

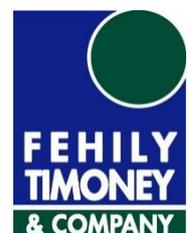


ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

# FINAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING DETERMINATION OF THE CARLOW LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2016-2021

## CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### FEBRUARY 2016



# FINAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING DETERMINATION OF THE CARLOW LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2016-2021

## User is Responsible for Checking the Revision Status of This Document

| Rev. Nr. | Description of Changes | Prepared by: | Checked by: | Approved by: | Date:      |
|----------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| 0        | Issue to Client        | SMcA/MG      | TPR         | TPR          | 03/02/2016 |

**Client:** Carlow County Council

**Keywords:** strategic environmental assessment, Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan 2016, final screening determination

**Abstract:** This report has been prepared to accompany the Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 and provide the final strategic environmental assessment (SEA) screening determination for adoption of the LECP.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PAGE

|          |   |          |
|----------|---|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....   | <b>1</b> |
| 1.1      | BACKGROUND TO COUNTY CARLOW LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2016 – 2021 .....   | 1        |
| <b>2</b> | <b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING</b> .....   | <b>4</b> |
| 2.1      | PURPOSE OF SEA SCREENING.....   | 4        |
| 2.2      | INITIAL SEA SCREENING DETERMINATION OF THE DRAFT CARLOW LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2016-2022 .....                           | 4        |
| 2.2.1    | <i>The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to .....</i> | 5        |
| 2.2.2    | <i>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to .....</i>                 | 7        |
| 2.2.3    | <i>Initial SEA Screening Determination .....</i>  | 8        |
| 2.3      | CONSULTATION ON DRAFT LECP AND INITIAL SEA SCREENING DETERMINATION .....  | 8        |
| 2.3.1    | <i>Consultation Responses .....</i>   | 9        |
| 2.4      | SEA SCREENING ON REVISIONS TO LECP FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION .....  | 11       |
| 2.5      | FINAL SCREENING DETERMINATION .....   | 11       |

## LIST OF TABLES

|   |   |
|---|---|
| TABLE 1: LECP THEMES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES..... | 1 |
|---|---|

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Carlow County Council has prepared a draft six year integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) in accordance with Section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 with the purpose of;

- the promotion of economic development in its functional area, and
- the promotion of local and community development in its functional area.

This report appraises the LECP for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requirement and provides the final SEA Screening Determination to accompany the adopted LECP in February 2016.

### 1.1 Background to County Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2021

The County Carlow LECP was prepared to provide for the promotion and support of economic and community development in County Carlow. The objectives and actions needed for this promotion and support will act at a local level while being consistent with the relevant upper tier plans and programmes, the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022, the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021, Carlow County Corporate Plan 2014-2019 and government policy.

The LECP does not sit within the hierarchy of spatial development plans but rather to complement these plans while maintaining consistency with the core strategy and objectives of the County Development Plan.

The preparation of the LECP was under the joint responsibility of Carlow County Council and Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) who are developing the economic and community elements of the Plan respectively.

The plan is structured around five economic and community themes:

1. Living in Carlow, a community development theme
2. Doing Business and Working in Carlow, an economic development theme
3. Education, Upskilling and Professional Development in Carlow, a shared community and economic theme
4. Visiting Carlow, a shared community and economic theme and
5. Underpinning Infrastructure, an economic development theme

Each of these themes is supported by a High End Goal, i.e. for 'Living in Carlow'; the High End Goal is to *Build thriving, resilient, sustainable and inclusive communities* which is supported by Strategic Objectives each of which is promoted by specific actions. The high level goals and strategic objectives are provided in Table 1 below. The actions for each is described in the LECP.

