

Appendices

Appendix I - Proposed Material Alterations of the Draft Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 relevant to the Appropriate Assessment process.

Section 1: Introduction and Strategic Context Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 1 - No. 2

Sub-section Planning Context

Insert additional text following final Para as follows:

Section 28 Department Planning Guidelines

Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines	Relevant Section within Draft Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)	Separate Natura Impact Report prepared by CAAS Ltd
Architectural Heritage Protection - Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011	Section 7 - Heritage
Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)	Section 4 - Social, Community and Recreational Strategy
Sustainable Urban Housing - Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)	Section 8 - General Location and Pattern of Development
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2015)	Section 8 - General Location and Pattern of Development
Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)	All sections
Provision of Schools and the Planning System (2008)	Section 4 - Social, Community and Recreational Strategy
Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning (2012)	Section 5 - Economic Development and Appendix 4 - Retail Strategy
Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)	Section 6 - Infrastructure
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines (2004)	Separate SEA Environmental Report prepared by CAAS Ltd
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)	Section 8 - General Location and Pattern of Development
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)	Section 6 - Infrastructure
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Design Guidelines (2007)	Section 8 - General Location and Pattern of Development
Wind Energy Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2006)	Appendix 5 - Wind Strategy
Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Worship Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Section 7 - Heritage
Telecommunications and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities July 1996	Section 6 - Infrastructure
Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005)	Section 2 – Development Plan Strategy (Core Strategy)
Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)	Section 8 – General Location and Pattern of Development
Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004)	Section 5 - Economic Development

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Be consistent as far as possible with National Plans, Strategies and Policies which relate to proper planning and sustainable development
2. Have regard to the effects implementing the plan will have on adjoining local authorities
3. Set out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Laois
4. Contain a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the development objectives for County Laois
5. A range of objectives as follows –
 - a) The zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes (whether residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, as open space or otherwise, or a mixture of those uses), where and to such extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in the opinion of the planning authority, requires the uses to be indicated;
 - b) The provision or facilitation of the provision of infrastructure including—
 - (i). Transport, energy and communication facilities,
 - (ii). Water supplies and waste water services (regard having been had to the water services strategic plan for the area made in accordance with the Water Services Act 2007),
 - (iii). Waste recovery and disposal facilities (regard having been had to the waste management plan for the area made in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996), and
 - (iv). Any ancillary facilities or services;]
 - c) The conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph;
 - d) The encouragement, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, of the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species;
 - e) The promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established—
 - (i). For bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009;
 - (ii). For groundwater, by the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010;which standards and objectives are included in river basin management plans (within the meaning of Regulation 13 of the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003);
 - f) The integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population;
 - g) The preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;
 - h) The protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
 - i) The preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
 - j) The development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent—
 - (i). Adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
 - (ii). Urban blight and decay,
 - (iii). Anti-social behaviour, or
 - (iv). A shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses;]
 - k) The provision of accommodation for travellers, and the use of particular areas for that purpose;
 - l) The preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
 - m) The control, having regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive, of—
 - (i). Siting of new establishments,
 - (ii). Modification of existing establishments, and
 - (iii). Development in the vicinity of such establishments,for the purposes of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident;
 - n) The provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities;
 - o) The protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the development plan;
 - p) The promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to—

- (i). Reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources,
 - (ii). Reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and
 - (iii). Address the necessity of adaptation to climate change;
- In particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development;
- q) The preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, which public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the development plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the development plan, and
 - r) Landscape, in accordance with relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or any Minister of the Government relating to providing a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes and developed having regard to the European Landscape Convention at Florence on 20 October 2000.

Section 2: Development Plan Strategy (Core Strategy)
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 2 - No. 9

Sub-section 2.6 Rural Housing Strategy

Insert additional text following final Para as follows:

The Council will resist one-off housing proposals, where such development involves the creation of a new direct access point or the generation of increased traffic flows from existing direct access/egress points to the national road network where speed limits greater than 60km/h apply, in accordance with Policy Trans 5.

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 4

Sub-section 4.2 Social and Community

Additional Objective XX as follows:

XX Explore the potential for rural recreational tourism in conjunction with Tourism bodies, Waterways Ireland, Failte Ireland, National Trails Office and National Parks and Wildlife to diversify the range of tourist experience and extend the tourist season.

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 6

Sub-section 4.2.1 Education

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Encourage, promote and facilitate the provision of education infrastructure and related facilities in accordance with Section 28 national guidelines entitled The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice [DoEHLG, 2008].

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 9

Sub-section 4.3 Natural and Recreational Amenities

Amended and additional text at Para 3 as follows:

Countryside recreation refers to a wide range of activities including horse riding, cycling, walking, picnicking, ~~country drives~~, off-road biking, nature trails, bird watching, painting, photography, field studies, orienteering, para -gliding and hang- gliding, rock climbing, *back-packing, caving, mountaineering, hill walking* and adventure sports, *camping in the wild*, archaeological guided walks and water related activities such as swimming, boating, canoeing and kayaking, *wildlife and heritage trails, bird and animal watching, rafting, hill walking, mountain running, mountaineering, swimming and boating.* Laois County Council continues to work with the adjoining Counties to further develop and coordinate countryside recreation activities in an environmentally sustainable manner. It is recognised that the countryside of County Laois provides an important resource in outdoor recreational facilities not only for its own population but also for those visiting the county. The Council recognises the significance of natural amenities as a major resource for visitors and local people.

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 10

Sub-section 4.3 Natural and Recreational Amenities

Additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Support, promote and facilitate the provision and the development of outdoor activities and seek to preserve, improve and extend recreational amenities.

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 11

Sub-section 4.3 Natural and Recreational Strategy

Additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Recognizing the role played by natural amenities and landscape, as part of our heritage and as a major resource both for visitors and local people, support and protect public access to our natural heritage including mountains, uplands moorlands, forests, rivers, lakes, valleys, nature reserves, scenic areas, areas of natural beauty and to the countryside generally.

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 12

Sub-section 4.3 Natural and Recreational Strategy

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Develop the potential of Co Laois as an Outdoor Activity Hub.

Section 4: Social, Community and Recreational Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 4 - No. 14

Sub-section 4.3.1 Open Space Provision

Amend Policy NRA18 as follows:

*NRA18 Investigate the feasibility of developing walking and cycling routes [such as the Slieve Bloom Mountains Biking Project, **Durrow Green Network Cycle Trail**] to reflect recreational value and to implement strategic green corridors and ensure that any plan or project associated with open space planning, recreation or tourism is subject to **Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required.***

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 2

Sub-section 5.1 Economic Development

Amend Policy ECN4 as follows:

ECN4 Support the marketing of Laois for Inward Investment and as a visitor destination within the Ireland's Ancient East initiative through the Laois LECP.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 3

Sub-section 5 Economic Development

Insert new section following Section 5.1 as follows:

Industrial and Commercial Zoning

Laois County Council is proposing extensive industrial and commercial land-use zonings in the draft Plan.

The Council is mindful of the need to ensure that economic development and employment opportunities within the county are maximized so as to cater for the dramatic increase in population that has occurred over the past two decades in particular.

The type and quantum of such zonings are as follows and are listed in order of size:

- Industrial: 242 hectares

- Enterprise and Employment: 229 hectares
- General Business 141 hectares
- Transport and Utilities: 76 hectares
- Tourism: 42 hectares
- Retail Warehousing: 20 hectares

This is a total of 750 hectares [1,852 acres].

By way of comparison this exceeds by a factor of 3, the amount of land earmarked for residential development [240 hectares] in the Core Strategy Table on page 29 of the draft Plan.

In addition, other zonings which are more generic in name allow for a certain level of economic development. For example the land use light industry is considered as “open for consideration” [without invoking a material contravention procedure] in Town and Village Centres zonings.

As expected the bulk of the industrial and associated zonings are located in accordance with the settlement strategy which in turn adheres to advice from the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines as to the optimum siting of population growth and employment generation. The Principal Town of Portlaoise, the Key Service Town of Portarlinton and the Service Towns of Abbeyleix, Graiguecullen, Mountmellick, Mountrath and Stradbally collectively account for 487 hectares [65%] of the overall total.

The Council is also mindful of the economic development opportunities presented as a result of recent large scale road and rail infrastructure projects throughout the county such as the M7 and M8 Motorway and various rail upgrades.

