



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

Wilderness Experience and importance of landscape scale

Caibidil: Volume 1 - chapters » 13 - Landscape, Recreation &
Amenity

Ábhair: landscape, recreation, amenity

LR O13	Recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially fit to absorb a variety of development provided that the development proposal does not increase Green House Gas emissions
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Amendment : Recognise that ***some*** cutaway and cut-over boglands ***may*** have the characteristics of represent degraded

landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus ***may*** potentially be fit to

absorb a variety of development provided that the development

proposal does not increase Green House Gas emissions ***or damage protected habitats or species***

LR T1

Endeavour to increase the territory of County Kildare designated to

nature from 3% to 27%- **30%** by the end of this Plan period, in response to the Government’s commitment to designate 30% of the territory of Ireland for nature by 2030 and in accordance with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. This may can be achieved by the development of the proposed Midlands Peatlands National Park National Peatlands Park (see objectives in Section13.6).

13.4.4 The River Liffey and the River Barrow Valleys

Reference to the River Barrow forming part of an SAC should be added to this paragraph for consistency with

13.4.5 Rye Water Valley at Carton SAC

13.5.2 Views to and from Waterways

13.6.2 Forest Parks, Woodlands & Boglands

Approximately 9,200 ha of land in Kildare is under forest cover. Forests and woodlands provide benefits over and above the revenue yielded from timber and other wood-based products. These include recreational and tourism amenities for local communities. Table 13.8 outlines recreational woodlands in the county.

Name	Location	Owner
Donadea Forest Park	Donadea	Coillte
Moore Abbey	Monasterevin	Coillte
Mullaghreeelan Wood	Kilkea	Coillte
Rahin	Edenderry	Coillte
Killinthomas Wood	Rathangan	Coillte

12.5.3 County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan 2009-2014 The Council adopted its first Biodiversity Action Plan in April 2009 in accordance with the National Biodiversity Plan. The County Biodiversity Plan provides a framework for conserving biodiversity and natural heritage at a local level. It complements the Kildare Heritage Plan by including detailed actions to deliver positive outcomes focused on species and habitats. A key focus of the plan is gathering information on and managing the biodiversity resource, education, awareness raising and the promotion of effective cooperation between stakeholders. The County Kildare Biodiversity Plan will be reviewed during the lifetime of this plan. ***Insert : A new County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan will be published by 2024***

Reason; a central Kildare resource containing biodiversity aims, objectives and initiatives is essential. This document will illustrate the large reach, responsibility and accountability of the Council and partner organisations for biodiversity, healthy rivers, water quality and the protection of nature. This new enhanced objective to reach 27% of land for nature (see ch 13) should provide the cornerstone of the Plan with milestones for the achievement of this target. A published document will help inform the public, ensure implementation and form a tool to keep track of progress

Comment : The acknowledgement and recognition of the positive contribution of our natural assets is very welcome.

LR O40	<p>[Investigate the feasibility of developing a] Amend to read : <i>Support and facilitate the development</i> of a National Peatlands Park</p> <p>in consultation with Offaly and Laois County Councils, Bord na</p> <p>Móna, Coillte, NPWS, local landowners and all other relevant</p> <p>stakeholders to include areas of (inter alia) high nature value,</p> <p>amenity, education/science and eco-tourism potential.</p>
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Reason : for consistency and linkage with RE O127 which states “ Support in conjunction with Offaly County Council, Laois County

Council and all other relevant stakeholders such as Bord na Mona,

Coillte and the NPWS, any proposal for a new National Peatlands

Park centred in Kildare on Bord Na Mona cutaway bogs in

Kildare, Laois”

Insert new action to implement objective in LR040

LR A 13 Engage with the Department of Housing , Local Government and Heritage and other County Councils and relevant stakeholders to advance the delivery of a new National Peatlands Park (see EC A7)

13.3 Landscape Character Assessment

Actions

It shall be an action of the Council to:

LR A1	Review and update the County Landscape Character Assessment, within two years of the adoption of this Plan ¹ , having regard to the European Landscape Convention Florence 2000, in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and to ensure consistency with the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment. All landscape character designations will be fully reviewed having regard to updated best practice guidance, LCAs of adjoining Local Authorities and other local relevant considerations, including clusters of biodiversity rich areas.
LR A2	Investigate the feasibility of preparing a Historic Landscape Characterisation of the county.
LR A3	Plant gateway roundabouts within the county with innovative design themes, having regard to traffic safety.

Amendment : *Revaluate West Kildare Bogs to Class 5 and postpone decisions which would impact the landscape until an updated County Landscape Character assessment is completed. This would ensure the Bog of Allen's potential for rewilding and tourism is not irreversibly damaged by any proposed developments in the intervening period.*

Reason: The original LCA was undertaken in 2004 and undervalues the Bog of Allen historical, cultural, religious and environmental importance. It also fails to reflect the significant rehabilitation and scientific research carried out in many of these peatlands and the growth of both domestic and international tourism to West Kildare over the past 18 years. It is also now widely accepted that Irelands raised bogs have global significance as a carbon store and ecosystem treasures and that their protection and rehabilitation is the first line of defence in mitigating climate change and protecting biodiversity.

