

Mountmellick Local Area Plan

Natura Impact Report

20th March 2018

Mountmellick Local Area Plan

Natura Impact Report

Document Stage	Document Version	Date	Prepared by
Draft	1	19/03/2018	Pat Doherty MSc, MCIEEM

This report has been prepared by Minogue & Associates with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information report herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is prepared for Laois County Council and we accept no responsibility to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	7
2.1	GUIDANCE	7
2.2	BACKGROUND TO HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6 ASSESSMENTS	7
2.3	STAGE 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT STEPS	8
2.4	INFLUENCE OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS ON THE DRAFT MOUNTMELICK LAP	9
3.0	OVERVIEW OF THE MOUNTMELICK LAP	10
4.0	SUMMARY OF THE SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	14
5.0	ASSESSMENT OF THE MOUNTMELICK LAP	18
5.1	ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	18
☐	HYDROLOGICAL & WATER QUALITY IMPACTS	18
☐	HABITAT LOSS & DISTURBANCE TO SPECIES	19
5.2	IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS	23
5.3	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	27
5.4	DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE INTEGRITY OF THE SITE IS LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED	35
6.0	MITIGATION	36
7.0	CONCLUSIONS	43
APPENDIX 1: LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS OF OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF THE MOUNTMELICK LAP		
		45

1.0 INTRODUCTION

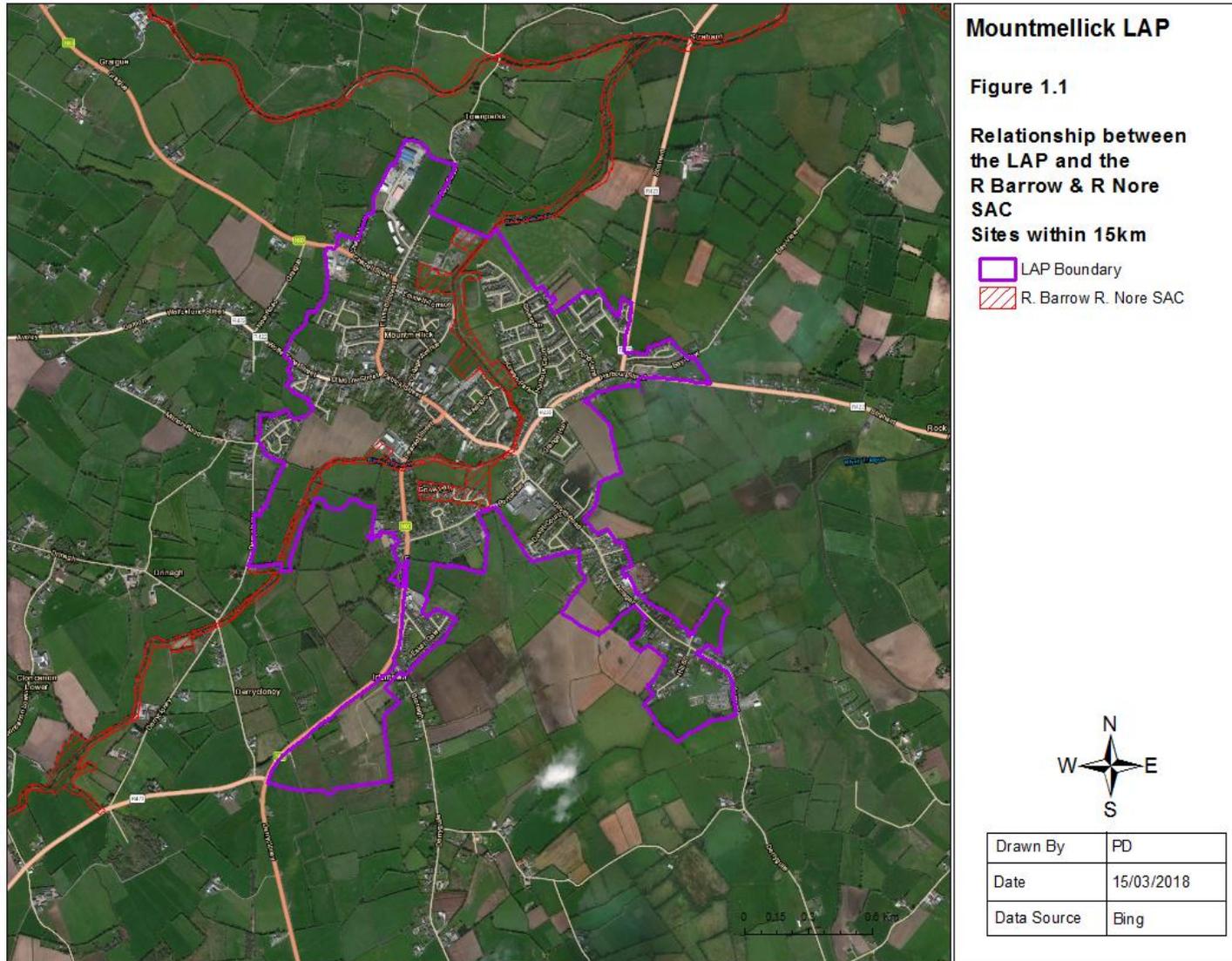
Minogue & Associates has been commissioned by Laois County Council to prepare a Natura Impact Report (NIR) in respect of the draft Mountmellick LAP.

The Mountmellick LAP is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of any European Site and hence the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, apply. Section 177U(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a screening for appropriate assessment of, inter alia, a land use plan be carried out by a competent authority to assess, in light of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed Plan, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment assessed the potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to the following European Sites:

- River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162).
- Mountmellick SAC (002141).
- Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC (000412).and
- Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA (004160)

The Screening concluded that the Mountmellick LAP has the potential to result in likely significant effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. All other European Sites considered during the Screening stage have been Screened Out. These European Sites were Screened Out due to the absence of any source-pathway-receptor relationships with the plan area.

Accordingly, this NIR has been prepared to inform the Appropriate Assessment of the plan's potential to result in likely significant effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and its qualifying features of interest occurring within the zone of influence of the plan. The location of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC with respect to the plan area is shown in Figure 1 below.



The remainder of this NIR is structured as follows:

Section 2: Assessment Method

Section 3: Overview of the Mountmellick LAP

Section 4: Summary of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Section 5: Assessment of the Mountmellick LAP

Section 6: Mitigation

Section 7: Conclusions

2.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 GUIDANCE

This NIR has been undertaken in accordance with National and European guidance documents: *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC*. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during this the preparation of this NIR:

- A guide for competent authorities. Environment and Heritage Service, Sept 2002. *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2010). DEHLG.
- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EED*. European Commission (2001).
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC*. European commission (2000). (To be referred to as MN 2000).
- *Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle*. European Commission (2000).

2.2 BACKGROUND TO HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6 ASSESSMENTS

The EC (2001) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking an assessment of a project under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. The assessment process comprises the four stages outlined below. Stage 1 to 3 form part of the Article 6(3) process, while Stage 4 forms part of the Article 6(4) process. This NIS presents the findings of an assessment for Stage 2 of this assessment process.

- Stage 1 – Screening: This stage defines the proposed plan, establishes whether the proposed plan is necessary for the conservation management of the Natura 2000 site and assesses the likelihood of the plan to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, upon a Natura 2000 site.
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment: If a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken. In this stage the impact of the plan or project to the Conservation Objectives of the Natura 2000 site is assessed. The outcome of this assessment will establish whether the plan will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.
- Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions: If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of mitigation measures, a plan has an adverse impact upon the integrity of a Natura 2000 site it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan can proceed.
- Stage 4 – Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura site 2000 will be necessary.

2.3 STAGE 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT STEPS

The EC Guidance Assessment Criteria for a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment seeks the following information:

1. A description of the elements of the project that are likely to give rise to significant effects to European Sites.
2. The Setting out the Conservation Objectives of the Site.
3. A description of how the project will affect key species and key habitats.
4. A description of how the integrity of the site (determined by structure and function and conservation objectives) is likely to be affected by the project (e.g. loss of habitat, disturbance, disruption, chemical changes, hydrological changes etc.).
5. A description of the mitigation measures that are to be introduced to avoid, reduce or remedy the adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites.

2.4 INFLUENCE OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS ON THE DRAFT MOUNTMELICK LAP

The purpose of the Appropriate Assessment of the Mountmellick LAP is not only to assess the implications of this Plan on European Sites and their qualifying features of interest occurring within its zone of influence, but also to provide safeguards that aim to minimise the ecological implications of the Plan and avoid likely significant effects to European Sites. This latter element of the Appropriate Assessment process is manifest in the following scenarios:

- Where specific policies and objectives have been identified as have the potential to result in negative land use effects that could in turn result in impacts to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, the text of the policies and objectives have been revised to minimise such effects.
- Where policies and objectives were of a more general nature that prevented the identification of specific impacts to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, text was provided to ensure that all potential impacts arising out of these policies/objectives are assessed as part of an Appropriate Assessment at the project levels.
- All policies and objectives that aim to protect the natural environment were reviewed and where necessary the text of these policies were revised to reinforce their role in safeguarding European Sites.
- All zoning maps were reviewed and assessed for likely significant effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and where necessary additional mitigation measures were provided.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE MOUNTMELICK LAP

The Mountmellick Draft Local Area Plan 2018 – 2024 (LAP) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Draft LAP sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Mountmellick, in the context of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 and the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022. The Draft LAP has also been informed by Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Act, together with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA).