This has been of major benefit to Portlaoise following on from its designation in both the NSS and RPGs as an Inland Port and National Transport Node In recognition of this designation, the Council has been pro-active and has serviced and zoned a large landbank at Togher, due south of the town centre and directly adjacent to the M7, for various enterprise and employment activities. The ability of this site to facilitate Foreign Direct Investment development opportunities will be maximised during the Plan period.

Moreover, the Council has allocated economic development and employment generating land use zonings in a number of smaller settlements that benefit from being in close proximity to the improved road and rail transport network. These locations include Borris-in-Ossory, Ballacolla, Ballybrittas and Rathdowney.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 15

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Objective XX as follows:

XX Plan and prepare for the future use of large industrial peatland sites when peat harvesting finishes in conjunction with NPWS, Coillte and ESB/Bord na Mona and other stakeholders.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 16

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional paragraph under 'Peatlands' as follows:

Peatlands are one of the world's most important ecosystems. Covering a mere 3% of the world's terrestrial surface, peatlands contain 550 gigatonnes of carbon, making them the most important long term carbon sinks in the terrestrial biosphere. This ability of peatlands to store CO2 and other greenhouse gas means they have a net cooling effect on the global climate. Our management of peatlands has to be sustainable. The rewetting and restoration of peatland has the capacity to secure existing carbon stock and reinitiate the carbon sequestration capacity of degraded peatlands.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 17

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional text above Figure 13 as follows:

Aggregate extraction can only take place where suitable aggregate resources exist; they are a 'tied' resource. It is considered, therefore, that planning policies should be carefully constructed to avoid adverse effects on aggregate resources and the related extractive industries and added value production that are essential for the built environment, infrastructure and future economic development.

Like many forms of development, extractive industries have the potential to cause harm to the environment, heritage and the landscape if not appropriately designed and managed. However, aggregates are a necessary resource and are of great importance to the economy and society. In addition, well managed and designed quarry sites minimise environmental effects. There is also the potential for habitat creation through the restoration of quarry sites following the cessation of operations.

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 18

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional text above Figure 13 as follows:

The following National Guidelines (as may be superseded and/or updated) should be complied with:

- i. Environmental Management(EPA 2006);
- ii. Quarries and Ancillary Activities: DOECLG Guidelines 2004);
- iii. Environmental Code(ICF 2006);
- iv. Geological Heritage Guidelines(ICF & GSI 2008);
- v. Archaeological Code of Practice((ICF & DOECLG 2009);
- vi. Secs 261 & 261A Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2013.

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 19

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX after Policy RUR1 as follows:

XX Support and facilitate agri-tourism and the work of farming / local bodies within the county in the promotion of the rural economy, including agriculture development, tourism adaptation, rural diversification and in the development of new initiatives to support farming.

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 21

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX To secure the long-term supply of value-added products (such as concrete products and asphalt, which are often, but not always, produced in conjunction with aggregate extraction.

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 22

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Protect rural amenities, natural archaeological and natural heritage, visual amenities, eco-systems, conservation areas, landscape and scenic views from adverse impacts of agricultural practices and development particularly in high amenity areas and ensure that it is appropriate in nature and scale, and ensure it does not have an undue negative impact on the visual/scenic amenity of the countryside and identify mitigating measures where required. Integrate into the landscape, including the minimal use of signage.

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 23

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Protect access routes to upland walks and rights of way.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 24

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Not to permit the convergence of the forest edge and the skylines and avoid geometric shapes particularly in uplands and monitor forestry applications in elevated and prominent landscapes and being conscious of the potentially negative visual impact of forestry development on landscape quality, conservation and harmony and on the surrounding area in terms of its nature and scale (including clear-felling activity), protect from injury scenic and exposed/elevated landscapes, scenic routes, views, prospects and vistas(including to water and valley approaches to the hills), Geological sites, National Monuments, heritage features, Aquatic zones, and in Primary and Secondary Amenity Areas.

Ensure that exclusion zones are applied to sites of archaeological importance and areas of archaeological potential. The Council will seek to have such planting and felling conducted in a manner which takes into account best practice in forestry planting and felling in the context of landscape design so that it integrates into the landscape.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 25

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Discourage new forestry development, except for broadleaf in Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Visually Vulnerable Areas, along designated Scenic Routes (Broadleaf forestry will be open to consideration in these areas).

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 26

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Forest development should follow current best practice and adhere to/be in accordance with Forest Service Guidelines and in respect of Landscape Guidelines where landscape objectives should focus on compatibility and enhancement of existing local landscape character. It should have regard to* FS "Code of Best Forest Practice (2000)".

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 27

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Amend Policy RUR 4 as follows:

RUR4 Support the appropriate sustainable management of peat extraction and related manufacturing activities subject to environmental, traffic and planning considerations and ensure that that any plan or project associated with peatland development is subject to the appropriate assessment screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment if required;

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 28

Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities

Amend Policy RUR 7 as follows:

RUR7 Support in principle the expansion of the aggregates and concrete products industry which offers opportunity for employment and economic development generally subject to environmental , traffic and planning considerations and ensure that any plan or project associated with extractive industry is subject to Appropriate assessment screening in compliance with the Habitats Direction and subsequent assessment as required , applicants for planning permission shall have regard to the GSI-ICF Quarrying Guidelines.

Section 5: Economic Development**Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 29*****Sub-section 5.9 Rural Economic Activities***

Amend Policy RUR 9 as follows:

RUR9 Investigate the feasibility of mapping the full extent of aggregate resources of the county during the lifetime of the County Development Plan 2017-20213 and Seek to prevent the sterilisation and inappropriate development of aggregate and mineral resources in order to ensure a sustainable supply of these non-renewable resources.

Section 5: Economic Development**Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 30*****Sub-section 5.10 Tourism***

Amend fourth Para as follows:

Under the Ireland's Ancient East Programme, signage has been installed at the following sites: Emo Court, the Rock of Dunamase, Heywood Gardens, Timahoe Round Tower and Abbeyleix Heritage House. It is the aim of Laois County Council to facilitate and encourage signage at further sites of importance including Donaghmore Workhouse and Agricultural Museum, Aghaboe Abbey, Killeshin Romanesque Church and others. Recommends the following specific sites to be signposted and marketed: Emo Court, Heywood Gardens, Aghaboe Abbey, Heritage House Abbeyleix, Timahoe Round Tower and the Rock of Dunamaise.

Section 5: Economic Development**Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 31*****Sub-section 5.10 Tourism***

Insert additional text after sixth Para as follows:

Fáilte Ireland data indicates that County Laois attracted approximately 57,000 overseas visitors in 2015. This demonstrates Laois' potential as a tourism destination. Initiatives such as Ireland's Ancient East aim to further increase the numbers of visitors to the county.

Section 5: Economic Development**Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 32*****Sub-section 5.10 Tourism***

Insert additional text after final Para as follows:

Ireland's Ancient East, established in 2016, has a target growth in visitor numbers of 600,000 (21%) to the region and an additional visitor revenue of €204 million (28%). To offer visitors a compelling motivation to visit the east of Ireland, Failte Ireland has developed a new umbrella destination brand called Ireland's Ancient East. The brand is rooted in the rich history and diverse range of cultural heritage experiences that are particularly prevalent in the East, South and Midlands regions of Ireland. The new destination brand has been designed to appeal to the key customer segments – namely the Culturally Curious and the Great Escapers – and to present this large geographic area in a cohesive and unified manner. Ireland's Ancient East offers a personal experience of 5,000 years of Europe's history. A journey of discovery in a lush green landscape that attracted warring settlers for millennia, illuminated by stories told by the best story tellers in the world. The key strategic objectives of the Ireland's Ancient East initiative are:

- To drive growth in international visitor numbers, tourism revenue and associated tourism employment in the regions which currently underperform in these areas.
- To move Ireland's east and south from a transit and day tripping zone to a destination which attracts international overnight visitors. • To develop a world class visitor experience, this delivers fully on the brand promise. To differentiate Ireland's east, south and midlands destination, within the international tourism marketplace, on the basis of the quality of its heritage experiences and a clear and memorable narrative, this links all experiences within it. Additional contextual information (Para.5.10) ,
- To disperse visitor traffic across the geography by encouraging the exploration of both the well-known attractions (in some cases congested) and lesser known sites and experiences (hidden gems).
- To ensure Ireland's Ancient East is delivered in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism, ensuring that economic, social and environmental benefits are delivered in a balanced way.