Amendment : *Recognize the importance of the nationally-important greenways and blueways as presented in the Green Infrastructure Concept map and identify important clusters of core areas/nodes/stepping stones which can have strengthened landscape protections in recognition of their importance of peatlands nature/tourism hubs as identified in the Barrow Blueway Economic Plan, the West Kildare Just Transition Plan and the Kildare Tourism Strategy.*

Reason: The existing Landscape Character Map was prepared in 2004 and fails to take into account significant new developments in County Kildare including:

- Significant peatlands in the landscape – in 2004 the peatlands of Kildare were largely considered as industrial production areas but since the cessation of peat harvesting in 2020 these areas have emerged as a major new opportunity for the development of biodiversity areas to meet the new 27% protected area target and the proposal for a National Peatlands Park on the Ballydermot Bog complex and a Peatlands Park on Umeras Bog which are recognized as core areas in this draft County Development Plan (section 12.14.5)
- The construction of the 5th national blueway – the Barrow Blueway and the development in this County Development Plan of a new Green Infrastructure Map which recognizes the importance of Green and Blue corridors joining the core areas and nodes/stepping stones in the county.
- The peatlands nature tourism opportunities identified in the West Kildare Just Transition Plan, the Barrow Blueway Economic Plan and the Kildare Tourism Strategy.

Change: *The current Matrix for the Impact of Development on Landscape is based on impacts in 2004 and is outdated and the landscape impacts on the core/nodes/corridors in the Kildare County Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy need to be revised before the Wind Energy Strategy is adopted and impacts considered within 2000m of Landscape Sensitivity Areas.*

Reason: The current Matrix for Impact on Development on Landscape is only based on a distance of 300m from significant Green infrastructure. This was based on a 2004 Landscape Character Assessment when wind turbines were only 50m in height. Given that turbines are being proposed in County Kildare which are 220m high it makes no sense to only consider a 300m distance from corridors/nodes and core areas and a distance of 2000m would be considered reasonable in relation to the height of turbines.

34	Views of the Bog of Allen (<i>including the Allen-Lullymore Bog group</i>) and the Hills of Allen, Grange and Dunmurry along the	Allenwood middle, Allenwood south, Lullymore
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R403 and R414 from Allenwood to Rathangan.	East, Lullymore West, Barnaran, Drumsru, Cappanargid, Killyguire and Newtown.
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Change: The inclusion of the Allen Lullymore Bog Group is important as this is the view looking westward from Lullymore which is an established peatland tourism hub in West Kildare.

Reason: The panoramic and uninterrupted views across the Bog of Allen to the west are celebrated and promoted internationally by Lullymore Heritage & Discovery Park (which attracted over 54000 fee paying visitors in 2019) and the IPCC.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

LR O37	Promote and enhance public access for all7 to the upland areas, rivers, lakes and other natural amenities of County Kildare, in conjunction with the relevant landowners and agencies, while protecting environmental sensitivities and ecological corridors.
LR O38	Ensure the biodiversity value of all sites are considered and protected in the development of outdoor recreational facilities including greenways through the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment which shall guide the location and design of such facilities.

LR O39	<p>Support Coillte, Bord na Mona, Waterways Ireland and other state agencies to explore the provision of more recreational infrastructure at appropriate locations to include access ways and nature trails with a view to opening up state lands for recreational use.</p>
LR O40	<p><i>Amendment : Work to develop</i> (delete: Investigate the feasibility of developing) a Peatlands National Park in consultation with Offaly County Council, Bord na Móna, Coillte, NPWS, local landowners and all other relevant stakeholders to include areas of (inter alia) high nature value, amenity, education/science and eco-tourism potential.</p>
LR O41	<p>Support the proposed Umeras Peatlands Park development of Umeras Community Development and explore links between the bog and nearby blueways and greenways, whilst ensuring nearby properties would not be negatively affected, in consultation with Offaly County Council, Waterways Ireland and all other relevant stakeholders.</p>
LR O42	<p>Lead and support the extension and interconnection of Greenways, Blueways, Peatways and trails within and outside County Kildare in consultation with Coillte, Bord na Móna and all other relevant stakeholders. <i><u>The creation of a successful community-led tourism destination supported by Kildare County Council, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders following the Blueway and encompassing peatland areas to the west as part of a National Peatlands Park has the potential to offer the visitor a unique experience to get “lost in wilderness” in a relaxed environment away from urban life. The Council recognises that the development of a range of outdoor activities based around our natural amenities of bogs, canals and rivers and the discovery of the area’s natural and built heritage would significantly support the future growth of tourism in Kildare and the midlands.</u></i></p>

Documents Attached: Níl