The Draft Local Area Plan comprises a written statement and accompanying maps. The written statement first outlines the strategic vision for Mountmellick and lists the key objectives and policies of the Plan. It then goes on to outline policies and objectives for the following aspects of future development within the plan area:

- Economic development
- Town Centre Revitalisation
- Key infrastructure
- Transport and Movement
- Housing
- Community Services & Culture
- Built heritage
- Natural Heritage
- Flood Management

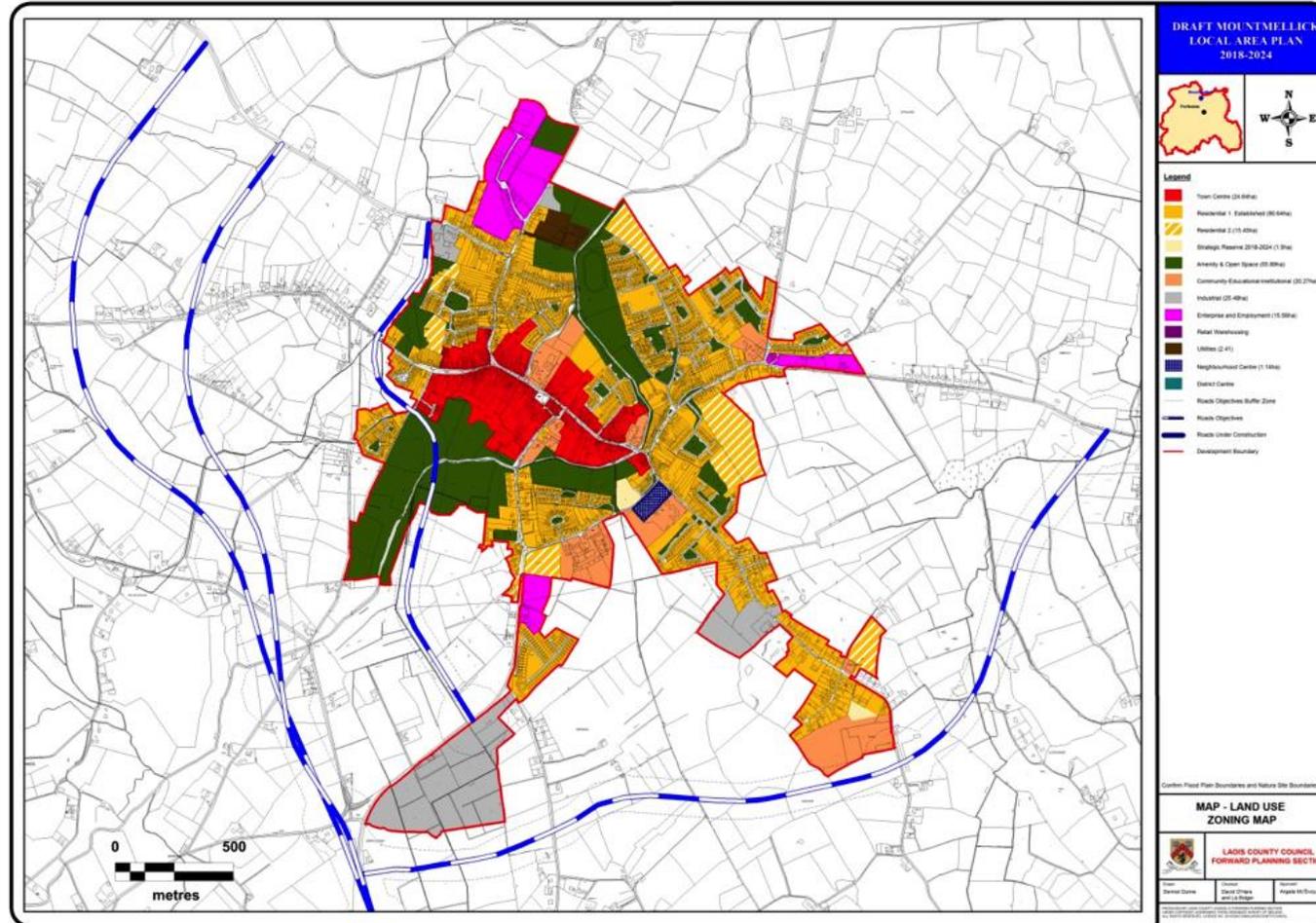
The Mountmellick LAP also provides zoning maps for the future development of different types of land use within the plan area. The types of land use zonings and their extent are

provided in Table 3.1 below. a map showing the locations of the land use zonings is provided as Figure 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Land Use Zonings & their Extent in the Plan Area

Landuse Zoning	Amount
Town Centre	24.64
Residential R1 –Established	90.64
Residential 2	15.45
Strategic Reserve 2018-2024	1.5
Amenity and Open Space	55.89
Community-Educational-Institutional	20.27
Industrial	25.48

Landuse Zoning	Amount
Enterprise & Employment	15.56
Utilities	2.41
Neighbourhood Centre	1.14

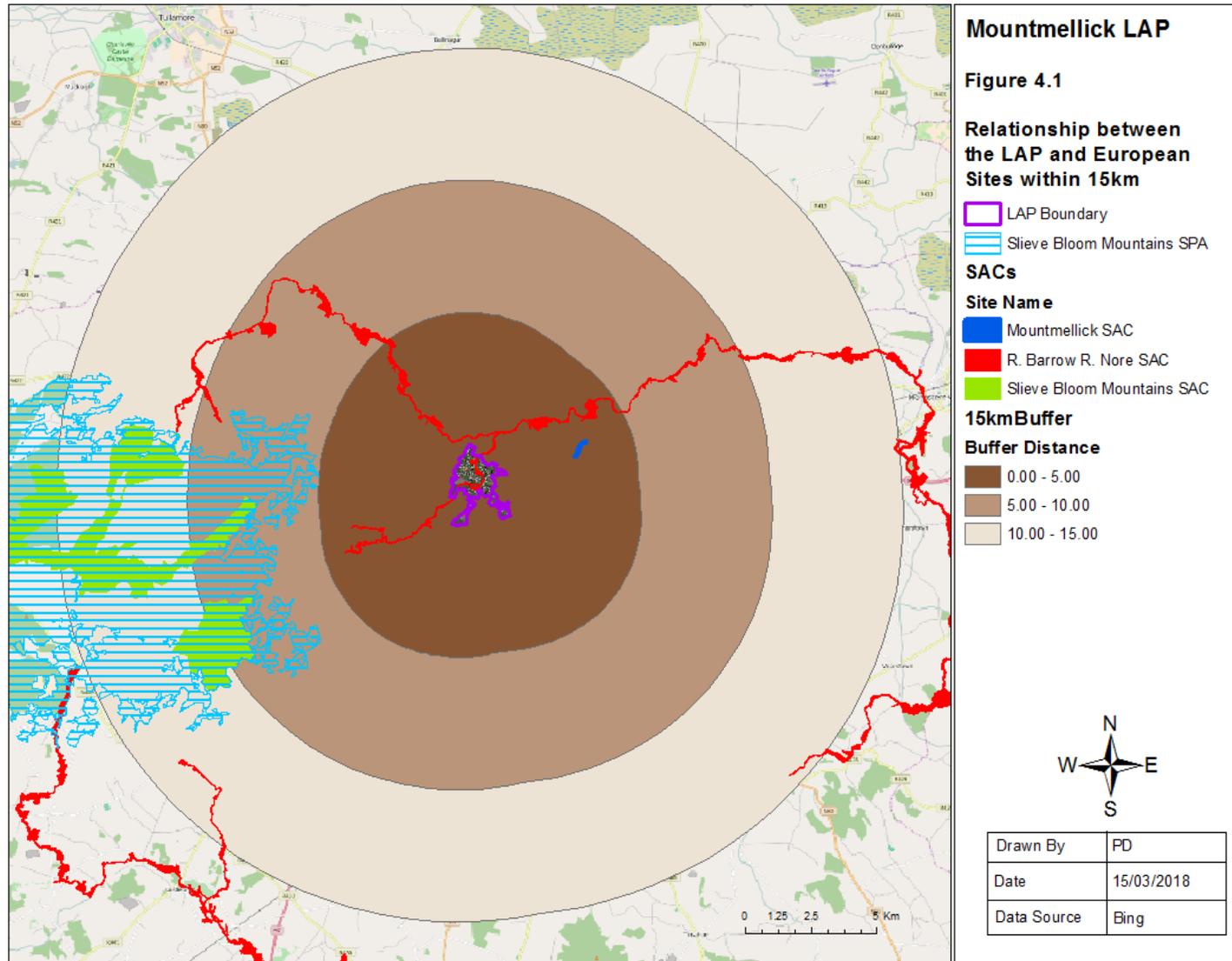


4.0 SUMMARY OF THE SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

A Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment has been completed for the Mountmellick LAP. This Screening was completed in line with the requirements of: Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish law in Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to land use planning.

The Screening represents the first stage of the Article 6(3) Habitats Directive assessment process and was undertaken to identify whether the plan has the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. All European Sites occurring within a 15km buffer distance of the plan area were screened for likely significant effects (the location of these sites with respect to the plan area are shown on Figure 4.1). No European Sites at a distance greater than 15km were considered during the screening as no source-pathway-receptor relationship occurs with European Sites at such distance from the plan area. The European Sites occurring within 15km of the plan area represented a preliminary list of European Sites to be screened for likely significant effects. The next step in the screening was to identify which European Sites occur within the zone of influence of the plan. The River Barrow and River Nore SAC was identified as occurring within the plan area and because of this it was automatically considered to occur within the zone of influence of the plan. For all other European Sites the zone of influence of the plan was determined by identifying the potential for pathways and connections between the plan area and these European Sites. A source-pathway-receptor approach was used during the screening for these sites, with the plan area representing the source and European Sites representing the receptors. The pathways identified during the screening were restricted to hydrological pathways and potential for interactions between the plan and mobile qualifying species of European Sites. Given that the distance between the plan area and the nearest European Site beyond the plan area is over 2.5km other pathways such as noise, air and visual pathways were not included as they were not considered to have the potential to function as impact pathways.

During the preliminary screening three European Sites, including the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, were identified as occurring within a 15km radius of the plan area. As mentioned above the River Barrow and River Nore SAC was automatically identified as occurring within



the zone of influence of the plan. No source-pathway-receptor relationships were identified for the three other European Sites (i.e. the Slieve Blooms Mountains SPA and SAC and Mountmellick SAC).

The next step of the screening identified the qualifying features of interest of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC that occur within the zone of influence of the plan. A source-pathway-receptor mobile was again used with the plan representing the source and the qualifying features of interest of the SAC representing the receptors. The pathways were again restricted to hydrological and mobile species pathways. The River Barrow and River Nore SAC includes a range of features representative of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. No source-pathway-receptor were identified between the plan and the terrestrial habitats and species of the SAC and due to the significant distance between the plan area and the coastal and marine interest features, amounting to over 100km, no functional impact pathway was identified between the plan and these features. However the freshwater qualifying habitats and species of the SAC and their relationship within the plan area required further consideration. The qualifying feature of interest that were identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the plan are the Annex 1 habitats "Floating River Vegetation" and Tall Hydrophilous Herb Fringe and the annex 2 species: otters. Atlantic Salmon. white-clawed crayfish. brook lamprey. river lamprey. and sea lamprey. It is noted that two other freshwater dependent qualifying features of interest were screened out during the screening process. These are the freshwater pearl mussel and alluvial woodland. Both qualifying features were screened out due to the absence of a functional hydrological pathway connecting the plan area to the areas of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC that support these features.