**Table 1: LECP Themes, Goals and Objectives**

| Theme               | High Level Goal  | Strategic Objectives   |
|---------------------|--|--|
| 1. Living in Carlow | Build thriving, resilient, sustainable and inclusive communities | 1.1 To empower citizens to actively participate<br>1.2 To create, empower and support leaders and build capacity<br>1.3 To develop sustainable cooperatives and social enterprises and community facilities as identified by the communities<br>1.4 To enhance community well-being, health and safety<br>1.5 To deliver integrated and sustainable community services to address social exclusion and poverty |

| Theme   | High Level Goal   | Strategic Objectives  |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | 1.6 To share, protect and sustain the receiving environment<br>1.7 To sustain, nurture and promote arts, culture and heritage   |
| 2. Doing Business and Working in Carlow                         | Strengthen and promote a thriving and sustainable enterprise culture in County Carlow | 2.1 To create leaders and build capacity<br>2.2 To facilitate the development of an innovative and entrepreneurial culture<br>2.3 To develop a sustainable rural economy, facilitated by community centres (linked to social enterprise)<br>2.4 Revitalisation of rural towns and villages through investment in people, communities and in the natural heritage and physical environment<br>2.5 To grow and further develop key sectors<br>2.6 Encourage people to purchase locally<br>2.7 To maximise employment and apprenticeship opportunities<br>2.8 Create local conditions to encourage business growth and expansion<br>2.9 Ensure development of an age friendly business culture<br>2.10 Build digital capacity of Carlow businesses and retailers |
| 3. Education, Upskilling and Professional Development in Carlow | Ensure access to education and skills for all members of communities                  | 3.1 To support the establishment of a Technology University for the South East<br>3.2 Support Carlow College and IT Carlow in their collaboration with other partner institutes<br>3.3 To connect employers with education and skills development providers to address vocational training needs<br>3.4 Community education; empowerment, well-being  |
| 4. Visiting County Carlow                                       | Optimise the tourism product and message  | 4.1 To instil a greater sense of pride by locals and the business community in the tourism product<br>4.2 To further develop a clear and compelling vision for Carlow<br>4.3 To develop and deliver a coherent, bottom up, tourism strategy, marketing strategy and product development strategy over a 5 year period that encompasses all the strengths Carlow has to offer<br>4.4 The development of sustainable rural tourism as an economic driver and stimulus for job creation throughout Carlow Town and County  |
| 5. Underpinning Infrastructure                                  | To provide the required infrastructure for the county                                 | 5.1 To develop and implement a regeneration strategy for Towns and Villages in County Carlow<br>5.2 To create awareness of existing core infrastructure<br>5.3 To identify and address gaps in underpinning infrastructure<br>5.4 To explore renewable energy options<br>5.5 To put in place strategic partnership to create synergies in addressing infrastructure gaps (establish protocols / MoUs / SLAs)  |

Consultation during preparation of the Draft Plan consisted of a request for public submissions during March/ April 2015 alongside community facilitation workshops in March 2015, followed by Strategic Consultation Stakeholder Workshops in July/ August 2015 and wide-ranging consultation from August to October 2015.

Public consultation was held on the draft Plan from 22 December 2015 to 22 January 2016 with the Initial SEA Screening Determination Report and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report accompanying the public consultation.

## 2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING

### 2.1 Purpose of SEA Screening

The SEA Directive, 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, was transposed into Irish legislation as SI 435 of 2004 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) respectively.

The LECP comes under the scope of SI 435 of 2004 (as amended) since the plan is subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which is prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and which is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.

The following sources have been used in the preparation of this screening determination report;

- SEA Pack, Environmental Protection Agency, April 2013
- Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021, July 2015
- SEA Environmental Report for the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021, July 2015

### 2.2 Initial SEA Screening Determination of the Draft Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022

The SEA process commenced with the preliminary stage to determine if a plan or programme is likely to have a significant impact on the environment. The determination of likelihood is known as screening.

The requirement for an SEA is described by Article 9(1) of SI 435 of 2004 (as amended) in terms that an environmental assessment "*shall be carried out for all plans and programmes*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*

*(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site."*

The LECP is a plan which incorporates the areas of energy, industry, waste management, water management, and tourism but it does not set, recommend or influence locations or scopes for economic development. Higher tier plans, in this instance, Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022, set the framework for future development. The LECP is required to be consistent with the regional spatial plans and the relevant County Development Plan as per Guidelines on Local Economic and Community Plans Issued by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government Under Sections 66H and 128E of the Local Government Act 2001, in conjunction with Circular LG 1/2015 / AL 1/2015 (21 January 2015).