During the life-time of this Plan there will be a phased roll-out of the branding strategy, with investment in tourism signage and the enhancement of the visitor experience across the programme area. The strategy will develop Ireland's Ancient East as a destination that is easy for the independent visitor to explore, interpret, understand and appreciate. The

implementation strategy will deal with on the ground information as well as promotional aspects of the brand and the accessibility of sites, possibly including mechanisms for pre-booking, ticketing and improved management. The strategy will enhance the visitor experience by promoting innovation in product development including the delivery of information through foreign languages and using digital technology where appropriate.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 33

Sub-section 5.10 Tourism

Remove second last paragraph as follows:

~~Fáilte Ireland data indicates that County Laois attracts a low number of overseas visitors and less overseas tourism revenue than surrounding counties — revenue of €11 million and overseas visitor numbers of 37,000 in 2012. Despite the absence of a tourism tradition in Laois, Fáilte Ireland recorded an increased level of overseas visitors (40%) and revenue (73%) during *The Gathering 2013*. This demonstrates Laois' potential as a tourism destination.~~

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 34

Sub-section 5.10 Tourism

Insert additional text after final Para as follows:

Fáilte Ireland promotes the incorporation of the principles of sustainability in the County Development Plan. The following five principles have been prepared to encapsulate the need to achieve a balance between appropriate tourism development and economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Developments will be assessed having regard to compliance with these, and the associated policies.

Principle 1: Tourism, when it is well managed and properly located, should be recognised as a positive activity which has potential to benefit the host community, the place itself and the visitor alike. Sustainable tourism planning requires a balance to be struck between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community.

Principle 2: Our landscapes, our cultural heritage, our environment and our linguistic heritage all have an intrinsic value which outweighs their value simply as a tourism asset. However, sustainable tourism planning makes sure that they can continue to be enjoyed and cherished by future generations and not prejudiced simply by short term considerations.

Principle 3: Built development and other activities associated with tourism should in all respects be appropriate to the character of the place in which they are situated. This applies to the scale, design and nature of the place as well as to the particular land use, economic and social requirements of the place and its surroundings.

Principle 4: Strategic tourism assets – including special landscapes, important views, the setting of historic buildings and monuments, areas of cultural significance and access points to the open countryside, should be safeguarded from encroachment by inappropriate development.

Principle 5: Visitor accommodation, interpretation centres, and commercial / retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within established settlements thereby fostering strong links to a whole range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustaining the host communities.

Sustainable tourism facilities, when properly located and managed can, especially if accessible by a range of transport modes, encourage longer visitor stays, help to extend the tourism season, and add to the vitality of settlements throughout the year. Underlying these principles for Sustainable Tourism, the definitions of economic, environmental and social sustainability, against which any tourism project should be assessed, are defined as follows:

Economic sustainability must be considered to ensure that the tourism sector is managed. The key strengths of the County include landscape, heritage, natural environment, and lifestyle and amenity pursuits. The sector is highly affected by seasonality and there are extremes in visitor numbers at key attractions contrasted with smaller attractions which struggle to maintain visitor numbers. These 'peaks and troughs' should be carefully managed to ensure the protection of natural resources. Tourism innovation should also be encouraged – particularly where it brings about environmental benefits. Finally, for projects to be economically sustainable they should meet the needs of the permanent and also visitor population alike, so the preparation of robust business plans for all such developments will ensure proposals are viable and sustainable.

Environmental sustainability will be central to the development and protection of a viable tourism sector and this is a key consideration in a County where tourism attractions are located in environmentally sensitive areas and close to historic areas where the quality of the built heritage and environment must be protected from inappropriate development - whether tourism

related or not. The 'mainstreaming' of policy guidance tools such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will undoubtedly address any deficits in relation to many of these key policy areas.

- Social Sustainability is arguably more difficult to assess. Many of the potentially negative impacts of tourism development can however be addressed through careful consideration of the social and cultural nature of the receiving environment. The impacts that large-scale developments can have on existing local communities' policies can be assessed having regard to the impact of visitor numbers on local quality of life, culture and heritage – with a particular emphasis placed on unique areas such as culturally sensitive areas where small impacts over time may have a significant cumulative effect.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 35

Sub-section 5.10 Tourism

Insert additional text following:

The Council will consult with TII in relation to any tourism and recreational proposals in order to ensure that any such proposal would not affect the national road network, having particular regard to the requirements of Policy Trans 5.

Section 5: Economic Development

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 36

Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy

Reinstate Table 17 from the Laois County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 before final Para as follows:

Key Heritage Assets	Archaeological Assets	Architectural Assets	Natural Assets
	Monastic heritage including Abbey at Aghaboe, intact Round Tower at Timahoe and fine Romanesque doorway at Killeshin	Emo Court and gardens	Slieve Blooms Nature Reserve with walks at: Monicknew Glenbarrow The Cut
	Viking Longphort known as Durrally Fort close to Vicarstown	Heywood Gardens	Timahoe Esker Nature Reserve with walk
	Rock of Dunamais with Norman Influences	Castledurrow, Ballyfin, Abbeyleix, Stradbally Hall, Roundwood House demesnes	Granstown Nature Reserve with walk
	Maryborough Fort and St Peter's Church and graveyard associated with Plantation of Laois-Offaly	Fine Georgian Square: O'Connor Square Mountmellick	Waterways: Nore, Erkina and Barrow including its source and smaller streams. Grand Canal Small lakes at Ballinakill, Brittas House, Ballyfin
	Tower houses at Lea, Cullahill and Ballaghmore Fortified houses at Brittas House,	Proposed Architectural Conservation Areas at Portlaoise, Abbeyleix and Durrow	Wetlands walks at Slieve Blooms, Killamuck, Portarlinton and the Derries

	<p>Industrial Archaeology Donaghmore Workhouse and Agricultural Museum</p> <p>Mill Buildings at Mountmellick, Castletown, Donaghmore</p> <p>Exhibits at Stradbally Steam Museum, Work Museum Mountmellick and Heritage Centre Abbeyleix</p>	<p>Historic town and villages such as Portarlinton, Mountrath Market Square, Clonaslee, Ballinakil, Emo, Timahoe and Stradbally</p>	<p>Woodlands open to the public:</p> <p>Oughaval Wood, Carrick Wood Dunmore Wood Garryhinch Wood Brittas Wood Togher Wood Capponellan Forest and Lake Walk</p>	
	<p>Heritage Trails, Sli Dala, ancient travelling route extant in places</p>	<p>Coolbanagher Church, Emo</p>	<p>Subtle landscape of rolling hills, river basins and their floodplains, expansive flat areas, upland areas</p>	
		<p>Midland Regional Hospital</p>	<p>On road and off-road walking and cycling routes open up the countryside to rural tourism</p> <p>8.1.1 Walks mapped on Laois Tourism www.laoistourism.ie Sli na Slainte Coillte</p>	

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 37

Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy

Insert additional Policy XX after Policy TM2 as follows:

XX Direct the provision of tourist related facilities, such as information offices and cultural centres, into town and village locations to support and strengthen the existing economic infrastructure of such centres. In all cases, the applicant must submit a robust assessment setting out the sustainability of any proposal with respect to economic, environmental and social sustainability, as defined herein.

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 39

Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy

Amend Policy TM7 as follows:

TM7 Support and promote the existing **festivals and cultural events** which take place in the county and facilitate the establishment of new events where viable to increase the profile of the county as a key tourism destination and enjoyable place to be;

Section 5: Economic Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 41

Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy

Amend Policy TM10 as follows:

TM10 Work in collaboration with Coillte, neighbouring local authorities, Fáilte Ireland, community organisations and other interested parties to develop new forest accommodation, with required ancillary facilities, access, signage and trails for walking, cycling, mountain-biking and horse-riding.