Existing threats and pressures to the freshwater qualifying features of interest occurring within the plan's zone of influence were identified during the screening and it could not be ruled out that elements of the plan would not have the potential to exacerbate the impacts of these existing threats and pressures. Therefore the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and its freshwater qualifying features of interest occurring within the zone of influence of the plan were brought forward for stage two Appropriate Assessment.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE MOUNTMELICK LAP

As outlined in section 2.3 above the recommended steps for an Appropriate Assessment are as follows:

1. A description of the elements of the project that are likely to give rise to significant effects to European Sites.
2. The Setting out the Conservation Objectives of the Site.
3. A description of how the project will affect key species and key habitats.
4. A description of how the integrity of the site (determined by structure and function and conservation objectives) is likely to be affected by the project (e.g. loss of habitat, disturbance, disruption, chemical changes, hydrological changes etc.).
5. A description of the mitigation measures that are to be introduced to avoid, reduce or remedy the adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites.

5.1 ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

All objectives and policies of the Plan were reviewed and assessed in terms of their potential to result in negative effects on the conservation status of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. The objectives and policies of the Plan that have been identified as having the potential to result in negative effects are identified in Appendix 1. Following on from the potential impacts identified in Appendix 1 the principal impacts and the related elements of the Plan with potential to cause these impacts are outlined below:

- **Hydrological & Water Quality Impacts**

Qualifying habitats and species sensitive to changes in water quality are supported by the Owenass River and the River Barrow along and downstream of the Plan area. Developments in areas adjacent to the Owenass River or in areas connected via hydrological pathways to this watercourse and the River Barrow could adversely affect water quality through:

- Surface water runoff from construction sites during the construction phase of developments and impermeable surfaces during the operation phase of developments. Runoff during the construction phase of developments can become contaminated with potentially polluting material associated with construction machinery and activities. Sedimentation of River Barrow resulting from sediment-laden runoff from areas of bare soils can also occur.
- The implementation of inadequate wastewater treatment facilities for new developments could give rise to surface water and groundwater pollution resulting in downstream impacts to qualifying habitats and species. Elevations in nutrient levels and eutrophication are likely to be the principal impacts arising from the discharge of any untreated/inadequately treated wastewater from new developments.

The types of developments relating to the objectives and policies of the plan that could result in water quality affects to the Owenass River and the River Barrow include tourism and recreational developments, developments associated with land zonings and particularly those for the identified opportunity sites within the plan area, land use works associated with flood management and alleviation measures, infrastructure developments for transport, energy, communications etc.

- **Habitat Loss & Disturbance to Species**

Elements of the Plan supporting development will have the potential to undermine the status of freshwater habitats supported by the Owenass River and the River Barrow along or downstream of the plan area. The status to these freshwater habitats will be undermined by potential water quality and hydrological effects arising from the potential negative objectives and policies of the Plan, as identified in Appendix 1. The potential for direct impact to these habitats, should they occur within the plan area could also arise during the construction phase and operation phase of developments associated with tourism and recreation, opportunity sites and flood management and alleviation measures. Such effects will in turn have the potential to result in the loss of suitable habitat for otters, Atlantic Salmon, crayfish and lamprey species along the Owenass River and the River Barrow within and downstream of plan area.

The objectives and policies of the Mountmellick LAP that have been identified as having the potential to result in such potential adverse effects, as identified in Appendix 1, are summarised in Table 5.1 below. Note that text coloured in bold has been proposed to mitigate the potential adverse effects of the relevant objectives/policies.

Table 5.1: Summary List of Objectives and Policies with potential to result in adverse effects to the River Barrow an

Strategic Aim No. 3. To support and facilitate development on zoned land based on the policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023
Strategic Aim No. 4. To focus new residential development primarily into infill and backland sites.
Strategic Aim No. 6. To develop and improve flood alleviation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland.
ED O3: Promote employment opportunities by facilitating development on appropriately zoned lands.
ED O4: Facilitate the provision and expansion of all services and infrastructure which would contribute positively to the attraction of the town to economic development.
ED O6: Facilitate the improvement and expansion of established enterprises and industries
ED O11: Develop lands for industry at Derrguile and Debbicot to support existing industry at Bay Road and Acragar
ED O18: Facilitate the development and expansion of new and existing food-agri businesses

ED P3: Facilitate the continuity of and encourage the expansion of established enterprises and to promote start-up enterprises, having regard to the protection of the amenity value of neighbouring properties.

ED P5: Encourage, in co-operation with the Local Enterprise Office and Laois Partnership, the development of further small to medium scale industries and services.

TCR 02: Encourage the opening up of the backlands to the north and south of Parnell Street and Sarsfield Street facing on to the Owenass River

TCR 03: Facilitate the redevelopment of strategic sites within the town centre for a mixture of uses that will contribute to vitality of the central core area.

TCR 08: Create attractive and secure pedestrian and cycling links including green infrastructure through the town.

TCR P2: Promote the consolidation of the town centre through the use of brownfield, infill and backland sites without compromising streetscapes.

Opportunity Site 1 Maltings, Irishtown, Portlaoise Road.Zoning: Residential 2

KI 01: Facilitate economic and social development through the provision of infrastructure and optimise the return of infrastructure investment.

TM 01: Promote and encourage the development of Mountmellick to enhance its strategic location on the National and Regional road network.

TM 09:Improve pedestrian links, based on desire lines, from Main to surrounding areas.

TM P1: Improve and provide pedestrian linkages, cycle networks and permeability including blueways and greenways throughout the town.

TM P2: Examine the feasibility of introducing clear, direct pedestrian routes between the Main Street and surrounding areas.

H O1: Ensure that sufficient zoned land is available at appropriate locations to cater for the envisaged population growth of the Core Strategy.

H O5: To utilise the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (Vacant Site Levy) to facilitate the appropriate development of vacant sites (residential zoned) that are in need of renewal or regeneration.

H O8: To encourage appropriate housing development on infill and brownfield sites subject to preservation of existing residential amenity, the provision of a high quality design respecting the established character, density and layout, compliance with all traffic safety, quantitative and qualitative standards of the Laois County Development.

H P1: Ensure that sufficient zoned land is available at appropriate locations to cater for the envisaged population growth of the Core Strategy.

CSC O1: Facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and to provide access to new and existing community and social facilities.

CSC O2: Facilitate the improvement and provision of community facilities, library and emergency services in appropriate locations

CSC O3: Facilitate the improvement and provision of educational, childcare and healthcare facilities in appropriate and accessible locations.

CSC P1: Ensure provision of sufficient zoned lands to allow for expansion of existing and provision of community facilities.

CSC P2: Facilitate the development of and expansion of services, amenities and facilities to cater for all society members, ages and community groups

CSC P3. Facilitate the development of primary, second-level, third-level outreach, vocational and lifelong learning facilities and digital capacity for distance learning including fourth level education, lifelong learning and up-skilling
CSC P4: Ensure the provision and implementation of primary and secondary education facilities in concert with the planning and sustainable development of residential areas in order to maximise the opportunities for use of walking, cycling and public transport
NH O6: Open up visual and physical access via the River Owenass as a as a continuous pedestrian and cycle link through the town centre, having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats.
NH P2: Develop a greenway/blueway walking and cycling route along the River Owenass having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats..
FM O3: To carry out a programme of infrastructure and flood defence works in conjunction with the OPW to alleviate flooding in the town and hinterland
FM O1: In conjunction with the OPW implement a program of flood defence works for the town
Land Use Zoning: should land use zonings be hydrologically linked to the Owenass River, future development in these zonings will have the potential to adversely affect the status of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.

5.2 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

An assessment for the plan to combine with other plans or project to result in cumulative effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC is provided in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Evaluation of Cumulative Effects with other Plans

Plan	Comment	Cumulative effects
Water Services Strategic Plan	Ireland's first integrated national plan for the delivery of water services, the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) addresses six key themes and was adopted in 2015. It was subject to full SEA and AA and concluded that Overall, the assessment has identified that the implementation of the draft WSSP is likely to have positive effects on the majority of the SEOs that have been used in the assessment to help characterise the environmental effects of the WSSP and no significant negative effects were identified.	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans
Neighbouring County Development Plans	<p>These plans were subject to full SEA and AA and concluded that subject to full adherence and implementation of measures likely significant effects were not identified.</p> <p>The Offaly CDP 2014-2020 is of particular relevance and this LAP has been prepared in conjunction with Offaly County Council.</p>	Regarding Offaly CDP 2014-2020, this plan has been prepared in conjunction and is a Joint LAP. Potential effects have been assessed through the SEA process of this Mountmellick Joint LAP.
River Basin District Management Plans.	The second cycle of these plans (2015 to 2021) are currently in preparation and will provide management measures to achieve WFD Objectives upto 2021. This plan is undergoing both SEA and AA and is in draft form.	No in-combination impacts are predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans
CFRAMS Study	The Eastern CFRAM study has been commissioned in order to meet the requirements of the Floods Directive,	Flood Risk Management is being addressed in the LAP

Plan	Comment	Cumulative effects
	as well as to deliver on core components of the 2004 National Flood Policy, in the Eastern district.	and in conjunction with the OPW. No adverse effects identified.
Laois Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021	The plan supports a range of high level goals, actions and objectives. It was subject to SEA and AA Screening, and was developed with support from the Forward Planning Section.	The plan is consistent with the CDP and no adverse in combination or cumulative effects are identified.
Laois Heritage Plan 2014-2019	<p>Key objectives as follows:</p> <p>Objective 1: Increase understanding of the heritage of Laois</p> <p>Objective 2: Record the heritage of Laois</p> <p>Objective 3: Protect and promote active conservation of the heritage of Laois</p> <p>Objective 4: Promote community participation in heritage plans and projects and</p> <p>Objective 5: Promote enjoyment and accessibility of heritage sites</p>	Potential for positive interactions between the Mountmellick Local Area Plan and this Plan. no adverse cumulative effects identified.
Irelands Ancient East and Laois Tourism	A range of proposed actions and projects and targets in terms of aligning with the Ancient East and increasing tourism numbers form part of this strategy. Key project identified for Mountmellick relates to the Laois Town	The Town Experience product is not identified as giving rise to adverse in combination /cumulative

Plan	Comment	Cumulative effects
Strategy 2018-2023	<p>Experience Product -</p> <p>The identification of a strong theme built on a rich bank of heritage and stories associated with the towns. The subsequent phases will focus on engaging the local tourism industry and communities to build on the opportunity it can present. For Mountmellick this would relate to the links and associations of the French Huguenots.</p> <p>A secondary objective relate to promoting the Barrow Blueway potential.</p>	<p>effects.</p> <p>Proposals on the Barrow may give rise to adverse in combination effects. However, the provisions of the Laois CDP 2017-2023 are considered appropriate to address any potential in combination effects at this juncture. Policies TRANS 06 and NHO8 apply in particular.</p>
Barrows Blueway Project	<p>This project is a proposed Blueway along the Barrow Line traversing Counties Laois, Kildare and Carlow. Carlow CC have refused the planning application whilst Laois and Kildare County Councils have approved subject to conditions.(Laois CC Planning Reference: 1737) The route does not extend to Mountmellick as part of these applications. Approximately 16km is within County Laois.</p> <p>Submissions from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht notes the following potential adverse effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in water quality • Loss of habitats • Disturbance to habitats and species. 	<p>No potential for cumulative effects are considered likely as this project is associated with a stretch of the River Barrow a significant distance downstream from the LAP boundary.</p>

5.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

An overview of the generic and main conservation objectives for the River Barrow and River Nore SAC was provided in the Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment for the Mountmellick LAP.