*"Each LECP must be consistent, in the first instance, with the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and subsequently with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies and a new National Planning Framework which, it is envisaged, will replace the National Spatial Strategy. The LECP must also be consistent with the statutory City/County Development Plan, and should be consistent with current Government policy in relation to economic development (at present the Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014 - 2020 (MTES) and Enterprise strategy as set out in Making it Happen - Growing Enterprise for Ireland), as well as having regard to other national policy initiatives under the Action Plan for Jobs."*

The LECP does not set the framework for future development with respect to projects listed in the EIA Directive Annexes I and II.

The LECP has been screened under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive for its potential to impact on European Sites of which there are three in County Carlow;

- Blackstairs Mountains cSAC (Site Code 000770) in the south-east of the County
- Slaney River Valley cSAC (Site Code 000781) in the east of the County; and
- River Barrow and River Nore cSAC (Site Code 002162) in the west of the County.

The Appropriate Assessment screening (Stage 1) has concluded that there no further assessment stages are required.

While the Draft LECP does not set a development framework for development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and there is no likelihood of impact on European sites from its implementation, the initial indication is that an SEA is not required.

This was further assessed by considering the Draft LECP against the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 201 of 2011 and discussed under headings described in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

### 2.2.1 The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to

- i. the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,*

The purpose of the Carlow County LECP is to promote and support the economic and community development of the county. This is provided through the actions detailed under each strategic objective. The setting of a project framework is carried out through the Carlow CDP and other spatial plans in the county.

The LECP will not set a framework for projects regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources to develop such projects.

- ii. the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy,*

The purpose of the LECP is to bring forward county and lower scale actions to develop the county economically and in terms of community through the incorporation of actions from other higher tier plans and programmes. These are listed in the baseline references to the Draft LECP. A sample of community and economic plans/programmes are listed below.

#### *Community Plans and Programmes:*

- County Carlow Rural Development Strategy 2014 – 2020
- County Carlow Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)
- County Carlow Local Sports Partnership Strategy
- County Carlow Arts Strategy 2016 – 2021
- County Carlow Litter Management Plan 2014 – 2017
- Carlow County Council Towards Universal Access for All Implementation Plan 2008 – 2015
- Carlow County Council Irish Language Scheme
- Carlow Age Friendly County Strategy
- Institute of Technology / IT Carlow Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018
- Carlow College Strategic Plan
- Kilkenny & Carlow Education & Training Board Strategic Plan
- County Carlow Children & Young People’s Services Committee Strategic Plan
- County Carlow Integration Strategy
- Traveller Interagency Plan
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010- 2022
- South East Homelessness Action Plan 2013 – 2016
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 - 2018
- South East River Basin District Management Plan

- Action Programme for Effective Local Government 2012 "Putting People First"
- Homelessness Policy Statement 2013 – 2016 (DECLG)
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 (DECLG)
- National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013 – 2-15 (Dept. Health)
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016 (DECLG)
- DECLG Housing Policy Statement 2011
- Social Housing Strategy 2014 (DECLG)
- Social Housing Strategy 2020 (DECLG)
- Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness 2014–2016 (DECLG)
- National Policy Framework for Children 2014 – 2020 (Dept. Children & Youth Affairs)
- Children First – National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children (DCYA)
- Government's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Programme and associated strategies (e.g. Health Strategy, Childcare Strategy, National Anti-Poverty Strategy)
- Better Outcomes/Brighter Futures (National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014-2020)
- Towards 2016 (Ten Year Framework for Social Partnership Agreement 2006 – 2015)
- Healthy Ireland –A Framework for Improved Health & Wellbeing 2013-2018
- National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016
- Ireland's National Traveller/Roma Integration Strategy 2011-2016
- Building Stronger and Inclusive Communities –A Regional Strategy for LGBT inclusion and support in the South East 2013-2018

*Economic Plans and Programmes:*

- Carlow Tourism Strategy
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
- Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region
- Waste Management Plan for the Southern Region (Pending)
- South East Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS) 2013 – 2023
- Barrow Corridor Recreational, Tourism & Commercial Product Identification Study

The LECP will not influence these other plans but will instead transpose their goals and objectives into county and local scale actions within its own strategic objectives and actions.

