

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

**IN LINE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE
EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE**

**MUINEBHEAG / ROYAL OAK
LOCAL AREA PLAN
2010-2016**

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Chapter1 Introduction and Terms of Reference

1.1 Introduction

This is an appropriate assessment screening of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan 2010-2016 in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). The relevant provisions of the Directive are set out in Section 1.2 of this report.

This report complies with the European Communities (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EC. and was prepared in compliance with the European Communities (2002) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. A 'Screening matrix' and a 'Finding of no significant effects matrix' have been completed. These can be found in Sections 2 and 3 of this report. The conclusions of this evaluation are set out in Section 4 of this report.

1.2 Terms of Reference

Appropriate assessment is an assessment carried out under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) states:

'if, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of economic or social nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Chapter 2 Screening Matrix

Brief Description of the Project or Plan

The LAP is intended to provide for the proper planning and sustainable development for Muinebheag / Royal Oak for a duration of six years, from adoption in 2010-2016, unless amended. It consists of a written statement and maps which give a graphic representation of the proposals of the Plan, indicating land use and other development standards together with various local objectives.

The overall goal of this LAP is to ensure the sustainable expansion and development of Muinebheag / Royal Oak appropriate to and integrated with the existing town and to further enhance the role of Bagenalstown as an attractive town to both reside in and for investment by both the private and public sector.

The purpose of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak LAP is to endeavour to provide a framework, which will facilitate ongoing development of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and tourism facilities. Bagenalstown will fulfill its role as a key settlement within County Carlow and the South East Region.

The specific objectives in terms of the development of Bagenalstown are set out in the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan as follows:

- 1 Zoning lands for development purposes that will provide for a range and mix of uses and set out urban design and development control objectives for their development,
- 2 Zone individual sites for a range of residential, industrial and community purposes where appropriate
- 3 Identify infrastructure works of local and regional benefit.

Given the above objectives from the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan which are directly applicable to its current population, it is envisaged that growth of this town, in line with population targets will lead to the following objectives being achieved:

- a strengthening of the service centre role of Bagenalstown both in terms of the town proper and its immediate hinterland;
- maintaining the vitality and viability of the existing town, and in particular ensuring the sustained provision of existing services, such as schools, shops, sports clubs, etc.;
- the avoidance of unsustainable ribbon development in the adjoining countryside by ensuring the designation of appropriate zoned lands within the town and thereby an efficient use of existing and planned service infrastructure.

The land use zoning framework which will form part of the Draft Local Area Plan for Muinebheag / Royal Oak will need to translate the population horizon as set out above into the provision of an adequate amount of zoned land in the town which can cater for any population increase. The designation of future lands will need to be particularly guided by and adhere to objectives within the LAP by designating lands particularly on infill sites, vacant sites and on backland sites.

Description of the Natura 2000 sites

The only candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) in Bagenalstown is listed in the table below. Site synopses may be accessed on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's website at www.npws.ie/ConservationSites/. Individual site maps area also on this website.

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE

SITE CODE: 002162

This site consists of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow/Nore River catchments as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains and it also includes the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. The site passes through eight counties – Offaly, Kildare, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford and Waterford. Major towns along the edge of the site include Mountmellick, Portarlington, Monasterevin, Stradbally, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Graiuenamanagh, New Ross, Inistioge, Thomastown, Callan, Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny and Durrow. The larger of the many tributaries include the Lerr, Fushoge, Mountain, Aughavaud, Owenass, Boherbaun and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow and the Delour, Dinin, Erkina, Owveg, Munster, Arrigle and King’s Rivers on the Nore. Both rivers rise in the Old Red Sandstone of the Slieve Bloom Mountains before passing through a band of Carboniferous shales and sandstones. The Nore, for a large part of its course, traverses limestone plains and then Old Red Sandstone for a short stretch below Thomastown. Before joining the Barrow it runs over intrusive rocks poor in silica. The upper reaches of the Barrow also runs through limestone. The middle reaches and many of the eastern tributaries, sourced in the Blackstairs Mountains, run through Leinster Granite. The southern end, like the Nore runs over intrusive rocks poor in silica. Waterford Harbour is a deep valley excavated by glacial floodwaters when the sea level was lower than today. The coast shelves quite rapidly along much of the shore.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for alluvial wet woodlands and petrifying springs, priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for old oak woodlands, floating river vegetation, estuary, tidal mudflats, *Salicornia* mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, dry heath and eutrophic tall herbs, all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive – Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Crayfish, Twaite Shad, Atlantic Salmon, Otter, *Vertigo moulinsiana* and the plant Killarney Fern.