A more detailed discussion of the specific conservation objectives is outlined for the qualifying features of interest associated with European Sites brought forward for Appropriate Assessment. This is based on the published Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO's) for the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (NPWS, 2011).

The overall aim of a European Site designation is the maintenance and/or restoration of the favourable conservation status for the qualifying features of interest for which it is designated. The detailed SSCO's for each of the site's interest features outline attributes and associated attribute targets for each qualifying features of interest that together represent the requirements for favourable conservation status for each of these features.

As an Appropriate Assessment of the Mountmellick LAP must be undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives of the qualifying features of interest of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC occurring within its zone of influence, the SSCO's for these features represent the parameters against which an assessment of the plan's potential to result in likely significant effects should be undertaken. Table 5.1 lists the Conservation Objectives attributes and targets for each of these features and provides an assessment of the plan's potential to undermine each of these targets.

Table 5.3: Assessment Of The Plan's Potential To Result In Likely Significant Effects To The Conservation Objectives Of Qualifying Features Of Interest Occurring Within The Zone Of Influence Of The Plan

Attribute.	Attribute	Target	Assessment
------------	-----------	--------	------------

No.			
Lamprey Species			
1	Distribution (extent of anadromy for sea lamprey)	Access to all watercourses down to first order streams for brook and river lamprey. Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from the estuary.	Any pollution to the Owenass River or the River Barrow resulting from development promoted and facilitated by the plan could negatively affect the distribution of lamprey species within the river within and downstream of the plan area.
2	Population structure of juveniles	At least three age/size groups present	Any perturbations in water quality within the SAC as a result of land use activities facilitated by the plan will have the potential to negatively affect the population structure of juveniles within the watercourse.
3	Juvenile density in fine sediment	Mean catchment juvenile density of at least 2/m ² for river and brook lamprey and 1/m ² for sea lamprey	Any changes in water quality within the SAC as a result of land use activities facilitated by the plan will have the potential to negatively affect the population structure of juveniles within the watercourse.
4	Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	No decline in distribution and extent of spawning beds.	Juvenile spawning habitat consists of fine sediment substrates along watercourses. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of this instream habitat downstream of the plan area.
5	Availability of juvenile habitat	More than 50% of sample sites positive	Juvenile spawning habitat consists of fine sediment substrates along watercourses. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of this instream habitat downstream of the plan area.
Atlantic Salmon			
6	Distribution (extent)	100% of river channels down to	Flood alleviation measures associated with

	of anadromy)	second order from the estuary.	the flood management objectives of the plan could have the potential to result in barriers to the movement of Atlantic Salmon within the Owenass River or the River Barrow catchment.
7	Adult spawning fish	Conservation Limit consistently exceeded	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decrease in adult spawning fish along the Owenass River or downstream along the River Barrow.
8	Salmon fry abundance	Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment wide abundance threshold value. Currently set at 17 salmon fry/5 min sampling.	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decrease in the abundance of salmon fry within the Owenass River or River Barrow along and downstream of the plan area.
9	Out-migrating smolt abundance	No significant decline	Any adverse effects to water quality or barriers to the movement of fish could result in a decline in the numbers of out-migrating smolt from the sections of the SAC downstream of the plan area.
10	Number and distribution of redds	No decline in numbers or distribution	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decline in the numbers of spawning redds supported by the Owenass River or the River Barrow along and downstream from the plan area.
11	Water quality	At least Q4	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decline in the Q-value status of the Owenass River or the River Barrow along and downstream from the plan area.
Otters			

12	Distribution	No significant decline	Adverse water quality effects to the Owenass River or the River Barrow along and downstream of the plan area could result in decline in the distribution of otters within this river. Increases in human activity along the Owenass River could result in a decline in the use of this river by otters. However it is noted that otters are not sensitive to high levels of human activity and are known to habituate to a range of human-related activities (Chanin, 2003).
13	Extent of terrestrial habitat	No significant decline	The plan will not result in a reduction in the extent of terrestrial habitat for otters within the SAC as no greenfield areas along the riparian zone of the SAC have been zoned for development within the plan area. Only existing built land occurring along or adjacent to the riparian zone of the SAC has been zoned for future development.
14	Extent of marine habitat	No significant decline	Marine habitats occurring downstream at the Barrow estuary lie outside the zone of influence of the plan and there will be no potential for the plan to result in a decline in the extent of marine habitat for otters.
15	Extent of freshwater habitat (river)	No significant decline	Any changes to water quality downstream will have the potential to result in an indirect effect to the status of freshwater habitats that could result in a decline in the availability of this habitat.
16	Extent of freshwater habitat (lakes)	No significant decline	No lakes occur within the zone of influence of the plan and as such there will be no potential for the project to result in a decline in the extent of lake habitat for otters.
17	Couching sites and	No significant decline	In the event that couch sites or holts occur

	holts		along the stretch of the Owenass River within the plan area, the potential will exist for disturbance to these critical features of otter conservation status, during development along the river that is promoted/facilitated by the plan. Key elements on the plan that could result in such effects are recreational and tourism objectives and flood management objectives.
18	Fish biomass	No significant decline	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decline in fish biomass downstream from the plan area.
19	Barriers to connectivity	No significant increase	Flood management measures could have the potential to result in barriers to the connectivity of otter habitat along the Owenass River within the plan area.
White-clawed crayfish			
20	Distribution	No reduction from baseline.	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decline in the distribution of white-clawed crayfish which is known to occur along the Owenass River or the River Barrow, downstream of the plan area.
21	Population structure: recruitment	Juveniles and/or females with eggs in at least 50% of positive samples	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decline in the recruitment of juveniles downstream from the plan area.
22	Negative indicator species	No alien crayfish species	Increased human activity along the Owenass River promoted by the plan will have the potential to increase the risk of spreading non-native invasive species.
23	Disease	No instances of disease	Increased human activity along the Owenass River promoted by the plan will have the potential to increase the risk of spreading disease.

24	Water quality	At least Q3-4 at all sites sampled by EPA	Any adverse effects to water quality could result in a decline in the Q-value status of the Owenass River and the River Barrow downstream from the project site.
25	Habitat quality: heterogeneity	No decline in heterogeneity or habitat quality	Adverse effect to water quality and particularly the discharge of silt-laden runoff from development areas, promoted by the plan, will have the potential to undermine this target.
Floating River Vegetation			
26	Habitat area	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Adverse effect to water quality and particularly the discharge of silt-laden runoff from development areas, promoted by the plan, to the Owenass River and the River Barrow will have the potential to undermine this target.
27	Habitat distribution	No decline, subject to natural processes.	Adverse effect to water quality and particularly the discharge of silt-laden runoff from development areas, promoted by the plan, to the Owenass River and the River Barrow will have the potential to undermine this target.
28	Hydrological regime: river flow	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes	Development within the plan area leading to increased urban land cover and impermeable surfaces will have the potential to lead flashy surface water runoff to the Owenass River. Increased flow rates within this water course could in turn lead to localised changes in the flow rates of the River Barrow within and downstream of the plan area.
29	Hydrological regime: tidal influence	Maintain natural tidal regime	The plan is located at a remote distance from the coast and will not have the potential to interfere with the tidal influence along the lower River Barrow.

30	Hydrological regime: freshwater seepages	Maintain appropriate freshwater seepage regimes	No examples of freshwater seepage zones supporting this habitat occur within close proximity to the plan and therefore it will not have the potential to influence the hydrological regime of this feature.
31	Substratum composition: particle size range	The substratum should be dominated by the particle size ranges, appropriate to the habitat sub-type (frequently sands, gravels and cobbles)	Development promoted by the plan will have the potential to result in increased inputs of suspended solids to the Owenass River. Increases in suspended solids to this watercourse will have the potential result in changes to river substrates along the Owenass River and the River Barrow downstream.
32	Water quality: nutrients	The concentration of nutrients in the water column should be sufficiently low to prevent changes in species composition or habitat condition	Increases in populations, economic activity and development, which are promoted by the plan will have the potential to lead to an increases in wastewater generated within the plan area. The inadequate treatment of wastewater generated by such activities will have the potential to result in nutrient pollution to the Owenass River and the River Barrow downstream..
33	Vegetation composition: typical species	Typical species of the relevant habitat sub-type should be present and in good condition	Potential changes in water quality and hydrological regime for the reasons set out above for Attribute Nos. 28, 31 and 32 will have the potential to result in changes to the vegetation composition of this habitat.
34	Floodplain connectivity	The area of active floodplain at and upstream of the habitat should be maintained	Proposed development along the Owenass River will have the potential to result in the fragmentation of the Owenass River floodplain.
35	Riparian habitat	The area of riparian woodland at and upstream of the bryophyte-rich sub-type should be	This attribute refers specifically to the mapped example of this habitat along the King's River, which is not hydrologically

		maintained	connected to the plan area. As such there will be no potential for the plan to undermine the targets for this attribute.
Tall Herb Fringe			
36	Habitat distribution	No decline, subject to natural processes	Adverse effect to water quality and particularly the discharge of silt-laden runoff from development areas, promoted by the plan, to the Owenass River will have the potential to undermine this target.
37	Habitat area	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Adverse effect to water quality and particularly the discharge of silt-laden runoff from development areas, promoted by the plan, to the Owenass River will have the potential to undermine this target.
38	Hydrological regime: Flooding depth/height of water table	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes	Development within the plan area leading to increased urban land cover and impermeable surfaces will have the potential to lead flashy surface water runoff to the Owenass River. Increased flow rates within this water course could in turn lead to localised changes in the flow rates along the river downstream of the plan area or development sites.
39	Vegetation structure:sward height	30-70% of sward is between 40 and 150cm in height	Potential changes in water quality and hydrological regime for the reasons set out above for Attribute Nos. 28, 31 and 32 will have the potential to result in changes to the vegetation composition that could result in changes to the sward height of this habitat.
40	Vegetation composition: broadleaf herb: grass ratio	Broadleaf herb component of vegetation between 40 and 90%	Potential changes in water quality and hydrological regime for the reasons set out above for Attribute Nos. 28, 31 and 32 will have the potential to result in changes to the vegetation composition in terms of the ratio of the broadleaved herb component of this

			habitat.
41	Vegetation composition: typical species	At least 5 positive indicator species present	Potential changes in water quality and hydrological regime for the reasons set out above for Attribute Nos. 28, 31 and 32 will have the potential to result in changes to the occurrence and diversity of positive indicator species present for this habitat.
42	Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control- NB Indian balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>), monkeyflower (<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>), Japanese knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>) and giant hogweed (<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>)	Potential changes in water quality and hydrological regime for the reasons set out above for Attribute Nos. 28, 31 and 32 will have the potential to result in an increase in the abundant of negative indicator species, particularly nitrophile species.

