



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: KCC-C55-172

Údar: Umeras Community Development

Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht:

Submission from Umeras Community Development CLG
(UCDCLG) on 2023-2027 Kildare Draft County Development Plan

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Comments on Chapter on Landscape, Recreation & Amenity

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

Ábhair: landscape, recreation, amenity

Chapter 13: Landscape, Recreation & Amenity

Comment

We welcome the innovative Green Infrastructure Policy which involves a holistic approach and should be provided as an integral part of sustainable development. However, the current landscape maps and approach are dated from 2004 and are completely outdated. The development of a 5th National Blueway as a backbone to a new nature-tourism corridor focusing on core areas such as Umeras Peatlands Park and nodes needs to be recognized in the landscape assessment and this nationally-important protected scenic route needs to be afforded protection from intrusive industrial development.

Main Request: The previous County Development Plan provided for a 300m buffer from scenic routes from wind turbines at a time when turbine were 50m in height. The latest turbines being proposed in County Kildare are 220m in height and the setback from the Blueway needs to reflect the importance of this nationally important scenic route and should be at least 10 times the turbine height or a significant distance. The position of Kildare County Council should be consistent with that outlined in the CAAS report commissioned by Kildare County Council in it's submission on the Maighne Wind Farm.

Main Requests

BIA22 – Change “Work with Bord Na Mona to prepare a Green Infrastructure Masterplan that will inform the delineation of core areas, stepping stones and corridors..”

To:

Work with Bord Na Mona, Coillte, Waterways Ireland and local community and environmental groups to prepare a Green Infrastructure Masterplan that will inform the delineation of core areas, stepping stones and corridors..”

Main Reason

It is a key recommendation of the West Kildare Just Transition Plan that a tripartite approach (Kildare County Council/Government agencies/Communities & NGOs) is adopted to plan for the future of the region. Local communities and environmental groups must be central to any development of a Green Infrastructure Masterplan. Already groups such as Umeras Community Development, the National Peatlands Park, Tidy Towns, Lullymore Heritage Centre are working on grassroots initiatives to develop green infrastructure and need to be equal partners in any masterplan development.

Main Request

Revise the Green Infrastructure Concept Map to recognize Umeras Peatlands Park as a Core Area consistent with the text in 12.14.6.8 which includes Umeras Bog as a Core Area.

Main Reason

The development of Umeras Peatlands Park is strongly supported by Kildare County Council and Bord Na Mona and Coillte have provided positive feedback on the draft Strategic Plan. We believe that Umeras Peatlands Park will be a core nature/tourism initiative in County Kildare and this need to be reflected in the map.

Change: 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.

LRO42

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.

The creation of a successful community-led tourism destination supported by Kildare

County Council, Failte 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.

Comment

We welcome the support for the development of a National Peatlands Park as a major opportunity to regenerate the biodiversity and economy of West and South Kildare through nature-based tourism core areas linked by corridors to nodes which will create new tourism hub

Documents Attached: Níl