Good examples of Alluvial Forest are seen at Rathsnagadan, Murphy’s of the River, in Abbeyleix estate and along other shorter stretches of both the tidal and freshwater elements of the site. Typical species seen include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Grey Willow (*S. cinerea*), Crack Willow (*S. fragilis*), Osier (*S. viminalis*), with Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Thin-spiked Wood-sedge (*Carex strigosa*), Pendulous Sedge (*C. pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and the Red Data Book species Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*). Three rare invertebrates have been recorded in this habitat at Murphy’s of the River. These are: *Neoascia obliqua* (Diptera: Syrphidae), *Tetanocera freyi* (Diptera: Sciomyzidae) and *Dictya umbrarum* (Diptera: Sciomyzidae).

A good example of petrifying springs with tufa formations occurs at Dysart Wood along the Nore. This is a rare habitat in Ireland and one listed with priority status on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. These hard water springs are characterised by lime encrustations, often associated with small waterfalls. A rich bryophyte flora is typical of the habitat and two diagnostic species, *Cratoneuron commutatum* var. *commutatum* and *Eucladium verticillatum*, have been recorded.

The best examples of old Oak woodlands are seen in the ancient Park Hill woodland in the estate at Abbeyleix; at Kyleadahir, on the Delour, Forest Wood House, Kylecorragh and Brownstown Woods on the Nore; and at Cloghristic Wood, Drummond Wood and Borris Demesne on the Barrow, though other patches occur throughout the site. Abbeyleix Woods is a large tract of mixed deciduous woodland which is one of the only remaining true ancient woodlands in Ireland. Historical records show that Park Hill has been continuously wooded since the sixteenth century

and has the most complete written record of any woodland in the country. It supports a variety of woodland habitats and an exceptional diversity of species including 22 native trees, 44 bryophytes and 92 lichens. It also contains eight indicator species of ancient woodlands. Park Hill is also the site of two rare plants, Nettle-leaved Bellflower and the moss *Leucodon sciuroides*. It has a typical bird fauna including Jay, Long-eared Owl and Raven. A rare invertebrate, *Mitostoma chrysomelas*, occurs in Abbeyleix and only two other sites in the country. Two flies *Chrysogaster virescens* and *Hybomitra muhlfeldi* also occur. The rare Myxomycete fungus, *Licea minima* has been recorded from woodland at Abbeyleix. Oak woodland covers parts of the valley side south of Woodstock and is well developed at Brownsford where the Nore takes several sharp bends. The steep valley side is covered by Oak (*Quercus* spp.), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Birch (*Betula pubescens*) with some Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). All the trees are regenerating through a cover of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) Wood Rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*).

On the steeply sloping banks of the River Nore about 5 km west of New Ross, in County Kilkenny, Kylecorragh Woods form a prominent feature in the landscape. This is an excellent example of a relatively undisturbed, relict Oak woodland with a very good tree canopy. The wood is quite damp and there is a rich and varied ground flora. At Brownstown a small, mature Oak-dominant woodland occurs on a steep slope. There is younger woodland to the north and east of it. Regeneration throughout is evident. The understorey is similar to the woods at Brownsford. The ground flora of this woodland is developed on acidic, brown earth type soil and comprises a thick carpet of Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Cowwheat (*Melampyrum* spp.) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Borris Demesne contains a very good example of a semi-natural broad-leaved woodland in very good condition. There is quite a high degree of natural re-generation of Oak and Ash through the woodland. At the northern end of the estate Oak species predominate. Drummond Wood, also on the Barrow, consists of three blocks of deciduous woods situated on steep slopes above the river. The deciduous trees are mostly Oak species. The woods have a well established understorey of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and the herb layer is varied, with Brambles abundant. Whitebeam (*Sorbus devoniensis*) has also been recorded.