5.4 DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE INTEGRITY OF THE SITE IS LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED

EU Guidelines (2001) recommend as part of a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment that a checklist of site integrity is carried out (see Table 5.2). This aids in establishing the nature of potential adverse effects to the integrity of the European Sites, as defined by the conservation objectives of special conservation interests occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.

Table 5.4: Checklist of Site Integrity

Conservation Objectives	
Does the Plan have the potential to:	
Cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site	Yes.
Interrupt progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site	Yes
Disrupt those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the site	Yes
Interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site.	Yes
cause changes to the vital defining aspects (e.g. nutrient	Yes

balance) that determine how the site functions as a habitat or ecosystem?	
change the dynamics of the relationships (between, for example, soil and water or plants and animals) that define the structure and/or function of the site?	Yes
interfere with predicted or expected natural changes to the site (such as water dynamics or chemical composition)?	Yes
reduce the area of key habitats?	Yes
reduce the population of key species?	Yes
change the balance between key species?	Yes
reduce diversity of the site?	Yes
result in fragmentation?	Yes
result in loss or reduction of key features (e.g. tree cover, tidal exposure, annual flooding, etc.)?	Yes

6.0 MITIGATION

While the Plan has sought to provide a template for the sustainable development of Mountmellick, a number of Policy and Objectives supporting individual plans and projects will have the potential to result in significant effects without the implementation of adequate environmental safeguards.

As outlined in the Plan a key consideration during its preparation has been the statutory provisions of the EU Habitats Directive. A Strategic Aim of the Plan is to seek to balance the promotion of sustainable development of Mountmellick against the need to safeguard and enhance the environmental sensitivities of the Plan area. To this end Specific Objective 7 and 8 have been included within the Plan so that overarching policies that aim to safeguard environmental sensitivities are integrated into the Plan. These Specific Objectives will ensure that the Plan will only support lower level Plans and projects that will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

In addition to the two overarching Specific Objectives No. 7 and 8, the Plan sets out a number of other natural heritage Policies and Objectives that aim to provide further protection for European Sites. These Policies and Objectives will ensure that all plans or projects that have the potential, either alone or in combination with other plans and project, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and to natural heritage in general will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that no significant effects will arise.

Furthermore a number of mitigatory Policies and Objectives are included throughout the various sections of the Plan to ensure that the Plan affords protection to European Sites against specific policies and objectives that could otherwise result in likely significant effects.

A list of all Policies and Objectives affording protection to the water quality, riparian corridor and floodplain of the River Barrow and the section of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC within and downstream of the plan area are provided in Table 6.1 below. An assessment of how these Policies and Objectives will ensure the protection of European Sites is provided.

In addition to the mitigatory Policies and Objectives outlined in Table 6.1, additional mitigation is recommended for all elements of the Plan that have been identified as having the potential to result negative effects. These additional mitigation measures are outlined in Table 6.2. This Table demonstrates the direct influence of the Appropriate Assessment process on the formulation of the Plan. The rewording of Policies and Objectives, as shown in Table 6.2 sought to specifically target and annul the potential negative environmental implications associated with them. It is noted that additional mitigation has not been recommended for all potential negative elements of the plan. This is because the mitigatory measures originally included within the Plan (as outlined in Table 6.1) are deemed sufficient to ensure potential likely significant effects associated with these elements are avoided.

Table 6.1: Mitigatory objectives & Policies of the Mountmellick LAP

Plan Reference	Objective/Policy identified as having the potential to mitigate negative effects of the plan and safeguard the environment	Negative Objectives & Policies that will be mitigated
	7. To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and	This is a strategic aim of the Mountmellick LAP that sets out the approach to future development within

	requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this Draft Joint LAP;	the plan area. It aims to protect and safeguard the natural environment, of which European Sites such as the River Barrow and River Nore SAC are a critical part.
	8. To require projects to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project planning and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to habitats and species, where required.	This strategic aim of the Mountmellick LAP clearly states that only those developments that can be shown not to have the potential to result in adverse effects to European Sites will be supported.
	KI O2: Phase growth in line with the capacity of supporting infrastructure;	This objectives will ensure that developments will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that adequate supporting infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment capacity, is in place.
	KI O3: Facilitate Irish Water in the maintenance, expansion and upgrading of wastewater disposal and water supply infrastructure;	This objective will seek to ensure that adequate water services are in place during the lifetime of the plan.
	KI O4: Ensure a good quality of life, through maintaining and improving waste water treatment and water supplies and to minimise the adverse impacts of development on the environment, through policies for the management of wastes and emissions;	This objective will seek to ensure that adequate water and wastewater treatment is undertaken for Mountmellick during the lifetime of the plan.
	KI O5: Seek compliance with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure;	This objective will seek to ensure that adequate water services are in place during the lifetime of the plan.
	KI O7: 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 catchments;	This objective aims to maintain and conserve water supply sources for the plan area.
	KI O8: Require all new developments to include proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems	This objective pays particular attention to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality as a result of uncontrolled storm water runoff from development sites, that could result in adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	KI O9: Maintain, improve and enhance the	This objective pays particular attention

	environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in accordance with the South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan /National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures.	to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality as a result of uncontrolled storm water runoff from development sites, that could result in adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	<p> South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan; </p> KI O10: Ensure developments will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan; National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG)	This objective pays particular attention to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality, that could result in adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	KI O11: Facilitate, promote and encourage the expansion and improvement of telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas networks infrastructure subject to proper planning and sustainable development	This objective pays particular attention to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality, that could result in adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	KI P1: 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;	This objective pays particular attention to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality, that could result in adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	KI P2: Work with Irish Water on developing and upgrading the water supply schemes so as to ensure an adequate, resilient, sustainable and economic supply of piped water	This objective seeks to ensure that a sustainable water supply is provided for Mountmellick during the lifetime of the plan.
	KI P3: Work with Irish Water on upgrading the wastewater treatment plant in line with the projected future growth of the settlement of Mountmellick	This objective aims to ensure that adequate wastewater is provided for Mountmellick during the lifetime of the plan. The successful implementation of this objective will ensure that wastewater generated by development supported by the plan does not have the potential to negative affect the water quality of the River Barrow and the SAC within and downstream of the plan area.
	KI P4: Promote and support the implementation of Irish Water's Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project;	This objective pays particular attention to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality as a result of uncontrolled storm water runoff from development sites, that could result in

		adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	<p>KI P5: Assess all applications in the context of available and sufficient public infrastructural facilities, the protection of Surface Water and Groundwater Resources and their associated habitats and species¹;</p>	This objective seeks to ensure that a sustainable water supply is provided for Mountmellick during the lifetime of the plan.
	<p>KI P6: Promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, businesses and industries and supports the implementation of Energy Efficiency solutions in Water and Waste Water Systems;</p>	This objective pays particular attention to the key element of the plan, namely risks to surface water quality, that could result in adverse effects to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and seeks to ensure that such effects do not arise.
	<p>NH O1: Identify, protect and conserve natural heritage sites, nationally designated conservation sites and non designated sites in co-operation and consultation with the relevant statutory authorities;</p>	This objective specifically aims to protect European Sites, such as the River Barrow and River Nore SAC downstream. In effect the inclusion of this objective will require proponents of all future developments to demonstrate that adverse effects to conservation status of European Sites will not arise during the lifetime of the plan.
	<p>NH O2: Seek integration of all elements of existing green infrastructure into new developments, prevent fragmentation and mitigate potential impacts on the existing green infrastructure network;</p>	The Owenass River within the plan area represents a feature of green infrastructure. This measures affords protection to the watercourse.
	<p>NH O9: Protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures with respect to air quality, water quality greenhouse gases, climate change, light</p>	This objective aims to ensure that future developments do not result in significant adverse environmental effects.
	<p>NH O11: Maintain riverbank vegetation along watercourses and ensure protection of a 30 to 50m riparian buffer zone on Greenfield sites and maintain free from development;</p>	This objective provides protection to the riparian corridor of the River Barrow, ensuring that such habitat is not directly disturbed by future development facilitated by the plan.
	<p>NH O12: Facilitate the work of agencies</p>	This objective will provide protection for

¹ On foot of EPA Scoping submission

	redressing the issue of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.	the River Barrow and River Nore SAC within the plan area and downstream by aiming to minimise the spread of non-native invasive species.
--	---	--

Table 6.2: Additional Mitigation Measures recommended for inclusion in the Mountmellick LAP

LAP	Mitigation Measure	Included in LAP Yes/No
Key Plan Objectives Additional objective:	7. To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this LAP;	Yes
Opportunity Site: Maltings, Portlaoise Road, Zoning: Residential 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically located on the Portlaoise Road entrance into the town with direct access onto National Secondary Route N80; • A 0.37ha. brownfield site formerly used as a grain mill; • Protected Structures on site; • Fully serviced site; • Extant permission for residential development of 37 no. apartments; • Outside of Flood Zones A and B; • Ecological survey including bat surveys may be required and results inform landscaping and design. • Opportunity to intensify development to provide a key landmark or gateway building to signify the approach and entrance to the town from Portlaoise to create a sense of arrival; • The building should address the extensive street frontage and be designed to an exceptional standard. 	Yes
KIP5:	Assess all applications in the context of available and sufficient public infrastructural facilities, the protection of	Yes

	Surface Water and Groundwater Resources and their associated habitats and species² ;	
KI O9:	Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in accordance with the South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan / National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures.	Yes
KI O10:	Ensure developments will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan ; National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG)	Yes
KI O11	Facilitate, promote and encourage the expansion and improvement of telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas networks infrastructure subject to proper planning and sustainable development	Yes
KI O8	Co-operate with and facilitate the work of national telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas network providers in the improvement, expansion and provision of energy and communication infrastructure subject to proper planning and sustainable development	Yes
NH O5:	Carry out and require the planting of native trees, hedgerows and vegetation in all new developments;	Yes
NH P2:	NH P2: Develop a greenway/blueway walking and cycling route along the River Owenass having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats. ;	Yes
NH O5	NH O5: Carry out and require the planting of native trees, hedgerows and vegetation in all new developments;	Yes
NH O6:	Open up visual and physical access via the River Owenass as a continuous pedestrian and cycle link through the town centre, having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats.	Yes
NH O10:	Protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures with respect to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management;	Yes

² On foot of EPA Scoping submission

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This NIR has reviewed the impacts arising from the Mountmellick LAP and found that, without the implementation of mitigation measures, the Plan will have the potential to impact upon the integrity of River Barrow and River Nore SAC and its qualifying features of interest occurring within the Plan area.

