

**COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL DARA**  
**KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Record of Executive Business and Chief Executive's Orders

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) – Part XAB  
Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) – Part 8

**Construction of a new trailhead parking and amenity area adjacent to the newly constructed towpath on the northern bank of the Grand Canal Barrow Line at Canalside, Athy, Co Kildare.**

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (AA) SCREENING DETERMINATION**

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, Kildare County Council is proposing a **new trailhead parking and amenity area** at Athy, comprising:

1. A new shared surface access road,
2. Parking facilities including:
  - a. seventeen car parking spaces (including two accessible bays),
  - b. sixteen bicycle spaces (including two accessible spaces),
3. Three bicycle storage lockers,
4. One pedestrian access link to the Barrow Blueway towpath south west of the site,
5. Ancillary greenway amenities including:
  - a. lighting,
  - b. play area,
  - c. benches,
  - d. picnic tables,
  - e. bins, and
  - f. associated signage.
6. Drainage designed and delivered in compliance with Sustainable Urban Drainage methods including:
  - a. the construction of a tree pit,
  - b. rain garden,
  - c. permeable pavements, and
  - d. a swale drain with full on-site infiltration of all surface water.

7. Traffic control measures such as kerb buildouts on the access road, height restriction barrier on the entrance, installation of traffic bollards and all associated site works.

Having regard to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the guidance contained in the document entitled "*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities*" (published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2009) and following an examination of the objective information provided in the *Athy Trailhead Appropriate Assessment Screening Report* by *Fehily Timoney* on behalf of Kildare County Council, as the Competent Authority, determines that the proposed development at Athy, Co. Kildare, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, does not have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on European sites, their conservation objectives or integrity, and therefore does not require an Appropriate Assessment

Key points in the determination –

- The Grand Canal, a pNHA, is located, approximately 8-10m from the boundary of the site (at its closest point).
- The River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site Code: 002162) is located approximately 115m east of the site.
- There are no surface water, groundwater or other pathways linking the Site to any European sites, so there is no risk of indirect effects.
- No outfalls to nearby watercourses, i.e. the Grand Canal Barrow Line or River Barrow are proposed.
- Proposed development is located fully outside any European Sites.
- The habitat within the zone of impact of the proposed development include improved grassland, hedgerow and treelines. Field survey concluded that these habitats do not support any species designated for protection under the Habitats Regulations.
- The River Barrow is located approximately 115m from the proposed development, and as such, having regard to IFI guidelines, a sufficient riparian zone exists such that there is no pathway for effects on the River Barrow (part of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, site code 002162). The on-site land drain permeates to ground, and as such the surrounding lands act as a natural swale between the development lands and the River Barrow, located 110m away. The Grand Canal - Barrow Line is located at its closest point approximately 8m from the project. The Grand Canal is not a designated European site, however it joins the River Barrow approximately 180m downstream.
- There are no SPAs located within the 200m potential disturbance zone for birds from the proposed project. Additionally, there are no SPAs located within the 15km core foraging range for birds. There are no SPAs within the potential ZOI of the project.
- The nearest GWDTE to the project is the marsh habitat located on the island downstream of Athy between the Grand Canal and River Barrow (located 550m

south of the proposed project), and, is beyond the zone of influence of the project.

- The River Barrow and River Nore SAC is located within the potential disturbance zone for breeding Otter.

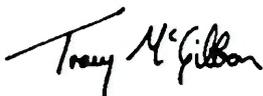
On the basis of the above, European sites were considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects (refer to Tables 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 of the Fehily Timoney Report).

The overall conclusions state:

*The results of the s-p-r modelling process identified that - given the scale and nature of the potential sources identified in Table 2.1 - there are no likely significant effects identified to any European sites. The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during all phases of the proposed project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the sources for impacts, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site*

It is therefore unlikely that a project of this nature and scale will have any measurable impact on the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites.

Therefore, a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment will not be required to inform the project appraisal either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to any Natura 2000 sites and their Conservation Objectives.



Tracy McGibbon  
Senior Executive Planner  
26/02/2026



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J. O'Reilly  
Acting Senior Planner  
27/02/2026

**ORDER:** That Kildare County Council as the Competent Authority, having considered the *Athy Trailhead Appropriate Assessment Screening Report* by *Fehily Timoney* on behalf of Kildare County Council, makes a determination that a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment will not be required to inform the **trailhead parking and amenity area development adjacent to the newly constructed towpath on the northern bank of the Grand Canal Barrow Line at Canalside, Athy, Co Kildare**, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to any Natura 2000 sites and their Conservation Objectives.



Chief Executive

Date: 2/3/2026