Eutrophic tall herb vegetation occurs in association with the various areas of alluvial forest and elsewhere where the flood-plain of the river is intact. Characteristic species of the habitat include Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*). Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), an introduced and invasive species, is abundant in places. Floating River Vegetation is well represented in the Barrow and in the many tributaries of the site. In the Barrow the species found include Water Starworts (*Callitriche* spp.), Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Milfoil (*Myriophyllum* spp.), *Potamogeton x nitens*, Broad-leaved Pondweed (*P. natans*), Fennel Pondweed (*P. pectinatus*), Perfoliated Pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*) and Crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.). The water quality of the Barrow has improved since the vegetation survey was carried out (EPA, 1996).

Dry Heath at the site occurs in pockets along the steep valley sides of the rivers especially in the Barrow Valley and along the Barrow tributaries where they occur in the foothills of the Blackstairs Mountains. The dry heath vegetation along the slopes of the river bank consists of Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) species with patches of acidic grassland vegetation. Additional typical species include Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and Bent Grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*). On the steep slopes above New Ross the Red Data Book species Greater Broomrape (*Orobancha rapum-genistae*) has been recorded.

Where rocky outcrops are shown on the maps Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Wood Rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) are present. At Ballyhack a small area of dry heath is interspersed with patches

of lowland dry grassland. These support a number of Clover species including the legally protected Clustered Clover (*Trifolium glomeratum*) – a species known from only one other site in Ireland. This grassland community is especially well developed on the west side of the mud-capped walls by the road. On the east of the cliffs a group of rock-dwelling species occur, i.e. English Stonecrop (*Sedum anglicum*), Sheep's-bit (*Jasione montana*) and Wild Madder (*Rubia peregrina*). These rocks also support good lichen and moss assemblages with *Ramalina subfarinacea* and *Hedwigia ciliata*.

Dry Heath at the site generally grades into wet woodland or wet swamp vegetation lower down the slopes on the river bank. Close to the Blackstairs Mountains, in the foothills associated with the Aughnabrisky, Aughavaud and Mountain Rivers there are small patches of wet heath dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*). Saltmeadows occur at the southern section of the site in old meadows where the embankment has been breached, along the tidal stretches of in-flowing rivers below Stokestown House, in a narrow band on the channel side of Common Reed (*Phragmites*) beds and in narrow fragmented strips along the open shoreline. In the larger areas of salt meadow, notably at Carrickeloney, Ballinlaw Ferry and Rochestown on the west bank; Fisherstown, Alderton and Great Island to Dunbrody on the east bank, the Atlantic and Mediterranean sub types are generally intermixed. At the upper edge of the salt meadow in the narrow ecotonal areas bordering the grasslands where there is significant percolation of salt water, the legally protected species Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*) and Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) (Flora Protection Order, 1987) are found. The very rare Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) is also found. Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*) is also present. Other plants recorded and associated with salt meadows include Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Couch (*Elymus pycnanthus*), Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) and Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*).

Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand are found in the creeks of the saltmarshes and at the seaward edges of them. The habitat also occurs in small amounts on some stretches of the shore free of stones.

The estuary and the other Habitats Directive Annex I habitats within it form a large component of the site. Extensive areas of intertidal flats, comprised of substrates ranging from fine, silty mud to coarse sand with pebbles/stones are present. Good quality intertidal sand and mudflats have developed on a linear shelf on the western side of Waterford Harbour, extending for over 6 km from north to south between Passage East and Creadaun Head, and in places are over 1 km wide. The sediments are mostly firm sands, though grade into muddy sands towards the upper shore. They have a typical macro-invertebrate fauna, characterised by polychaetes and bivalves. Common species include *Arenicola marina*, *Nephtys hombergii*, *Scoloplos armiger*, *Lanice conchilega* and *Cerastoderma edule*.

The western shore of the harbour is generally stony and backed by low cliffs of glacial drift. At Woodstown there is a sandy beach, now much influenced by recreation pressure and erosion. Behind it a lagoonal marsh has been impounded which runs westwards from Gaultiere Lodge along the course of a slow stream. An extensive reedbed occurs here. At the edges is a tall fen dominated by sedges (*Carex* spp.), Meadowsweet, Willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.) and rushes (*Juncus* spp.). Wet woodland also occurs. This area supports populations of typical waterbirds including Mallard, Snipe, Sedge Warbler and Water Rail.