*iii. the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,*

The LECP is being developed to "deliver clear, concise, innovative and evidence based measures aimed at accelerating the economic and social transformation, revitalisation and sustainable development of the County." While sustainable development is being designed in the core of the plan being one of the Guiding Principles of County Carlow 2015 "Sustainability – promoting a more resource efficient, green and more inclusive economy", this aspect has been developed in cognisance of the strategic vision of the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2022 and no objectives relating to sustainable development will conflict with the CDP.

The LECP contains the following specific environmental positive actions which either follow from the CDP objectives or share a common action outcome.

*Strategic Objective 1.6: To share, protect and sustain the environment:*

- *Action 1.6.1: To promote the adoption of energy efficiency technology in homes, business and communities*
- *Action 1.6.2: To promote of the development of innovative renewable energy for businesses and communities*
- *Action 1.6.3: To seek and facilitate active community engagement in implementing the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan (SERBMP) in Carlow*
- *Action 1.6.4: To establish a county environmental water forum consisting of NGO's and public bodies*
- *Action 1.6.5: To identify and promote the economic and societal benefits of a high quality natural environment*
- *Action 1.6.6: To apply the strategic vision of the Regional Waste Plan by rethinking our approach to managing waste and viewing waste streams as a valuable material resource*
- *Action 1.6.7: To strive towards achieving a Circular Economy with a zero waste objective*

- *Action 1.6.8: To develop local action programmes for recycling & Reuse of waste at County and Local level*
- *Action 1.6.9: To achieves targets and objectives set out in Sustainable Energy Action Plan as part of joining the Covenant of Mayors*

*Strategic Objective 1.7: To sustain, nurture and promote arts, culture and heritage:*

- *Action 1.7.3: To develop and implement a Heritage and Bio-diversity Strategy for County Carlow.*

The LECP is consistent with the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2022 in its consideration of sustainable development. It will not however promote actions of sustainable development beyond those already contained within the CDP.

*iv. environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme,*

An SEA and an AA were carried out on the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021 and environmentally sensitive sites (ecological, heritage, landscapes and views) were identified and impacts from implementation of the CDP were mitigated against. Chapter 10 of the CDP '*Environmental Management, Infrastructure and Water Services*' also provides specific environmental objectives relating to improvements in waste management, soil quality, air quality, flood risk, noise, light pollution, renewable energy promotion and water quality. The LECP is prepared in line with the CDP and therefore its objectives and actions will not conflict with the CDP.

The LECP is consistent with the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2022 and none of the objectives and actions described therein will create environmental problems which have not already been assessed and mitigated against in the SEA of the CDP.

*v. the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection),*

The Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021 was prepared in line with the European Union legislation on the environment and was subject to SEA and AA. The CDP will lead in implementing the legislation and since the LECP is prepared to be consistent with this plan, it will also be in line with European Union legislation on the environment but will not be the prime plan/programme for the implementation of the legislation.

The LECP is consistent with the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2022 but it is not the primary driver in assuring that environmental legislation is implemented in the County with specific environmental actions reinforcing CDP objectives.

## 2.2.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

*i. the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,*

The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of putting the LECP into action over its 6-year period will be solely dependent on the extent of economic and community development resulting from the plan.

There are also environmentally positive impacts resulting from the LECP where environmental specific actions under Strategic Objective 1.6: *To share, protect and sustain the environment* and Strategic Objective 1.7: *To sustain, nurture and promote arts, culture and heritage* reinforce existing environmental objectives from the CDP.

Since the LECP is consistent with the Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2021, any effects will be compliant with the CDP's environmental policies and objectives which in turn were subject to an SEA and AA.

The LECP, once it remains compliant with the Carlow CDP 2016-2021, will not result in negative effects.

*ii. the cumulative nature of the effects,*

There will only be positive environmental effects from the implementation of the LECP since any developments resulting from the economic actions will be consistent with the CDP which has been subject to an SEA and AA and the environmental actions described in the LECP will further enhance the environmental objectives of the CDP. The LECP, once it remains compliant with the Carlow CDP 2016-2021, will not result in negative effects.

*iii. the transboundary nature of the effects,*

As above, there are no negative transboundary effects predicted since the LECP is consistent with the CDP's environmental objectives and the LECP actions are designed in accordance with the CDP which was subject to SEA and AA processes.