The potential impacts that could negatively affect these European Sites have been outlined in Section 5 and Appendix 1 of this NIR. Section 6 outlines the environmental safeguards within the Plan that aim to ensure these potential impacts are avoided.

The requirement of the Plan to ensure Appropriate Assessment Screening and where necessary Appropriate Assessment of any future variations to the LAP, associated Plans or Projects which, alone or in combinations with other plans and project, are likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any European Sites will protect these Sites from potential adverse impacts.

The measures and the requirements for all new developments with the potential to adversely affect European Sites to undertake thorough assessments to inform the conclusions of Screening for Appropriate Assessment and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment will ensure adverse impacts to the integrity of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC will be identified in advance of receiving planning permission. Such developments will only be permitted where it can be shown that such adverse impacts can be mitigated or minimised so that likely significant effects will be avoided.

In summary and in light of the:

- **Original approach of the draft LAP.**
- **Requirement as set out in the recommended strategic objectives which will ensure that likely significant effects are avoided. and**
- **Plan-level mitigation measures as outlined in Section 6 of this NIR and incorporated into the draft LAP.**

it is considered that the adoption of the draft LAP will not result in likely significant effects to the Conservation Objectives or integrity of European Sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

APPENDIX 1: LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS OF OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF THE MOUNTMELICK LAP

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
<p>Strategic Vision To develop Mountmellick as a sustainable low carbon settlement centred on a vibrant town centre, utilising the location strengths to attract employment and promote the unique settlement as an attractive town in which to work, live and play, while ensuring the protection of the unique built and natural heritage and managing flood risk”.</p>	<p>1. To support and facilitate sustainable intensification and consolidation of the town centre and in established residential areas;</p>	No	No	No
	<p>2. To promote balanced economic development and employment ensuring a diverse range of economic sectors are developed and supported;</p>	No	No	No
	<p>3. To support and facilitate development on zoned land based on the policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023</p>	<p>Yes. The support of new development within zoned lands, in areas adjacent to or hydrological linked to the Owenass River, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.</p>	<p>Yes Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.</p>
	<p>4. To focus new residential development primarily into infill and backland sites;</p>	<p>Yes. The support of new development within such lands, in areas adjacent to</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and</p>

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		or hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	5. To protect, conserve and enhance the built, natural and cultural environment, through promoting awareness, utilising relevant heritage legislation and promoting good quality urban design.	No	No	No
	6. To develop and improve flood alleviation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland.	Yes. The flood alleviation measures will be focused on and therefore hydrological linked to the Owenass River and River Barrow and River Nore SAC and many such measures will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such	Yes. Flood alleviation measures will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring along the river.	Yes. Flood alleviation measures will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring along the river.

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		infrastructure.		
	7. To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this Draft Joint LAP;	No	No	No
	8. To require projects to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project planning and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to habitats and species , where required.	No	No	No
	1. Implement the development strategies for Mountmellick in order to be consistent with, and in accordance with policies of higher tier plans;	No	No	No
	2. Support strategic enterprise and employment opportunities at other appropriate locations in Mountmellick and environs, having regard to proper planning and sustainable development and relevant development control standards;	No	No	No
	3. Facilitate and promote Mountmellick’s role as a “Service Town” as designated in the MRPGs and Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023;	No	No	No
	4. Monitor and manage the delivery of population and housing in Mountmellick, in line with national, regional and county level objectives, through the development strategy in	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	this plan and also through the development management process.			
	5. Facilitate and support the provision of new, and expansion of existing services, facilities and community infrastructure.	No	No	No
Economic Development: Strategic Aim: To promote, facilitate and enable economic development and employment generation activities in appropriate locations and in a sustainable manner	ED O1: Facilitate the future sustainable development of Mountmellick so as to optimise the benefits of its location, in accordance with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines;	No	No	No
	ED O2: Promote balanced and sustainable economic development and employment, ensuring that a diverse range of economic sectors are developed and supported;	No	No	No
	ED O3: Promote employment opportunities by facilitating development on appropriately zoned lands;	Yes. Development within zoned lands, in areas adjacent to or hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	ED O4: Facilitate the provision and expansion of all services and infrastructure which would contribute positively to the attraction of the town to economic development;	Yes. The provision and expansion of infrastructure, in areas adjacent to or hydrological	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	ED O5: Facilitate and promote the up skilling and training of the labour force in conjunction with NUI Maynooth, Athlone and Carlow IT and other education providers	No	No	No
	ED O6: Facilitate the improvement and expansion of established enterprises and industries	Yes. The expansion of enterprises and industries, in areas adjacent to or hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	ED O7: Facilitate and promote the provision of incubator units for start up businesses and SMEs;	No	No	No
	ED O8: Facilitate development of a digital hub/creative cluster	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	ED O9: Accommodate small employment generating activities at first floor level and vacant ground floor commercial premises on the town centre	No	No	No
	ED O10: Facilitate home based economic activities which do not adversely impact on existing amenities	No	No	No
	ED O11: Develop lands for industry at Derrguile and Debbicot to support existing industry at Bay Road and Acragar	Yes. Lands Derrguile are likely to drain to the Owenass River, while lands at Debbicot are likely to drain to the Owenass River or the River Triogue. Such drainage will establish a hydrological pathway between these development areas and the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and there will exist the potential for adverse effects to water quality during the construction phase and operation phase of developments at this locations.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	ED O12: Support the continued operation and reasonable	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	expansion of non-conforming uses subject to maintenance of existing environmental, visual and residential amenity.			
	ED O13: Promote Mountmellick as a tourist destination as a gateway to the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains and on the Quaker Experience.	No	No	No
	ED 014: Promote the Georgian and Quaker character of the town as a basis for tourism development	No	No	No
	ED 015: Facilitate the provision of tourism accommodation and ancillary services.	No	No	No
	ED016: Facilitate the development of the Rivers Owenass and Barrow for recreational amenities whilst avoiding significant effects on habitats and species of the River Barrow and Nore SAC.	No	No	No
	ED017: Facilitate the provision of standardized tourism signage and interpretation facilities for tourist attractions;	No	No	No
	ED O18: Facilitate the development and expansion of new and existing food-agri businesses	Yes. The expansion of food-agri businesses, in areas adjacent to or hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		infrastructure.	influence of the plan.	influence of the plan.
	ED P1: Co-operate with Mountmellick Development Association, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, the Local Enterprise Office and other agencies, organisation and individuals in promoting enterprise and employment in Mountmellick	No	No	No
	ED P2: Support strategic enterprise and employment opportunities at other appropriate locations, having regard to proper planning and sustainable development and relevant development control standards;	No	No	No
	ED P3: Facilitate the continuity of and encourage the expansion of established enterprises and to promote start-up enterprises, having regard to the protection of the amenity value of neighbouring properties;	Yes. The expansion of enterprises, in areas adjacent to or hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	ED P4: Support the further development of broadband in Mountmellick to facilitate the development of internet based businesses and home based economic activities.	No	No	No
	ED P5: Encourage, in co-operation with the Local Enterprise Office and Laois Partnership, the development of further small to	Yes. The development of industries and services, in	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	medium scale industries and services;	areas adjacent to or hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	ED P6: Create an integrated and sustainable public and private transport system to move people and goods efficiently within and through Mountmellick;	No	No	No
	ED P7: Develop high quality business infrastructure	No	No	No
	ED P8: Identify opportunities to improve the tourism product in cooperation with relevant statutory agencies, private providers and community groups	No	No	No
Town Centre Revitalisation: Strategy Aim:	TCR O1: Improve the quality, vitality and vibrancy of the town centre;	No	No	No
To support the sustainable long-term growth of Mountmellick, in accordance with the Core and Retail Strategies of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 – 2023	TCR O2: Encourage the opening up of the backlands to the north and south of Parnell Street and Sarsfield Street facing on to the Owenass River	Yes. Development on backlands adjacent to the Owenass River will be hydrologically connected to the the SAC and will have the potential to result in adverse effects to	Yes. Development of backlands could result in direct impacts to qualifying habitats should they occur along the Owenass River. Adverse effects to water	Yes. development of backlands along the Owenass River could result in direct disturbance to qualifying species occurring along this stretch of the Owenass

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	quality will have the potential to indirectly affect these qualifying habitats should they occur at or downstream of backland development locations.	River.
	TCR O3: Facilitate the redevelopment of strategic sites within the town centre for a mixture of uses that will contribute to vitality of the central core area;	Yes. The development of strategic site that are hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	TCR O4: Renew, consolidate and develop the existing fabric of the town by achieving a high quality of design in new development and refurbishments while safeguarding the built heritage of the town;	No	No	No
	TCR O5: Facilitate public realm improvement projects and landscaping integrating blue and green infrastructure measures where appropriate	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	TCR O6: Ensure the type, quantum and location of future retail floor space is consistent with the requirements and recommendations of the County Development Plan, relevant regional policy frameworks and national planning guidelines;	No	No	No
	TCR O7: Promote an appropriate mix of day and night time uses;	No	No	No
	TCR O8: Create attractive and secure pedestrian and cycling links including green infrastructure through the town.	Yes. The development of pedestrian and cycle links along the Owenass River or in areas that are hydrological linked to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.
	TCR P1 Promote the town centre as a priority location for commercial, civic, social and cultural development and sustainable consolidation	No	No	No
	TCR P2: Promote the consolidation of the town centre through the use of brownfield, infill and backland sites without compromising streetscapes;	Yes. The development of such areas that occur along the Owenass River or are hydrological linked to the Owenass River will	Yes. Development of such areas could result in direct impacts to qualifying habitats should they occur along	Yes. development of such areas along the Owenass River could result in direct disturbance to qualifying species occurring along

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure.	the Owenass River. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to indirectly affect these qualifying habitats should they occur at or downstream of backland development locations.	this stretch of the Owenass River.
	TCR P3: Promote the reuse of existing town centre buildings through appropriate design and adaptation	No	No	No
	TCR P4: Prohibit the proliferation of uses in the town centre which would detract from the amenities of the area or the vitality and viability of the town centre;	No	No	No
	TCR P5: Encourage retail development within the existing town centre. Proposals which would undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre will not be permitted. The sequential approach to retail development set out in the "Retail Planning - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2012" will be strictly enforced	No	No	No
	TCR P6: Encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict and vacant sites and disused buildings, especially upper floors	No	No	No
	TCR P7: Promote living over the shop and conversion of town centre buildings into housing units;	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	TCR P8 Encourage the maintenance of original shop fronts, or the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts where poor replacements have been installed	No	No	No
	TCR P9: Ensure new shop fronts have regard to existing shop fronts and complement the existing character	No	No	No
	TCR 10: Prohibit internally illuminated fascias or projecting box signs. Concealed strip or flood lighting of fascias and traditional hand painted signs lit by spotlight may be an acceptable alternative.	No	No	No
Opportunity Sites	Opportunity Site 1 Maltings, Irishtown, Portlaoise Road.Zoning: Residential 2	Yes. this development is located 500m from the Owenass River. Should it be hydrological linked to the Owenass River the potential for adverse effects to water quality during the development and operation of such infrastructure will occur.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the Owenass River and downstream along the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan.