The dunes which fringe the strand at Duncannon are dominated by Marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) towards the sea. Other species present include Wild Sage (*Salvia verbenaca*), a rare Red Data Book species. The rocks around Duncannon ford have a rich flora of seaweeds typical of a moderately exposed shore and the cliffs themselves support a number of coastal species on ledges, including Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*).

Other habitats which occur throughout the site include wet grassland, marsh, reed swamp, improved grassland, arable land, quarries, coniferous plantations, deciduous woodland, scrub and ponds.

Seventeen Red Data Book plant species have been recorded within the site, most in the recent past. These are Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*), Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*), Clustered Clover (*Trifolium glomeratum*), Basil Thyme (*Acinos arvensis*), Hemp nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*), Borrer's Saltmarsh Grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*), Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*), Wild Sage (*Salvia verbenaca*), Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*), Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*), Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*), Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*), Broomrape (*Orobanche hederarum*) and Greater Broomrape (*Orobanche rapum-genistae*). Of these the first nine are protected under the Flora Protection Order 1999. Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) was thought to be extinct but has been found in a few locations in the site since 1990. In addition plants which do not have a very wide distribution in the country are found in the site including Thin-spiked Wood-sedge (*Carex strigosa*), Field Garlic (*Allium oleraceum*) and Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*). Six rare lichens, indicators of ancient woodland, are found including *Lobaria laetevirens* and *L. pulmonaria*. The rare moss *Leucodon sciuroides* also occurs.

The site is very important for the presence of a number of EU Habitats Directive Annex II animal species including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera* and *M. m. durrovensis*), Freshwater Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), Salmon (*Salmo salar*), Twaité Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*), three Lamprey species - Sea (*Petromyzon marinus*), Brook (*Lampetra planeri*) and River (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), the marsh snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* and Otter (*Lutra lutra*). This is the only site in the world for the hard water form of the Pearl Mussel *M. m. durrovensis* and one of only a handful of spawning grounds in the country for Twaité Shad. The freshwater stretches of the River Nore main channel is a designated salmonid river. The Barrow/Nore is mainly a grilse fishery though spring salmon fishing is good in the vicinity of Thomastown and Inistioge on the Nore. The upper stretches of the Barrow and Nore, particularly the Owenass River, are very important for spawning.

The site supports many other important animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*), Badger (*Meles meles*), Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) and Frog (*Rana temporaria*). The rare Red Data Book fish species Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) occurs in estuarine stretches of the site. In addition to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, the site also supports two other freshwater Mussel species, *Anodonta anatina* and *A. cygnea*.

The site is of ornithological importance for a number of E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species including Greenland White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Bartailed Godwit, Peregrine and Kingfisher. Nationally important numbers of Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are found during the winter. Wintering flocks of migratory birds are seen in Shanahoe Marsh and the Curragh and Goul Marsh, both in Co. Laois and also along the Barrow Estuary in Waterford Harbour. There is also an extensive autumnal roosting site in the reedbeds of the Barrow Estuary used by Swallows before they leave the country.

Landuse at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities – many intensive, principally grazing and silage production. Slurry is spread over much of this area. Arable crops are also grown. The spreading of slurry and fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality of the salmonid river and to the populations of Habitats Directive Annex II animal species within the site. Many of the woodlands along the rivers belong to old estates and support many non-native species. Little active woodland management occurs. Fishing is a main tourist attraction along stretches of the main rivers and their tributaries and there are a number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. Both commercial and leisure fishing takes place on the rivers. There is net fishing in the estuary and a mussel bed also.

Other recreational activities such as boating, golfing and walking, particularly along the Barrow towpath are also popular. There is a golf course on the banks of the Nore at Mount Juliet and GAA

pitches on the banks at Inistioge and Thomastown. There are active and disused sand and gravel pits throughout the site. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site. New Ross is an important shipping port. Shipping to and from Waterford and Belview ports also passes through the estuary. The main threats to the site and current damaging activities include high inputs of nutrients into the river system from agricultural run-off and several sewage plants, overgrazing within the woodland areas, and invasion by non-native species, for example Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*). The water quality of the site remains vulnerable. Good quality water is necessary to maintain the populations of the Annex II animal species listed above. Good quality is dependent on controlling fertilisation of the grasslands, particularly along the Nore. It also requires that sewage be properly treated before discharge. Drainage activities in the catchment can lead to flash floods which can damage the many Annex II species present.