<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 42</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Amend Policy TM11 as follows: TM11 Continue to work in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other key stakeholders on the development of the Ireland's Ancient East branding strategy, to implement the programmes and plans of the Ireland's Ancient East initiative over the lifetime of the plan to maximise the tourism potential of the county. As part of that process Laois County Council will liaise with Fáilte Ireland on the development of the over-arching strategy, as well as any smaller scale plans or programmes that are prepared to give effect to that strategy. Laois County Council will consult with Fáilte Ireland as required, on assessment of any such plans, programmes or policies to ensure that they are adequately screened or assessed in full compliance with Directives including the SEA Directive and the Habitats Directive.</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 43</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Insert new Policy XX after Policy TM11 as follows: XX Facilitate Fáilte Ireland initiatives for the development of tourism experiences in the County that are fit for purpose and deliver on the Ireland's Ancient East brand promise, within the context of the land use management and infrastructural provision in the County.</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 44</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Amend Policy TM 14 as follows: TM 14 Support in principle and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive, developing and marketing off-road Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking Trail by Coillte and Durrow Green Network Cycle Trail in co-operation with relevant stakeholders including Durrow Development Forum.</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 45</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Amend Policy TM17 as follows: TM17 Co-operate with National Trails Office (management standards), Fáilte Ireland, National Way Marked Way Advisory Committee, Coillte, the Heritage Council and other relevant bodies, in order to support the sustainable development, maintenance and enhancement of walking routes at appropriate locations throughout the county, including but not limited to, drying rooms for walkers and repair facilities for cyclists subject to compliance with the policies and objectives of the Plan particularly as they relate to the protection of the natural environment subject to compliance with the Habitats and Bird Directives;</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 46</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Amend Policy TM21 and relocate to after Policy TM11 as follows: XX Encourage the clustering of tourism enterprise in town and village centres in the interest of sustainable tourism development and the enhancement of the public realms of town and village centres to maximise their tourism potential; in all cases, the applicant must submit a robust assessment setting out the sustainability of any proposal with respect to economic, environmental and social sustainability, as defined herein.</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 47</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Amend Policy TM22 as follows:</p>

<p>TM22 Seek to maintain existing walking and cycling trails as well as facilities associated with angling and examine the feasibility of setting up additional walking/cycling trails or canoe/bridle trails and support the development and funding for general enhancements along trails and in collaboration with the National Trails Office, provide up to date information on trail locations and routes;</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 48</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Insert new Policy XX as follows: XX Subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, support in principle the development and marketing of the Erkina River Blueway Trail in association with all relevant stakeholders including Woodenbridge Paddlers Association and facilitate related commercial opportunities in Durrow as well as opportunities to link with other tourist and recreational facilities in the area.</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 49</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Insert new Policy XX after Policy TM26 as follows: XX Develop a management plan for specific busy tourist sites in order to facilitate the effective accommodation of large numbers of tourists at sensitive locations.</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 50</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Insert new Policy XX after Policy TM26 as follows: XX Support the implementation of Ireland's Ancient East by facilitating the provision of visitor information– in line with the policies and objectives with respect to heritage sites; and integrating the objectives of Ireland's Ancient East with transport programmes in the County;</p>
<p>Section 5: Economic Development Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 5 - No. 51</p> <p><i>Sub-section 5.10.1 Laois's Tourism Strategy</i> Insert new Policy XX after Policy TM26 as follows: XX Encourage and support the provision of foreign language interpretation interventions in order to ensure the appropriate interpretation and appreciation of the county's heritage asset.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 2</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.1.2.1 Motorway Network</i> Insert additional Policy XX as follows: XX Seek to prevent and control the spread of invasive plant species along the roads network</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 3</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.1.2.1 Motorway Network</i> Insert additional Policy XX after Policy TRANS 4 as follows: XX Support sustainable travel in the tourism sector by the promotion of public transport use and by undertaking enhancements to overall accessibility thereby making the County easier for visitors to navigate. Integrate the County's transport and tourism strategies to promote increasingly sustainable travel patterns among visitors to the County.</p>

<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 9</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.1.3.1 Laois Walking and Cycling Strategy</i> Amend Policy TRANS48 as follows: <i>TRANS48 Develop on-road cycle trail with a Rathdowney Trailhead to facilitate sporting and general cycling as well as link points of interest including Donaghmore Workhouse and Museum, Aghaboe Abbey, views of Gortnaclea Castle, Clough Village, Grantstown Lake and River Erkina.</i></p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 10</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.1.3.1 Laois Walking and Cycling Strategy</i> Amend Policy TRANS56 as follows: <i>TRANS56 Support the designation of forest cycling areas in Laois such as at cycle club trails at Durrow, Cullenagh, Fossey and Cullahill Mountain.</i></p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 11</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.2 Water Supply and Wastewater Services</i> Insert additional objective OBJ XX as follows: XX It is the objective of the Council to work with Irish Water to facilitate the timely delivery of ongoing and future upgrades of water supply and wastewater services to meet the future needs of the County and the Region.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 12</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.2.1 Public Water Supply</i> Insert additional policy XX as follows: XX Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and Implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 13</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.2.2 Public Wastewater</i> Replace Policy WS1 as follows: WS1 Facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016 and Investment Plan for 2017-2021, and all subsequent Irish Water Investment Plans and ensure that all lands zoned for development are serviced by adequate water services. Facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's Water Services Investment Programme, and all subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes, to ensure that all lands zoned for development are serviced by an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 14</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.2.3 Procedures of the Water Supply and Wastewater Services Department</i> Replace Policy WS5 as follows: WS5 To promote and support the implementation of Irish Water's Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project to ensure that the overall allocation of 15 million litres of potable water per day (15MLD) is provided in relation to IWS East/Midlands Water Supply Project to ensure a resilient water supply for Laois thus ensuring that Portlaoise, the County Town is included in the "Benefiting Corridor"</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 15</p>

<p><i>Sub-section 6.3.3 Climate Change</i> Insert additional text after fourth Para as follows: The National Mitigation Plan is currently being prepared by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) and relevant aspects of this plan will be incorporated into Laois County Development Plan by way of variation, as relevant and appropriate, on completion of the plan.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 16</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.6 Waste Recovery and Disposal</i> Insert additional Policy ES3 as follows: ES3 Investigate the feasibility of using the former County landfill site at Kyletalesha for alternative activities such as energy production, nature conservation and other suitable activities.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 17</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.6 Waste Recovery and Disposal</i> Insert additional Objective OBJ 7 as follows: OBJ7 To facilitate a sustainable and diverse mix of developments which limit the net adverse impacts associated with global warming such as promoting renewable energy, the growth of local farm produce and the promotion of sustainable modes of public transport.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 18</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.6.1 Renewable Energy</i> Insert additional text after first Para as follows: Wind, solar, hydro and geothermal energy do not produce GHG emissions or emissions of air pollutants such as particulates, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. Use of these renewable resources can have considerable co-benefits for human health and ecosystems. Meeting energy requirements from renewable resources can provide significant economic and employment benefits at local to national scales.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 19</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.6.1.1 Solar Power</i> Insert additional Policy XX as follows: XX Ensure that new hydro energy schemes take into account the impact on public rights of way and walking routes.</p>
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 21</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.6.1.3 Solar Power</i> Insert additional criteria at third Para 'Ground-Mounted Arrays' as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and visual impact; • local ecology; • archaeological considerations; • avoidance of material glint and glare on neighbouring residential properties and • transportation and aviation safety considerations.
<p>Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 22</p> <p><i>Sub-section 6.6.1.4 Wind Energy</i></p>

Insert additional text above Map 1.6.5 as follows:

The Council's approach to wind energy has been prepared to inform developers, landowners and the public of the most appropriate sites for the location of wind energy proposals. This approach accords with the guidelines on Wind Energy Development to identify preferred areas and areas where the wind farms should not be considered. This followed an analysis of areas suitable for wind energy development within the County. This assessment utilised a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) approach examining a range of factors relating to wind energy development including: wind energy potential (through the Wind Speed Atlas, www.seai.ie), proposed and existing grid connections, natural heritage designations, landscape sensitivity. The strategy identifies the following:

Preferred Area - These areas are considered suitable for windfarm development because of sufficient wind speeds, access to grid network, and established patterns of enquiries.

Area Open for Consideration – These are the only areas, outside the preferred areas, open to consideration for appropriate wind energy proposals. They have been identified having regard to a range of factors, including wind energy potential (through the wind speed atlas www.seai.ie), existing grid connections, proposed grid connections, natural heritage designations and landscape sensitivity, the road infrastructure is adequate and where likely conflict with natural heritage designations can be protected.