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically located on the Portlaoise Road entrance into the town with direct access onto National Secondary Route N80; • A 0.37ha. brownfield site formerly used as a grain mill; • Protected Structures on site; • Fully serviced site; • Extant permission for residential development of 37 no. apartments; • Outside of Flood Zones A and B; <p>Ecological survey including bat surveys may be required and</p>			

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	<p>results inform landscaping and design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to intensify development to provide a key landmark or gateway building to signify the approach and entrance to the town from Portlaoise to create a sense of arrival; • The building should address the extensive street frontage and be designed to an exceptional standard. 			
<p>Key Infrastructure: Strategic Aim: To enable development in line with the capacity of supporting infrastructure and to require the timely provision of infrastructure needed for the planned development of lands.</p>	<p>KI O1: Facilitate economic and social development through the provision of infrastructure and optimise the return of infrastructure investment;</p>	<p>Yes. In the event that related developments are hydrologically connected to the Owenass River there will be potential for such development to result in adverse effects to the water quality of the SAC.</p>	<p>Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.</p>	<p>Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.</p>
	<p>KI O2: Phase growth in line with the capacity of supporting infrastructure;</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>KI O3: Facilitate Irish Water in the maintenance, expansion and upgrading of wastewater disposal and water supply infrastructure;</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>KI O4: Ensure a good quality of life, through maintaining and improving waste water treatment and water supplies and to minimise the adverse impacts of development on the environment, through policies for the management of wastes and emissions;</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	KI O5: Seek compliance with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure;	No	No	No
	KI O6: Maintain a development free buffer around the Mountmellick wastewater treatment plant of a minimum of 100 metres	No	No	No
	KI O7: 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 catchments;	No	No	No
	KI O8: Require all new developments to include proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems	No	No	No
	KI O9: Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in accordance with the South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan / National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures.	No	No	No
	KI O10: Ensure developments will not adversely impact on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and South Eastern River Basin District River Basin Management Plan; National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (DHPLG)	No	No	No
	KI O11: Facilitate, promote and encourage the expansion and improvement of telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas networks infrastructure subject to proper planning and	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	sustainable development			
	KI P1: 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;	No	No	No
	KI P2: Work with Irish Water on developing and upgrading the water supply schemes so as to ensure an adequate, resilient, sustainable and economic supply of piped water	No	No	No
	KI P3: Work with Irish Water on upgrading the wastewater treatment plant in line with the projected future growth of the settlement of Mountmellick	No	No	No
	KI P4: Promote and support the implementation of Irish Water's Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project;	No	No	No
	KI P5: Assess all applications in the context of available and sufficient public infrastructural facilities, the protection of Surface Water and Groundwater Resources and their associated habitats and species ³ ;	No	No	No
	KI P6: Promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, businesses and industries	No	No	No

³ On foot of EPA Scoping submission

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	and supports the implementation of Energy Efficiency solutions in Water and Waste Water Systems;			
	<p>KI P7: Promote and encourage the harvesting of rainwater to meet non-potable water needs</p> <p>KI P8: Co-operate with and facilitate the work of national telecommunications, broadband, electricity and gas network providers in the improvement, expansion and provision of energy and communication infrastructure subject to proper planning and sustainable development</p>	No	No	No
<p>Transport and Movement: Strategic Aim: To promote and facilitate a sustainable transport system that prioritises and provides for walking, cycling and public transport facilities while ensuring sufficient traffic management.</p>	<p>TM 01: Promote and encourage the development of Mountmellick to enhance its strategic location on the National and Regional road network.</p>	Yes. In the event that related developments are hydrologically connected to the Owenass River there will be potential for such development to result in adverse effects to the water quality of the SAC.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.
	<p>TM 02: To cooperate with NTA and other relevant transport planning bodies in the delivery of a high quality, integrated transport system;</p>	No	No	No
	<p>TM 03: Facilitate the economic and social development of the town through the provision and efficient use of transport infrastructure</p>	No	No	No
	<p>TM 04: Cooperate and facilitate Bus Eireann and private</p>	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	operatives in the provision and frequency of public transport services, operation of services and facilities;			
	TM O5: Encourage, promote and facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport in all new developments;	No	No	No
	TM O6: Promote sustainable and compact forms of development which reduce reliance of private car based transport;	No	No	No
	TM O7: Significantly reduce carbon emissions through interventions on the N80;	No	No	No
	TM O8: Improve the pedestrian experience by reducing car dominance on the N80;	No	No	No
	TM O9: Improve pedestrian links, based on desire lines, from Main to surrounding areas;	Yes. In the event that related developments are hydrologically connected to the Owenass River there will be potential for such development to result in adverse effects to the water quality of the SAC.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.
	TM P1: Improve and provide pedestrian linkages, cycle networks and permeability including blueways and greenways throughout the town;	Yes. Development of greenways and blueways are likely to be in close proximity to the Owenass River and could result in	Yes. the construction phase and operation phase of greenways and blueways will have the potential to result in	Yes. the construction phase and operation phase of greenways and blueways will have the potential to result in direct

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		adverse effects to water quality of the river and the SAC during the development phase.	direct and indirect impacts to qualifying habitats, should they occur along the footprint of such development.	and indirect impacts to qualifying species, should they occur along the footprint of such development.
	TM P2: Examine the feasibility of introducing clear, direct pedestrian routes between the Main Street and surrounding areas;	Yes. In the event that related developments are hydrologically connected to the Owenass River there will be potential for such development to result in adverse effects to the water quality of the SAC.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.
	TM P3: Provide adequate, secure and dry bicycle parking facilities at appropriate locations;	No	No	No
	TM P4: Ensure all footpaths provide access for disabled and mobility impaired persons;	No	No	No
	TM P5: Facilitate and implement appropriate measures to reduce or manage traffic associated with schools to regularize vehicular movements and alleviate congestion;	No	No	No
	TM P6: Reserve all lands for future relief roads free of development in conjunction with the requirements of the Roads Authority;	No	No	No
	TM P7: Provide for improvements to the national road network,	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	including reserving corridors for proposed routes, free of development, so as not to compromise future road schemes;			
	TM P8: Prevent inappropriate development on lands adjacent to the existing national road network, which would adversely affect the safety, current and future capacity and function of national roads and having regard to possible future upgrades of the national roads and junctions;	No	No	No
	TM P9: Ensure that any development permitted along national roads is in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads–Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) or any updated version;	No	No	No
	TM P10: Facilitate a limited level of new accesses or the intensified use of existing accesses to the national road network on the approaches to or exit to Mountmellick that are subject to a speed limit zone between 50 kmh and 60 kmh otherwise known as the transition zone. Such accesses will be considered where they facilitate orderly urban development and would not result in a proliferation of such entrances, leading to a diminution in the role of these transitional zones. The Council will have regard to the nature of the proposed development and the volume of traffic to be generated by it and the implications for the safety, capacity and efficient operation of the national road. A Road Safety Audit, prepared in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA, 2010), shall be submitted where appropriate	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
<p>Housing: Strategy Aim: To deliver new residential development, to support the existing community infrastructure, recreation and amenity facilities and provide new facilities in tandem with new housing.</p>	<p>H O1: Ensure that sufficient zoned land is available at appropriate locations to cater for the envisaged population growth of the Core Strategy;</p>	<p>The provision of zoned land for the future development of residential housing within the plan area, in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.</p>	<p>Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.</p>	<p>Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.</p>
	<p>H O2: Promote and encourage the development of the critical mass of Mountmellick and to enhance its strategic location on the National and Regional road network;</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>H O3: Facilitate the provision of housing in a range of locations to meet the needs of the population, with particular emphasis on facilitating access to housing to suit different household and tenure needs, in a sustainable manner;</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>H O4: To ensure compliance with the provisions of Part V of the Act (as amended) and to integrate such housing so as to prevent social segregation within residential developments;</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>H O5: To utilise the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (Vacant Site Levy) to facilitate the appropriate</p>	<p>Yes. The provision of residential housing in such</p>	<p>Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have</p>	<p>Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the</p>

