



The Draft Kildare County Development Plan

C/O The Administrative Officer

Forward Planning

Áras Chill Dara

Devoy Park

Naas

Co. Kildare.

23rd May 2022

RE: DRAFT KILDARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023 – 2029

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is a central Government Office operating under the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform with particular responsibility for Flood Risk and Estate Management, including Heritage.

This submission outlines observations from the Heritage Services unit of the OPW. A submission from the Flood Relief and Risk Management Division of the OPW issued separately on the 17th May 2022.

The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland are listed as a prescribed authority for the purposes of Section 11 (Preparation of draft development plan) and Section 12 (Making of a development plan) of the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended). In this regard, the OPW would welcome the opportunity to engage in more detailed discussions with Kildare County Council on the observations contained in this submission.

2.0 CASTLETOWN HOUSE AND DEMESNE/PARKLANDS

Castletown House is in state ownership and is managed by the OPW. It is widely considered to be the finest example of a Palladian-style country house in Ireland. The house is set within an eighteenth-century parkland on the banks of the River Liffey.

Castletown House and demesne/parklands is arguably County Kildare's highest value combined cultural, amenity and biodiversity asset. Its designed landscape, and that of its historically and visually connected neighbours Donaghcumper and St. Wolstan's have, over time, naturalised. Donaghcumper and St Wolstan's provide a 'Liffey Valley' designed landscape and 'rural' setting to Castletown.

Chapter 11 Built and Cultural Heritage

The OPW welcomes the inclusion of the following objectives in Chapter 11 Built and Cultural Heritage:

AH 022

- Safeguard the amenities of Castletown House including the main avenue, Donaghcumper, St Wolstan's and the River Liffey environs as shown on Map 11.14.
- Safeguard the amenities of The Wonderful Barn including the adjacent buildings.

AH 023

Maintain the views from Castletown House to the River Liffey and to protect the integrity of the designed landscape at Castletown Demesne, including pathways, avenues and the following views:

Axial views between the Castletown House to the Conolly's Folly;

Views between Castletown House and the Wonderful Barn;

Views from the House to the river and across the back parterre;

Views across the river and to the linked demesnes of Donaghcumper and St Wolstan's;

Views from the main avenue to the river towards Castletown, and up and down the river to Celbridge and New Bridges.

It is requested that the above text objective (highlighted in grey) be amended as follows:

'Views from the main avenue to, **and across**, the river towards Castletown, and up and down the river to Celbridge and New Bridges'

Protected Area Castletown – Donaghcumper Map (Chapter 11 Built and Cultural Heritage)

In order to avoid development that could detract from the axial/reciprocal "Views to be Preserved" contained in the 'Protected Area Castletown – Donaghcumper Map', the OPW requests the inclusion of a further objective in the development plan to strengthen this protection as follows:

Require that planning applications in proximity to 'Views to be Preserved' are accompanied by a Visual Impact Assessment.

Chapter 13 Landscape Recreation and Amenity

The OPW welcomes the inclusion of the following objectives in Chapter 11 Built and Cultural Heritage:

LR 056

Progress the implementation of the following flagship projects identified in the report 'Towards a Liffey Valley Park Strategy' (2006) or any superseding plan, while ensuring that environmental and built heritage sensitivities are not negatively impacted upon.

- Enhancement work of the Celbridge Town Centre, specifically the refurbishment of the pedestrian bridge over the River Liffey adjacent to The Mill building.
- The acquisition and development of the Donaghcumper land into a public park with the opportunity to create a linkage with Castletown estate.
- Preparation of a Masterplan for the Donaghcumper land.
- The development and installation of high quality interpretative boards in each of the towns and villages along the Liffey from Leixlip to Ballymore Eustace.

It is requested that consideration be given to amending the above text objectives (highlighted in grey) to reflect the following:

Investigate the feasibility of developing the Donaghcumper lands as an amenity for local people and of linking the lands with Castletown – in co-operation with the National Historic Properties unit of the OPW and other relevant stakeholders;

The OPW notes the sensitivity of views from the Wonderful Barn to Castletown House;

The OPW welcomes the continued objective of a walkway in Donaghcumper and St. Wolstan's (Protected Area Castletown – Donaghcumper Map).

The OPW welcomes the following action:

LR A22

To prepare an integrated public amenity park and tourism destination at the Wonderful Barn and associated lands, to be informed by a detailed conservation and management plan.

Chapter 12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

In reference to the 'Green Infrastructure Concept Map' in Chapter 12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure of the draft development plan, the OPW notes the proposal for 'green corridors' and a 'stepping stone' in the environs of Castletown House. The OPW would welcome an early opportunity to discuss these proposals – which will traverse the demesne/parklands of Castletown House – in greater detail with Kildare County Council.

3.0 APPENDIX 9 – CORE STRATEGY METHODOLOGY

It is noted that the focus of the Draft Core Strategy of the *Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029* is based on achieving critical mass in the following areas: the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area (Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge, Kilcock) and in the Key Towns of Naas and Maynooth. It is acknowledged that objectives (AH 022 and AH 023) to preserve the aforementioned views may be challenged by this proposed development strategy. In this regard, the OPW request early consultation in the review process for the following local area plans (LAPs):

Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 - 2023

Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017 - 2023

Maynooth LAP 2013-2019

4.0 CONCLUSION

We request that Kildare County Council give due consideration to observations contained in this submission. If further information or input is required from the items raised in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact the OPW at:

info@opw.ie

We look forward to hearing from you.



Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Collier

Head of Heritage Services and Capital Works Delivery