*iv. the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),*

There are no Major Accident / Seveso establishments presently within County Carlow and the LECP objectives are consistent with the CDP objectives designed not to impact on human health and the environment.

*v. the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),*

The LECP does not zone additional lands or create spatial requirements for projects. All planning policy has been set within the CDP and lower tier spatial plans within County Carlow. These plans will all have been subject to at least SEA and AA screening for negative effects and all such effects, if found, will have been mitigated.

- vi. the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:*
- o *special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,*
  - o *exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,*
  - o *intensive land-use,*

The LECP does not set the framework for development inside lands not already zoned or identified within existing Carlow spatial plans. These plans will all have been subject to at least SEA and AA screening for negative effects and all such effects, if found, will have been mitigated.

*vii. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.*

The LECP does not set the framework for development inside lands not already zoned or identified within existing Carlow spatial plans. These plans will all have been subject to at least SEA and AA screening for negative effects and all such effects, if found, will have been mitigated.

**2.2.3 Initial SEA Screening Determination**

On the basis of the above assessment, it was determined that the draft LECP would not set a framework for development and its implementation will not have significant effects on the environment subject to the criteria described in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004 and therefore an SEA was not required.

**2.3 Consultation on Draft LECP and Initial SEA Screening Determination**

Article 9(5) of the SEA regulations (as amended) requires that prior to the SEA Screening decision, a notice should be provided to the following environmental authorities;

- (a) *the Environmental Protection Agency,*
- (b) *where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government,*

(c) where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment, the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The following environmental authorities were consulted with in relation to the LECP, together with non-statutory bodies, as part of the SEA screening process;

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG)
- Department of Agriculture, Marine and Food (DoAMF)
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR)
- Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs;
- NPWS District Conservation Officer for South Wexford, Carlow & Kilkenny
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- An Taisce
- Bat Conservation Ireland
- Birdwatch Ireland Carlow branch

The draft LECP was also provided to other bodies by the local authority as part of the overall public consultation. The responses from SEA consultation bodies or those who discuss the SEA screening determination are described in Section 2.3.1 below.

### 2.3.1 Consultation Responses

#### Environmental Protection Agency

A response was received from the Environmental Protection Agency dated 15 January 2016. The recommendations and subsequent response are as follows;

| Recommendations  | Response  |
|--|---|
| <i>We recommend considering the inclusion of an additional high level goal for the LECP, relating to "protecting the receiving environment" in implementing the LECP.</i>  | This recommendation has been incorporated into the LECP through modification of an objective under the high level goal 'Living in Carlow'. Strategic Objective 1.6.1. has been revised from "To Share Protect and sustain the environment" to "Share Protect and Sustain the Environment and Receiving Environment".  |
| <i>In particular, it would also be useful to include a commitment that the environmental-related policies and objectives of the CDP will be complied with in implementing the LECP.</i>  | Text has been included in plan to reflect this commitment in Section 1 of the LECP 'Introduction and Background' under sub-section titled 'Local Context – Planning and Development Framework';<br><br>"Environmental related policies and objectives of the Carlow County Development Plan will be complied with in implementing this plan"  |
| <i>The LECP could consider encouraging community level activities in areas such as energy conservation, water conservation, river clean-ups, riparian zone protection measures, awareness and appropriate control of invasive species etc., which would be beneficial for both local communities as well as the environment. Supporting measures which promote and encourage local eco-tourism ventures, fishing/angling, bird watching, agri-tourism, supporting and encouraging citizen science activities such as local heritage mapping, supporting habitat restoration would also be beneficial in forming a closer link between social participation and</i> | These issues are covered under actions in Section 5 of the LECP 'Action Plan' and will be taken into account during the implementation stage;<br><br>Action 1.6.1 To promote the adoption of energy efficiency technology in homes, businesses and communities and achieve targets and objectives set out in Sustainable Energy Action Plan as part of joining the Covenant of Mayors |