Area not for consideration – Areas where wind energy proposals will not be favoured have been identified due to the significant environmental, heritage and landscape constraints. These include; SAC and SPA (Natura 2000) Sites, NHAs, unspoiled areas of EHSAs, Areas of Fresh Water Pearl Mussel, important views and prospects. It is considered that these areas have little or no capacity for wind energy development.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 23

Sub-section 6.6.1.4 Wind Energy

Insert additional paragraph as follows over Map 1.6.5:

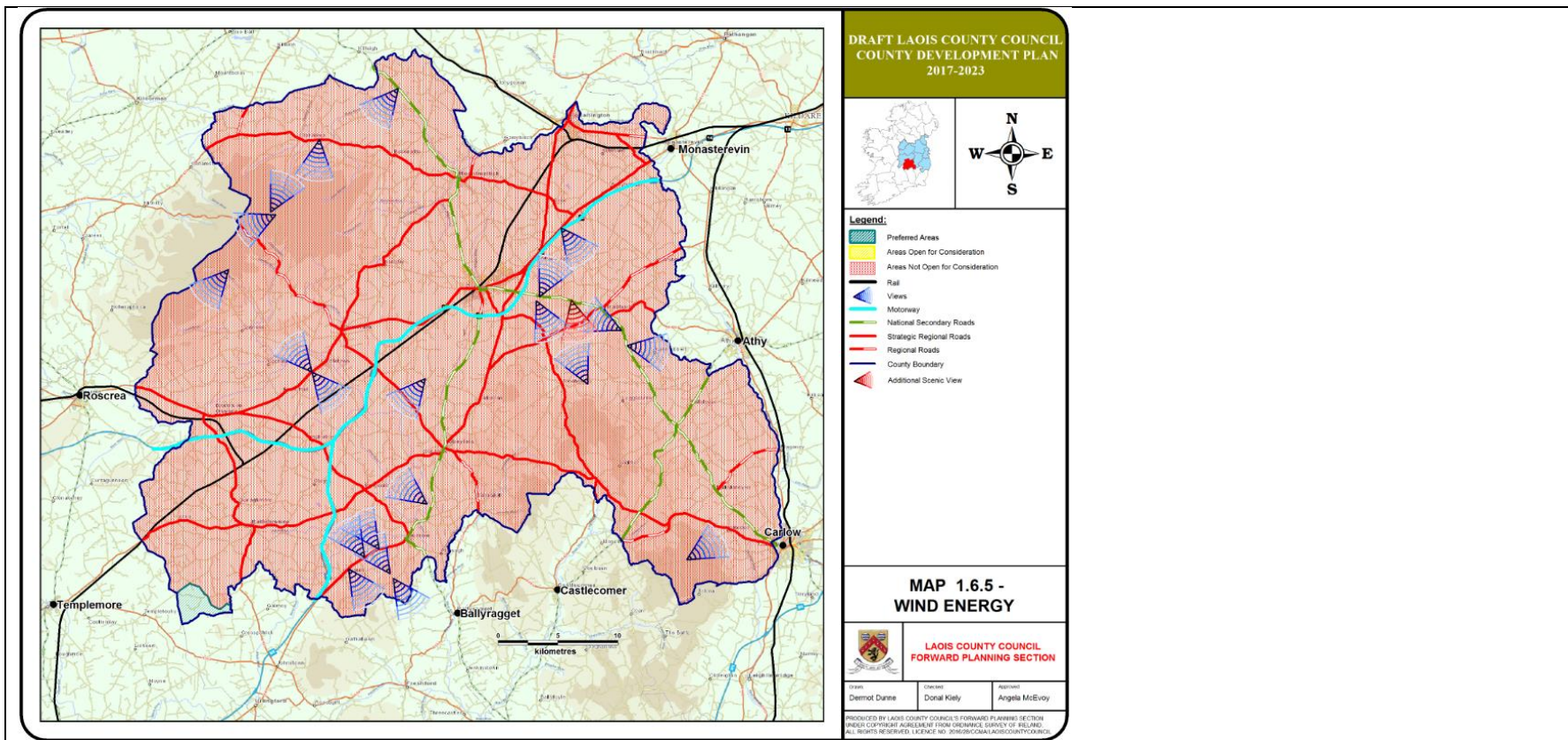
Site suitability is an important factor having regard to possible adverse impacts on public rights of way.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 24

Sub-section 6.6.1.4 Wind Energy

Insert updated Wind Energy Map 1.6.5 at Figure 21 as follows:



Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 25

Sub-section 6.6.1 Renewable Energy

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX It is policy of the Council to promote PV Solar for domestic or local use on rooftops of domestic dwellings, industrial, agriculture and public buildings.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 26

Sub-section 6.6.1 Renewable Energy

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Planning applications shall comply with **DECLG Guidelines (2006)** or any future guidelines and the best international practices and standards.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 27

Sub-section 6.6.1 Renewable Energy

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Identify existing public rights of way and preserve them as public rights of way. Take into account, when assessing planning applications, the impact on public access to the countryside including **public rights of way**, recreational amenities and the openness and visual amenity of the countryside.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 28

Sub-section 6.6.3 Electricity

Insert additional text following first Para as follows:

Grid25

GRID25, the grid development strategy, was published in 2008 and is now due for review. EirGrid therefore published a draft strategy entitled *Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow: Ireland's Draft Grid Development Strategy* for consultation in March 2015.

The aim of *Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow* was to start a dialogue about the need for grid development, and to seek opinions and suggestions from anyone impacted by the plans. The draft strategy consultation ran from the 27 March to the 5 June 2015. Feedback on the draft strategy is currently being reviewed with the aim of informing the preparation of a Grid Development Strategy to be published in 2016. The draft strategy can be viewed at the following link: [EirGrid-Draft-Grid-Development-Strategy](#).

The draft strategy considers the facilitation of renewable energy in the East Region. This is addressed in p.52 of Appendix 1, which states that *"To meet Dublin demand growth it is necessary to install additional transformer capacity and increase circuit capacity to the north and south of the city, and into the city itself. These projects will strengthen the network for all electricity users, and in doing so will improve the security and quality of supply"*.

Grid25 Implementation Programme

With regard to the Grid25 Implementation Programme, it should be noted that EirGrid is currently preparing a new Grid Implementation Plan and associated SEA. The revised Grid Implementation Plan will replace EirGrid's original "Grid 25 Implementation Programme 2011-2016", and is a regional spatial 6 year Development Plan for grid development.

White Paper on Energy Policy Framework 2015 2030

Building on the 2007 White Paper *'Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland'*, the 2015 White Paper sets out Ireland's energy future and confirms the core objectives of sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness. Chapter 7.3 of the White Paper recognises the need for the development and renewal of energy networks to meet economic and social goals. It endorses the strategic programmes of the energy infrastructure providers, subject to their adherence to national and international standards for design and construction, and to community consultation.

The Transmission Network and Landscape

The issue of compatibility of land-uses and landscape areas with high voltage powerlines is a subject which EirGrid is very cognisant of. For this reason in 2012, EirGrid appointed Consultants to undertake an evidence-based study on the actual visual and landscape effects of the presence of transmission infrastructure over a range of Ireland's typical landscapes. The Study included towers and substations located in different Landscape Character Types (LCTs) around Ireland and included locations in County Laois. The findings of the studies have been concluded and can be viewed on its environmental webpage: <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/about/in-the-community/environment>

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 29

Sub-section 6.6.3 Electricity

Second Para amended in order to form additional policy XX as follows:

The Council will support the reinforcement of the electricity transmission grid to improve energy supply to the county. Where strategic route corridors have been identified, the Council will support the statutory providers of national grid infrastructure by safeguarding such corridors from encroachment provided these corridors do not have adverse impacts on residential

amenity or the environment. Applicants shall ensure that planning applications involving the siting of power lines and other overhead cables fully consider impacts on the landscape, national monuments, archaeology and views special amenity value. Where impacts are inevitable, mitigation measures to minimise such impact must be provided. Development shall be consistent with best practice, with regard to siting and design.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 30

Sub-section 6.6.3 Electricity

Amend Policy ELEC 3 follows:

ELEC 3 Facilitate the provision of and improvements to energy networks in principle, provided that it can be demonstrated that:

- I. The development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure;
- II. The route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, environmental and cultural impacts;
- III. The design is such that will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring excessive cost;
- IV. Where impacts are inevitable mitigation features have been included;
- V. Proposals for energy infrastructure should be assessed in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- VI.** *Ensure that the ability of the area to absorb overhead transmission lines is considered with reference to the **National Landscape Strategy 2015**.*
- VII.** *Cognisance will be taken of the **Code of Practice between the DoECLG and Eirgrid(2009)**.*
- VIII.** *Ensure that landscape and visual assessment of planning application shall focus on the potential to impact upon landscape designations and important designated sites.*

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 31

Sub-section 6.6.5.2 Telecommunications Masts and Antennae

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Promote and facilitate the sharing of facilities. Co-location and clustering of new masts and support structures on existing sites will normally be required, unless a fully documented case is submitted explaining the precise circumstances which mitigate against co-location and clustering. Where it is not possible to share a support structure, the applicant should, where possible, share the site or an adjacent site so that the antennae may be clustered. In sensitive landscape areas the presumption will be that applications must meet the co-location requirements. Where it has been proven that there is a need for new/expanded coverage in a particular area, the applicant shall show that all existing masts and support structures have been examined to determine if the attachment of new antennae to existing structures can provide the coverage required, the applicant shall submit either a Discovery Series Map or similar map type (to be agreed with planning authority) to the scale of 1:50,000 the location of all telecommunication structures within a radius of 1km of the proposed site, indicating the coverage area of the proposed facility and a technical evaluation of the capabilities of these masts to take additional antennae and provide the coverage required. Avoid a proliferation of masts and aerials in the upland areas (names mountain area) in order to protect their amenity value and their unspoilt character.

Applicants shall indicate whether or not they are willing to share the proposed masts with other telecommunication operators. Comply with the Code of Practice of Sharing Radio Sites issued by the Commission for Communication Regulation.

Section 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 6 - No. 34

Sub-section 6.6.5.2 Telecommunications Masts and Antennae

Insert additional Policy TELE XX as follows:

XX Access roads will be permitted only where they are absolutely necessary. The applicant shall be required to demonstrate that the greatest care has been taken in terms of minimising visual impact on landscapes, particularly sensitive or historic landscapes, natural environment by ensuring that they do not scar the landscapes and that they follow the natural contours so as to minimise their visual intrusion and should be bordered with scrubs and that they are designed and landscaped to avoid visual and environmental disruption of the landscape. It shall be a condition of permission that the land is reinstated at the end of the construction period. In the event that a developer requires that an access track be retained, the developer shall indicate the justification for doing so as part of the planning application and indicate the frequency of visits which will be required to service the site and facility.

Incorporate the following in the Development Management Standards in section 8 DC 66

Prohibit satellite dishes in areas which would cause unacceptable harm to visual amenities or would materially harm the character and appearance of rural areas. The design and visual appearance of masts, antennae of satellite dishes and their associated equipment shall be as unobtrusive as possible. Cumulative effect of dishes in the area should be considered.

Cables and wire connections shall be located underground.

Where masts are located in areas of high amenity, landscapes of exceptional or high value or international or national importance and high sensitivity as indicated in the Landscape Character Assessment, there shall be a presumption to provide a "Landscape Impact Report" to allow proper assessment of the visual impact. Surrogate (coniferous trees) shall be considered.

Strive to reduce the number of telecommunication structures by ensuring that ComReg's Code of Conduct is implemented.

Masts will only be permitted if supported by an acceptable Visual and Environmental Impact Assessment Report. In sensitive landscape and amenity areas the presumption shall be that applications must meet the co-location requirements or be supported by a Visual Impact Assessment Report that will demonstrate that the development can be satisfactorily absorbed into the landscape. VIA required within a focal point/view or in sensitive landscapes.

Applicants must demonstrate the significance of the proposed development as part of the telecommunications network.

Discourage the development of individual telecommunications support structures and antennae for private use.

Section 7: Heritage Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 1

Sub-section 7.4 Built Heritage

Amend Objective OBJ 2 as follows:

OBJ 2 Recognise the importance of archaeology and National Monuments as part of our heritage and provide public access, subject to reasonable conservational restrictions, reasonable considerations of public safety and avoidance of adverse effects on extant land uses, to Archaeological Sites and National Monuments in state, Council or private ownership. Traditional access routes will be designated as public rights of way. In other cases, routes will be acquired either by agreement with landowners or way of compulsory powers. Appropriate signage will be put in place";

Section 7: Heritage Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 6

Sub-section 7.5.4 Buildings at Risk

Insert additional Policy XX after Policy BH7 as follows:

XX Favourably consider proposals for tourism and recreation development, which involve the reinstatement, conservation and / or replacement of existing disused buildings, and to adopt a positive interpretation of plan policies to encourage such development.

Section 7: Heritage Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 10

Sub-section 7.9 Archaeological Heritage

Amend Objective OBJ 8 as follows:

OBJ 8 When considering proposals for extractive Industry, the applicant shall have regard to

- the Archaeological Code of Practice agreed between Irish Concrete Federation and National Monuments Division;
- the Code of Practice for Bord Na Mona
- and other Archaeological Codes of Practice <https://www.archaeology.ie/codes-of-practice>.
- Currently the Code of Practice with TII is at an advanced stage (pers. comm.).

Section 7: Heritage Strategy

Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 12

Sub-section 7.9.2 Rock of Dunamais

Amend Policy ARCH4 as follows:

ARCH4 Promote and develop the importance of the Rock of Dunamais as a cultural and tourism resource;

