member States including Ireland are required to designate 30% of their land and marine areas for conservation and biodiversity. The draft Plan actually reflects this guiding principle but it is not explicitly stated in chapter 1

Documents Attached: Níl