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	development of vacant sites (residential zoned) that are in need of renewal or regeneration;	sites that have hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.	potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.
	H O6: To encourage the sequential development of sustainable serviced residentially zoned lands in a sustainable manner subject to compliance with relevant Department Guidelines and Development Management Standards of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023; ;	No	No	No
	H O7: To promote a higher density at appropriate locations, particularly close to the town centre and public transport facilities;	No	No	No
	H O8: To encourage appropriate housing development on infill and brownfield sites subject to preservation of existing residential amenity, the provision of a high quality design respecting the established character, density and layout, compliance with all traffic safety, quantitative and qualitative standards of the Laois County Development;	Yes. The provision of residential housing in such sites that have hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		quality during the development of such infrastructure.		
	H O9: To promote the reoccupation of vacant residential stock within Mountmellick Town Centre, including 'Living Above the Shop' units;	No	No	No
	H O10: To ensure an appropriate and sustainable mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to cater for all members of society, including homeless persons, the elderly, disabled and travellers;	No	No	No
	H O11: To ensure provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time;	No	No	No
	H O12: To identify, acquire and provide suitable sites, accommodation and facilities for the housing and resettlement of travelling families;	No	No	No
	H O13: To secure the provision of social infrastructure, community and recreational facilities in tandem with residential development.	No	No	No
	H P1: Ensure that sufficient zoned land is available at appropriate locations to cater for the envisaged population growth of the Core Strategy;	The provision of zoned land for the future development of residential housing within the plan area, in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within the zone of influence of the	Yes. Adverse effects to water quality will have the potential to undermine the status of Annex 2 species occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	plan.	
	H P2: Require all new residential developments to be consistent with the Core Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2107-2023 and the settlement strategy of this plan;	No	No	No
	H P3: Promote and encourage the development of Mountmellick and to enhance its strategic location on the National and Regional road and rail network;	No	No	No
	H P4: Facilitate the provision of housing in a range of locations to meet the needs of the population, with particular emphasis on facilitating access to housing to suit different household and tenure needs, in a sustainable manner;	No	No	No
	H P5: To require the creation of sustainable communities and high quality residential areas at appropriate locations with a mix tenure and adequate amenities and facilities and to meet the standards and guidance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Residential Development In Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHG (2009); • Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2015); 	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTS and DECLG (2013); The development management standards of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023; Technical Guidance Document L – Conservation of Fuel and Energy – Dwellings. 			
Community Services & Culture: Strategic Aim: To deliver, facilitate and support the provision of a broad range of high quality community, educational and cultural facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of the population.	CSC O1: Facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and to provide access to new and existing community and social facilities;	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	CSC O2: Facilitate the improvement and provision of community facilities, library and emergency services in appropriate locations	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	CSC O3: Facilitate the improvement and provision of educational, childcare and healthcare facilities in appropriate and accessible locations;	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	CSC O4: Facilitate implementation of the Laois Age Friendly County Strategy 2016-2021	No	No	No
	CSC O5: Promote the amenities and ensure the accessibility of arts and cultural facilities within the ownership of Laois County Council;	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	CSC O6: Facilitate the roll out of community policing and neighbourhood watch schemes.	No	No	No
	CSC P1: Ensure provision of sufficient zoned lands to allow for expansion of existing and provision of community facilities;	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	CSC P2: Facilitate the development of and expansion of services, amenities and facilities to cater for all society members, ages and community groups	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan,	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
			downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	CSC P3. Facilitate the development of primary, second-level, third-level outreach, vocational and lifelong learning facilities and digital capacity for distance learning including fourth level education, lifelong learning and up-skilling	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	CSC P4: Ensure the provision and implementation of primary and secondary education facilities in concert with the planning and sustainable development of residential areas in order to maximise the opportunities for use of walking, cycling and public transport	Yes. The provision of such infrastructure in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of	Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan,

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		infrastructure.	influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
Built Heritage: Strategic Aim: To protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of the town and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations.	BH O1: Protect, conserve and enhance the built environment, through promoting awareness, utilising relevant heritage legislation and promoting good quality urban design;	No	No	No
	BH O2: Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of Mountmellick, including the Architectural Conservation Area, all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Recorded Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice;	No	No	No
	BH O3: Positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change the use of protected structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to consultation with suitably qualified Conservation Architects and / or other relevant experts, suitable design, materials and construction methods;	No	No	No
	BH O4: Ensure all development works on or at the sites of protected structures, including any site works necessary, shall be carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures / site that render it worthy of protection;	No	No	No
	BH O5: Support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc.) previously existed;	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	BH O6: Strongly resist the demolition of protected structures, unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist;	No	No	No
	BH O7: Consider the change of use of protected structures, provided that it can be shown that the structure, character, appearance and setting will not be adversely affected or where it can be shown it is necessary to have an economic use to enable its upkeep;	No	No	No
	BH O8: Ensure the protection within Architectural Conservation Areas, of all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects of the environment which form an essential part of their character, as set out in their character appraisals;	No	No	No
	BH O9: Ensure the design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of an existing building, should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole;	No	No	No
	BH O10: Promote schemes for the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of Architectural Conservation Areas;	No	No	No
	BH O11: No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value;	No	No	No
	BH O12: Ensure archaeological assessment is carried out as	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	required and promote 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings in developments that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features;			
	BH O13: Protect previously unknown archaeological sites and features, including underwater sites, where they are discovered during development works;	No	No	No
	BH O14: Facilitate public access to National Monuments in State or Local Authority care;	No	No	No
	BH P1: Ensure heritage assets that are the focus for tourism development are appropriately managed and their special interest conserved from potential adverse effects from visitors or development in general and that best practice standards in relation for the environmental management of tourism enterprises are adhered to;	No	No	No
	BH P2: Support and promote, with the co-operation of landowners, public access to heritage sites and features at appropriate locations whilst ensuring heritage related development does not result in negative impacts on the fabric or setting of Laois's heritage assets;	No	No	No
	BH P3: 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;	No	No	No
	BH P4: Encourage and support the provision of foreign	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	language interpretation interventions in order to ensure the appropriate interpretation and appreciation of the county's heritage asset.			
Natural Heritage: Strategic Aim: To protect, enhance, create and connect natural heritage, green spaces and high quality amenity areas throughout Mountmellick for biodiversity and recreation.	NH O1: Identify, protect and conserve natural heritage sites, nationally designated conservation sites and non designated sites in co-operation and consultation with the relevant statutory authorities;	No	No	No
	NH O2: Seek integration of all elements of existing green infrastructure into new developments, prevent fragmentation and mitigate potential impacts on the existing green infrastructure network;	No	No	No
	NH O3: Require the preservation and maintenance of suitable mature trees, hedgerows and natural heritage features in new developments;	No	No	No
	NH O4: Seek to preserve, protect and maintain trees of special amenity, conservation or landscape value;	No	No	No
	NH O5: Carry out and require the planting of native trees, hedgerows and vegetation in all new developments;	No	No	No
	NH O6: Open up visual and physical access via the River Owenass as a as a continuous pedestrian and cycle link through the town centre, having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats.	Yes. The provision of physical access along or in close proximity to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water quality of this	Yes. The provision of a network of paths and tracks along or in close proximity to the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the	Yes. The provision of a network of paths and tracks along or in close proximity to the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		watercourse, especially during the construction phase of infrastructure that will cater for such access.	water quality of this watercourse, especially during the construction phase of infrastructure that will cater for such access.	water quality of this watercourse, especially during the construction phase of infrastructure that will cater for such access.
	NH O7: Identify, protect, conserve and enhance wherever possible, wildlife habitats, stepping stones, corridors and features;	No	No	No
	NH O8: Provide recreational amenities such as playgrounds and outdoor gym equipment within existing areas of open space;	No	No	No
	NH O9: Protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures with respect to air quality, water quality greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management;	No	No	No
	NH O11: Maintain riverbank vegetation along watercourses and ensure protection of a 30 to 50m riparian buffer zone on Greenfield sites and maintain free from development;	No	No	No
	NH O12: Facilitate the work of agencies redressing the issue of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.	No	No	No
	NH P1: Ensure heritage assets that are the focus for tourism development are appropriately managed and their special interest conserved from potential adverse effects from visitors or development in general and that best practice standards in relation for the environmental management of tourism			

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	enterprises are adhered to;			
	NH P2: Develop a greenway/blueway walking and cycling route along the River Owenass having regard to ecological considerations including protected species and habitats. ;	Yes. The provision of greenway and blue way along or in close proximity to the Owenass River will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water quality of this watercourse, especially during the construction phase of infrastructure that will cater for such access.	Yes. The provision of a network of paths and tracks along or in close proximity to the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water quality of this watercourse, especially during the construction phase of infrastructure that will cater for such access.	Yes. The provision of a network of paths and tracks along or in close proximity to the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water quality of this watercourse, especially during the construction phase of infrastructure that will cater for such access.
	NH P3: Support and promote, with the co-operation of landowners, public access to heritage sites and features at appropriate locations whilst ensuring heritage related development does not result in negative impacts on the fabric or setting of the town's heritage assets	No	No	No
	NH P3: 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.	No	No	No
Flood Management:	FM O1: Manage flood risk in accordance with the requirements	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
<p>Strategic Aim: To develop and improve flood alleviation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland so as to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth and to achieve improved physical and environmental protection.</p>	<p>of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG and OPW (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014);</p>			
	<p>FM O2: Support and co-operate with the OPW in delivering the South Eastern CFRAM Programme.</p>	No	No	No
	<p>FM O3: To carry out a programme of infrastructure and flood defence works in conjunction with the OPW to alleviate flooding in the town and hinterland</p>	<p>Yes. The completion of such works in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water quality during the development of such infrastructure.</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1 habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.</p>
	<p>FM O1: In conjunction with the OPW implement a program of flood defence works for the town</p>	<p>Yes. The completion of such works in areas with hydrological links to the Owenass River and the River Barrow, will have the potential to result in adverse effects to water</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 1</p>	<p>Yes. Any adverse effects to water quality within the River Barrow will have the potential to result in adverse effects to the status of freshwater Annex 2 species that occur</p>

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
		quality during the development of such infrastructure.	habitats that occur within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.	within the zone of influence of the plan, downstream along the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.
	FM O2: Ensure development proposals within the areas outlined on Flood Risk Map are the subject of Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment as outlined in "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines" 2009.	No	No	No
	FM O3: Ensure development proposals within the areas outlined on Flood Risk Map are the subject of Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment as outlined in "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines" 2009.	No	No	No
	FM O4: Ensure all development on lands identified as being at risk of flooding must demonstrate, through the carrying out of a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment flood impact assessment and the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, that any flood risk can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere;	No	No	No
	FM O5: Co-operate with the OPW in relation to the development of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment (CFRAM) South Eastern River Basin and for the River Triogue and its tributaries in particular and to comply with any guidance and	No	No	No

Strategic Aim/Policy	Mountmellick LAP Policies and Objectives	Potential to Negatively Affect Water Quality	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 1 Habitats	Potential to Negatively Affect Annex 2 Species
	recommendations of this flood risk management plan;			
	FM 06: Incorporate the recommendations of the South Eastern CFRAM into any site specific flood risk assessment undertaken for individual sites/areas;	No	No	No
	FM 07: Provide an appropriate set back from the edge of the watercourse and proposed developments to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance;	No	No	No
	FM 08: Adhere to the requirements of the Inland Fisheries and National Parks and Wildlife Service in the construction of any flood alleviation measures.	No	No	No
	FM 09: Comply with relevant provisions of the Arterial Drainage Action, 1945 and the Arterial Drainage (Amendment) Act 1995	No	No	No
	FM 10: Ensure protection of Natura 2000 sites supporting rivers and streams by avoiding development on flood plains and ensure flood risk assessment policies, plans or projects are compliant with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and avoid or mitigate negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites	No	No	No