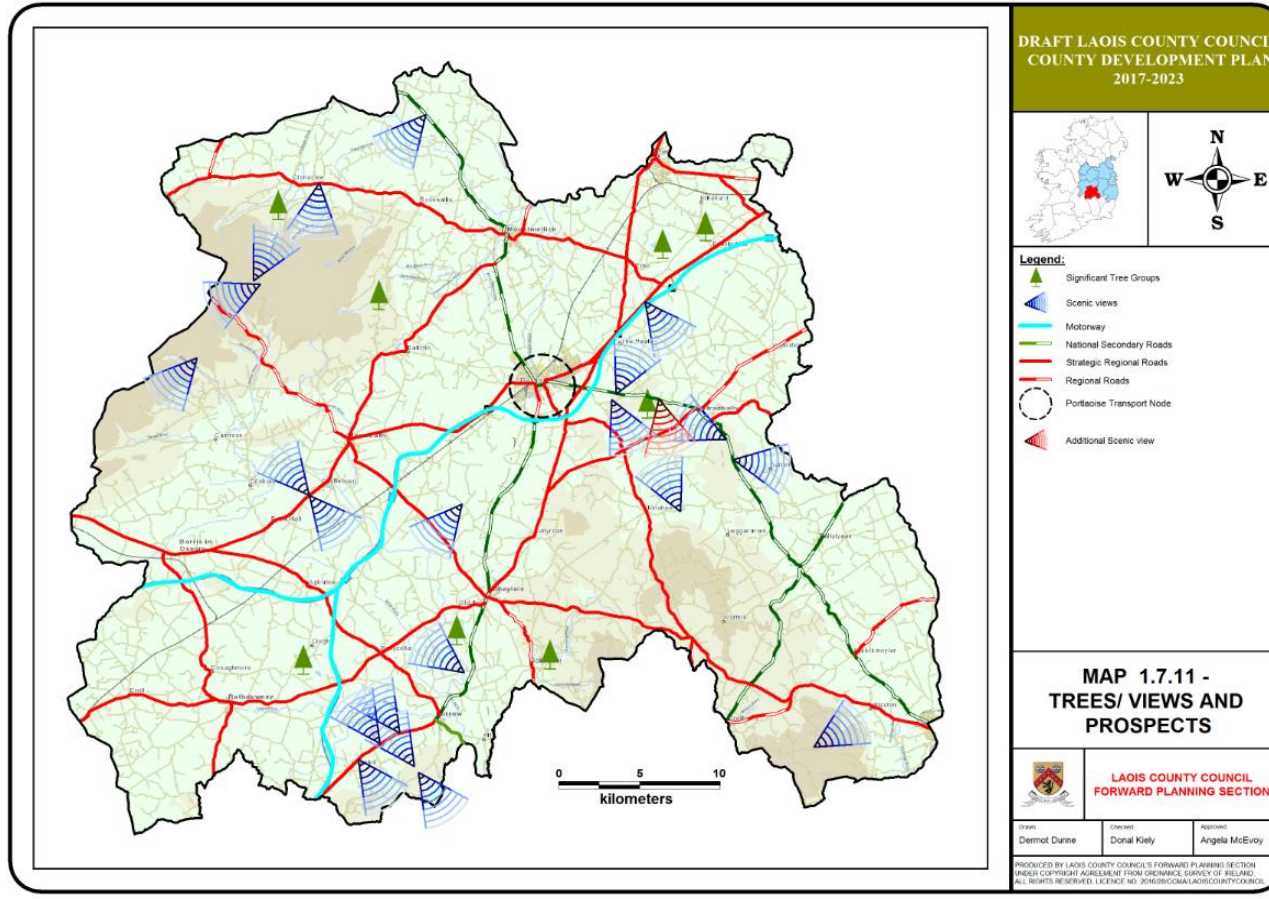
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 13</p> <p>Sub-section 7.10 Natural Heritage Omit Objective OBJ3 as follows:</p> <p>OBJ3 Undertake a feasibility study to report, within one year of the adoption of this Plan, on areas which are considered to be suitable for designation such as the Slieve Blooms and promote any proposals with the National Parks and Wildlife Service;</p>								
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 14</p> <p>Sub-section 7.11 Biodiversity Amend Policy BIO 1 as follows:</p> <p>BIO1 Comply with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Plan 2011-2016 (and any future National Biodiversity Plan which may be adopted during the period of this plan) as appropriate to County Laois. The objectives cover the conservation of biodiversity in the wider countryside both within and outside protected areas, the strengthening of the knowledge base on biodiversity and increasing public awareness and participation in the subject.</p>								
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 15</p> <p>Sub-section 7.12 Green Infrastructure Insert additional Policy XX as follows: Conserve, enhance, manage and protect, facilitate, improve the green infrastructure network, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and develop new Green infrastructure by recognizing the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the protection and management of heritage.</p>								
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 16</p> <p>Sub-section 7.12.2 Special Areas of Conservation Amend text of first Para as follows: Special Areas of Conservation are prime wildlife areas, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. The legal basis on which SACs are selected and designated is the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 The Directive lists certain habitats and species that must be protected within SACs. Irish habitats include raised bogs, blanket bogs, turloughs, sand dunes, machair, heaths, lakes, rivers, woodlands, estuaries and sea inlets. The species which must be afforded protection under the Habitats Directive include inter alia all our bat species, Salmon, Pearl Mussel, Common Frog, Pine Marten, Mountain Hare and Otter. There are eight SACs to date in County Laois.</p>								
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 17</p> <p>Sub-section 7.12.2 Special Areas of Conservation Amend Table 24 in order to list monument / site names alphabetically as follows:</p> <p>Table 24 Special Areas of Conservation in County Laois</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Site Name</th> <th>Site Code</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ballyprior Grassland</td> <td>002256</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clonaslee Eskers and Derry Bog</td> <td>000859</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coolrain Bog</td> <td>002332</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Site Name	Site Code	Ballyprior Grassland	002256	Clonaslee Eskers and Derry Bog	000859	Coolrain Bog	002332
Site Name	Site Code							
Ballyprior Grassland	002256							
Clonaslee Eskers and Derry Bog	000859							
Coolrain Bog	002332							

Knockacoller Bog	002333
Lisbigney Bog	000869
Mountmellick	002141
River Barrow And River Nore	002162
Slieve Bloom Mountains	000412

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 18

Sub-section 7.13 Trees and Woodlands

Replace Figure 29, Map 1.7.11 with updated map as follows:



<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 19</p> <p><i>Sub-section 7.14 Waterways and Wetlands</i> Insert additional text after final Para as follows:</p> <p>BARROW LINE OF THE GRAND CANAL <i>The Grand Canal is a man-made linear waterway and is a key element of green Infrastructure and has a unique setting of historic character. The towpath provides an uninterrupted corridor for pedestrians and cyclists.</i></p>
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 20</p> <p><i>Sub-section 7.14 Waterways and Wetlands</i> Insert additional Policy XX as follows: XX Promote and develop the towpaths along the Barrow Line in co-operation with Waterways Ireland and neighbouring local authorities.</p>
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 21</p> <p><i>Sub-section 7.14 Waterways and Wetlands</i> Insert additional Policy XX as follows: XX Investigate the possibility of developing long distance walking routes, within the lifetime of the Plan, along the disused Mountmellick Line.</p>
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 22</p> <p><i>Sub-section 7.14 Waterways and Wetlands</i> Insert additional Policy XX as follows: XX Facilitate the development of the Grand Canal for cycling, walking and nature study.</p>
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 23</p> <p><i>Sub-section 7.14 Waterways and Wetlands</i> Insert additional Policy XX as follows: XX Support the development of the amenities and recreational potential of the River Barrow, in co-operation with the NPWS, IW, adjoining Councils and other relevant authorities.</p>
<p>Section 7: Heritage Strategy Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 24</p> <p><i>Sub-section 7.19.1 Cross Border Sites</i> Amend Policy CBS 1 as follows: CBS 1 Co-operate with adjoining local authorities and other agencies in relation to cross border sites such as the Slieve Blooms and waterways and ensure a coherent and strategic approach to their sustainable development and conservation.</p>

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 25

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

Insert additional text after first Para as follows –

The Council recognises that Geology is an intrinsic component of natural heritage within the Planning Acts and Regulations and the Heritage Act 1995 to be protected and promoted for its heritage value and for its potential for recreational and geo-tourism initiatives and that it must ensure that geological heritage is adequately addressed in Development Plans.

While the most important geological sites and geomorphological scientific sites will be designated as NHAs the National Heritage Plan (2002) has recommended the recognition and **protection of other important sites** known as County Geological Sites. The Irish Geological Programme (a partnership between the GSI and NPWS) identifies CGs, that although of national, regional and local importance will not receive the statutory protection of NHA sites.

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 26

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

Amend Policy GEO1 as follows:

GEOL1 Work with stakeholders to protect, preserve, enhance, maintain, manage, conserve, recognise and, where appropriate, restore the character conservation value and integrity of these sites for their amenity, scientific, heritage and historic values (including County Geological Sites listed in Table 28, proposed NHA's, areas near site and areas of geomorphological. ~~Protect from inappropriate development the County Geological Sites listed in Table 25.1 as notified by the Geological Survey of Ireland;~~

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 27

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

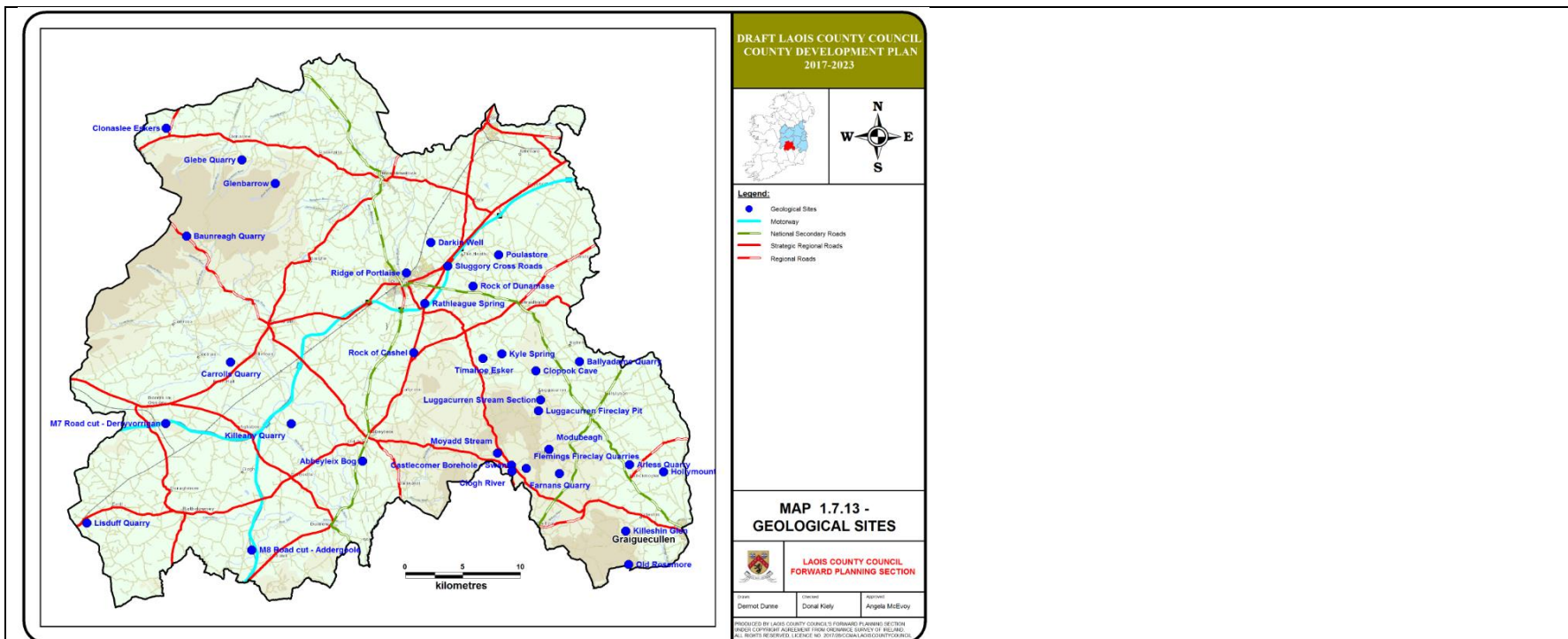
Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Encourage and facilitate the development of geo-tourism by conserving and managing geological resources, and by the development of a Rock Trail (named), **Geoparks** or other similar geo-tourism initiatives.