Capital and maintenance dredging within the lower reaches of the system pose a threat to migrating fish species such as lamprey and shad. Land reclamation also poses a threat to the salt meadows and the populations of legally protected species therein.

Overall, the site is of considerable conservation significance for the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed on Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive respectively. Furthermore it is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it. The occurrence of several Red Data Book plant species including three rare plants in the salt meadows and the population of the hard water form of the Pearl Mussel which is limited to a 10 km stretch of the Nore, add further interest to this site.

Assessment Criteria

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to the Natura 2000 sites.

The Plan has been formulated to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based upon this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site.

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:

- **size and scale;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site arising from their size or scale shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- **land take;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site arising from their land take shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- **distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

- **resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the

basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **emissions (disposal to land, water or air);**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **excavation requirements;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **transportation requirements;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **other;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Describe any likely changes to the sites arising as a result of:

➤ **reduction of habitat area;**

No projects giving rise to reduction of habitat areas for this Natura 2000 site shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **disturbance to key species;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **habitat or species fragmentation;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **reduction in species density;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the

basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

It is an aim of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan to improve water quality of the River Barrow with future upgrading of the existing treatment plant capable of dealing with the projected population increase for the area.

➤ **climate change;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:

➤ **interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

➤ **interference with key relationships that define the function of the site;**

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site or their key features arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of the Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

➤ **loss;**

Not applicable.

➤ **fragmentation;**

Not applicable.

➤ **disruption;**

Not applicable.

➤ **disturbance;**

Not applicable.

➤ **change to key elements of the sites (e.g. water quality etc.);**

Not applicable.

Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.

Not applicable.

Chapter 3 Finding of no significant effects report matrix

Name of project or plan

Muinebheag / Royal Oak Local Area Plan 2010-2016

Name and Location of Natura 2000 site

Barrow and Nore River Valley, running through Bagenalstown.

Description of the project or plan

As given in Chapter 2, pg. 4.

Is this project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites (provide details)?

The Plan includes policies and objectives to protect, conserve and manage in a prudent and sustainable manner the natural and built heritage of Bagenalstown, including its Natura 2000 site and also seeks to enhance this resource where appropriate.

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the sites (provide details)?

The plan has been formulated to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based upon this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of this Natura 2000 site.

The assessment of significance of effects

Describe how the project of plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site

The Plan has been formulated to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based upon this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site within Bagenalstown.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

The policies and provisions of the Plan have been devised to anticipate and avoid the need for developments that would be likely to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of this Natura 2000 site. Furthermore, such developments as will be permitted on foot of the provisions of this Plan shall be required to conform to the relevant regulatory provisions for the prevention of pollution, nuisance or other environmental effects likely to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of this Natura 2000 site.

List of agencies consulted.

SEA Screening letters were sent to the following:

The Manager, Development Applications Unit, Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), Dun Sceine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2. 01 833 3190

Frank O'Brien, Co-ordination Unit, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, (DCMNR), Lesson Lane, Dublin 2. 01 6783051

Tadhg O'Mahony, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, County Cork. 021 4875540

Data collected to carry out the assessment

Who carried out this assessment?

Carlow County Council Planning Department

Sources of data

Existing data

Level of assessment completed

Desktop study

Where the full results of the assessment can be accessed and viewed?

This document contains the full results of the Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise.

Chapter 4 Conclusions

Following the review of the draft plan in accordance with the ‘Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43’, a Screening Matrix and Findings of No Significant Effects Matrix have been completed.

This screening process was carried out to ascertain if the Plan were likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. If this were the case then it would be necessary to carry out Appropriate Assessment. The draft Plan has been formulated to ensure that developments and effects arising from permissions based upon this draft Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.

This screening report finds that the draft Plan does not require further appropriate assessment.