| Recommendations   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <p><i>involvement in and environmental protection at a local level.</i></p> <p><i>In particular, the 'River Allow Integrated Catchment Management Approach' may be worth considering in terms of supporting and encouraging community buy-in towards the benefits of supporting sustainable communities and protecting/managing environmental resources at a local level.</i></p> <p><i>It may be useful to consider taking into account the relevant environmental topics contained in the SEA Environmental Monitoring Programme aspects of the CDP, as appropriate, so that over the lifetime of the LECP the potential cumulative/in-combination effects can be reviewed.</i></p> | <p>Action 1.6.2 To promote the development of innovative renewable energy for businesses and communities</p> <p>Action 1.6.3 To seek and facilitate active community engagement in implementing the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan (SERBMP) in Carlow</p> <p>Action 1.6.4 To establish a county environmental water forum consisting of NGO's and public bodies</p> <p>Action 1.6.5 To identify and promote the economic and societal benefits of a high quality natural environment</p> <p>Action 1.7.3 To develop and implement a Heritage Plan for County Carlow.</p> <p>Action 1.7.4 To develop and implement a Biodiversity Plan for County Carlow.</p> |
| <p><i>Carlow County Council should determine whether or not any future proposed variations/amendments would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment should take account of the SEA Regulations.</i></p>   | <p>A commitment has been made by Carlow County Council that any variations or amendments will be considered for SEA screening during any review process.</p>  |
| <p><i>In proposing the LECP and any related amendments, variations etc. of the LECP and in implementing the LECP, adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the particular LECP.</i></p>  | <p>Carlow County Council has taken note of this requirement. Specific objectives and actions relating to provision of underpinning infrastructure to support the LECP are described in the Carlow County Development Plan 2016 – 2021.</p>  |
| <p><i>The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) should be consulted, as relevant and appropriate, with regard to screening of the Plan for Appropriate Assessment.</i></p>   | <p>NWPS has been advised and copies of the SEA and AA screening reports were provided alongside the draft LECP during the public consultation stage.</p> <p>A response was provided through the Development Applications Unit of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>  |
| <p><i>Where Appropriate Assessment is required, any findings or recommendations should be incorporated into the SEA and LECP, as appropriate.</i></p>   | <p>An appropriate assessment screening was carried out on the draft LECP prior to public consultation.</p> <p>There were no recommendations as there were no impacts envisaged from implementation of the LECP.</p>   |
| <p><i>A copy of your decision regarding the determination should be made available for public inspection at your offices, local authority website and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.</i></p>   | <p>Carlow County Council notes this requirement and confirmed that it is already standard practice.</p>   |

### Southern Regional Assembly

The Southern Regional Assembly in its submission dated 25 January 2016 re-iterated the findings of the SEA and AA screening reports. They made no comments on said determinations.

### Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

A response was received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Their comment on the SEA Screening was "It is noted in the Strategic Environmental Assessment screening that the setting of a project framework is carried out through the Carlow County Development Plan and other spatial plans. The Local Authority should satisfy itself that the assessments adequately consider the full range of possible actions resulting from the plan and provide adequate protection of the natural heritage of the county."

There are no physical projects or developments proposed within the LECP actions. The actions relate to social and economic development of County Carlow with respect to areas such as education, tourism and community building. The underpinning infrastructure described in High Level Goal 5 "*To provide the required infrastructure for the county*" are contained within the Carlow County Development Plan 2016 – 2021 which was already subject to an SEA.

## 2.4 SEA Screening on Revisions to LECP following Public Consultation

The revisions to the draft LECP following public consultation relate to re-wording of some objectives and actions.

The objectives and actions relating specifically to protection of the environment were considered the SEA screening criteria '*The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development*' (taken from Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 201 of 2011).

The changes shown in underlined text below maintain the positive outcomes needed from this objective and its actions and are still consistent with the upper tier Carlow County Development Plan 2016-2022 in its consideration of sustainable development.

- Strategic objective 1.6 was modified to include "receiving" to now read "*To share, protect and sustain the receiving environment*"
- *Action 1.6.1: To promote the adoption of energy efficiency technology in homes, business and communities and achieve targets and objectives set out in Sustainable Energy Action Plan as part of joining the Covenant of Mayors*

There are no other changes to the LECP which require further assessment beyond the Schedule 1 criteria assessment carried out for the draft LECP described in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 of this report.

## 2.5 Final Screening Determination

On the basis of the preceding assessment, it is determined that the adopted LECP will not set a framework for development and its implementation will not have significant effects on the environment subject to the criteria described in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004 and therefore an SEA is not required.