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 28

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

Insert additional map 1.7.13, Geological Sites, as follows:



Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 29

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

Insert additional section following 7.21 as follows –

ESKERS

The Council recognises the unique **importance of esker landscape** and its archaeological and historic value. All proposals for sand and gravel extraction will be determined by considering the need to conserve the environment and the extent to which proposed developments would be damaging. There is a **presumption against new quarry development** on eskers. 3 The Council recognises that the exploitation of deposits can have seriously damaging **environmental impact** on the esker network.

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 30

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX **Protect**, preserve and conserve the landscape and natural heritage and geo-diversity values of esker systems from inappropriate development. Ensure that any plan or project affecting eskers are adequately assessed with regard to their potential impact on the environment.

Section 7: Heritage Strategy
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 7 - No. 31

Sub-section 7.21 Geology

Insert additional Policy XX as follows:

XX Assess applications for **quarrying activity and gravel extraction** and other development in proximity to eskers, with respect to their landscape importance or amenity value and the need to conserve them free from inappropriate development and to conserve their environmental character values and the extent to which proposals would damage these qualities.

Section 8: General Location and Pattern of Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 8 - No. 1

Sub-section 8.5 Development Management Standards

Amend Development Management Standard DM04 as follows:

Public open space shall be clearly defined and be of high quality design and finish which is easily maintained, easy to access from all parts of the development, easy to use including by people with disabilities, has good lighting and natural surveillance and is enjoyable to use, walk and cycle around all year round. These spaces should include informal play spaces, safe well-lit pathways which will facilitate children learning to cycle, adults able to walk safely and encouraging social interaction between local residents.

A detailed plan for hard and soft landscaping should be submitted for each development. It should propose planting in public and private areas. Landscaping should contribute to the overall attractiveness of the development and be easily maintained.

In large infill sites or brown field sites public open space should generally be provided at a minimum rate of 10% of the total site area;

Section 8: General Location and Pattern of Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 8 - No. 4

Sub-section 8.5 Development Management Standards

Amend Development Management Standard DM53 as follows:

DM53 Hedgerows define rural landscapes and are valuable for terrestrial forms of wildlife. They are particularly important for birds and woodland plants. They provide commuting and feeding corridors for bats. Where they are found in settlements they are significant habitats and corridors for biodiversity.

Good hedgerows can easily be identified by their structure and location in the landscape. Best quality hedgerows will have all the following characteristics:

- i. a few mature trees,
- ii. a three tier structure (with trees, shrubs and herbs)
- iii. few gaps and
- iv. will not have been cut into a box shape. Shrubs (almost always) include hawthorn, blackthorn or and possibly dog rose.
- v. The herb layer is found under the shrub layer. It should form a strip of tall grassland along the margin of the hedgerow.

In dealing with applications for new developments, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- i. Retention of a connected network of good quality hedgerows;
- ii. The value of hedgerows as green infrastructure (landscape, biodiversity, shelter, supporting services to agriculture/horticulture);
- iii. The avoidance of the unnecessary removal of hedgerows;

iv. If it is necessary to remove a hedgerow, developers should be reminded of their obligations under the Wildlife Acts not to remove or interfere with them during the bird nesting season, between March 1st and 31st August. Also, replacement or compensatory planting of hedgerows using indigenous species such as whitethorn or blackthorn only will be required;

v. Proposals to integrate hedgerows into the layout of a new linear feature such as a road/ pedestrian/cycle track;

- vi. Depending on the potential risks of anti-social activity or requirements for a more garden look the margins of these new hedgerows/woodlands/new shrubberies could be planted with colourful non natives (for amenity) or spiny shrubs to deter vandals.
By occasionally mowing the grass margin of hedgerows (or part of it), they will look managed. As litter will accumulate in long grass along their margins arrangements will have to be made to carry out regular clean ups;
- vii. Encouragement should be given to develop a new linear feature of biodiversity value such as a hedgerow or dry stone wall, particularly if this type of habitat is found adjacent to the development site;
- viii. The use of native tree and shrub species similar to those found in adjacent hedgerows in new or replacement hedgerows;
- ix. The wholesale removal of hedgerows to facilitate the achievement of adequate sightline visibility for one-off houses in the countryside will not be encouraged.

Section 8: General Location and Pattern of Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 8 - No. 6

Sub-section 8.5 Development Management Standards

Amend Development Management Standard DM66 as follows:

- DM66 To facilitate the evaluation of development proposals for the erection of antennae and support structures, applicants/developers/operators will be required to:
- 1) Submit a reasoned justification as to the need for the particular development at the proposed location in the context of the operators overall Plans to develop a network in County Laois ;
 - 2) Indicate what other sites or locations in the County were considered;
 - 3) Submit evidence of consultations, if any, with other operators with regard to the sharing of sites and/or support structures;
 - 4) Provide a "Visual Impact Report" to allow proper assessment of the visual impact on the receiving landscape in addition to submitting proposals to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development including the construction of access roads, additional poles and structures;
 - 5) Furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines (Health Physics, Vol. 54, No. 1(Jan) 1988) or the equivalent European Prestandard 50166-2 which has been conditioned by the licensing arrangements with the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications;
 - 6) Furnish evidence that an installation of the type applied for complies with the above Guidelines.
 - 7) Cables and wire connections shall be located underground where feasible.
 - 8) Where appropriate, masts, antennae and fencing should be in harmony with their surroundings and should be of dull or neutral sky grey colour so as to be less visually obtrusive. Green or black is the preferred colour at ground level.
 - 9) Subject to visual and landscape considerations, support structures will normally be required to be designed to facilitate the attachment of additional antennae to facilitate co-location. The number of ancillary buildings/containers shall be kept to the minimum and the need for each structure must be clearly justified. They should be located in accordance with the provisions of the DoECLG Guidelines 1996 (or as may be amended).
 - 10) Restoration plans shall be submitted with the application for when antennae and their support structures are no longer being used and no new user has been identified.

Section 8: General Location and Pattern of Development
Material Alteration Ref. Section No. 8 - No. 7

Sub-section 8.5 Development Management Standards

Insert additional Development Management standard DM68 as follows:

- DM68 Applications for new development for aggregate extraction, processing and associated processes,
- a) Have regard to* the Landscape Character Assessment / Sensitivity Rating and its recommendations
 - b) Include screening proposals
 - c) Submit a detailed landscape and visual assessment must be submitted with proposals and will be used to determine the extent of the area of visual influence. The Planning authority will impose strict conditions on planning permissions requiring appropriate mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the surrounding area.
 - d) require that development is phased and each phase is rehabilitated to the highest possible standards before the next phase is commenced and the applicant must submit a detailed restoration programme on the manner and timing of restoration and after care/re-use
 - e) Carry out processing and storage of extractive aggregates in a manner minimises the impact on the natural environment.

- f) Recognising that the aggregates and concrete products industry have a particularly sensitive role in relation to the environment and any development of aggregate extraction, processing, delivery and associated concrete production must be carried out in a manner which minimises adverse effects on the environment and has due regard for visual amenities.
- g) Provide details and plans of any other buildings, plant and structures to be erected.