

## Appendix 1 Kilcock Environs Local Area Plan

### Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Reports

# Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

of the

Draft Kilcock Environs Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015

Prepared in conformance with Article 14a of the Planning and Development  
(Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004

February 2009



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*



## 1.0 Introduction

Meath County Council proposes to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Environs of Kilcock, Co. Meath. As part of this process, consideration has been given to the likely environmental effects of implementing the Local Area Plan, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2004.

Section 3.4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines states that screening (i.e. the process for deciding whether a particular plan other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA) is required in the case of Local Area Plans where the population is less than 10,000 persons. As the population of Kilcock is below 10,000 persons, the purpose of this report is to determine if the Local Area Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment i.e. screen the LAP. In preparing this report reference was made to the Guidelines for the Implementation of SEA Directive as prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) and in particular Schedule 2A of SI 436 of 2004.

## 2.0 Policy Context

Objective SS OBJ1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007–2013 states that Local Area Plans shall be prepared for the urban centres contained in Table 7 of the Development Plan, which include Kilcock. Objective SS OBJ 2 states:

*To explore the joint preparation of a Local Area Plan, in conjunction with Kildare County Council, for Kilcock, to include the area north east of Kilcock which is located in Co.Meath. The preparation of a joint Local Area Plan shall subsume the existing Local Area Plan for Kilcock as adopted by Meath County Council. It shall be an objective to advance the preparation of the Joint Local Area Plans within 2 years of the adoption of the Development Plan.*

According to the settlement hierarchy for County Meath set out in the County Development Plan, Kilcock Environs is categorised as a moderate growth town, with the role of these settlements envisaged as having an interacting and supporting role to their adjacent large towns. Having regard to its locational context, Kilcock is considered to be closely associated with the M4 Economic Development Corridor for the purposes of the County Development Plan (CDP) Settlement Strategy and the LAP. In this regard, Meath County Council, are keen to facilitate the realisation of the Dynamic Cluster of Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge and Kilcock contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. This will be achieved through continued partnership with Kildare County Council in the preparation of complimentary and integrated spatial planning frameworks and the delivery of necessary physical infrastructure for the environs of Kilcock including, inter alia, a services infrastructure for the envisaged development in the wider area.

## 3.0 Location and Physical Context

The study area, which comprises approximately 95ha of lands and is located in the administrative area of Meath County Council and contiguous to the County Kildare administrative boundary. The lands are separated from Kilcock by the Rye Water River and are currently accessed from the town by the County Bridge (Meath Bridge) from the town square and by Balfeaghan Bridge to the west of the Trim Road. The lands are approximately 1.2 km from the Kilcock Interchange on the M4 Motorway. The Royal Canal passes through Kilcock to the south of the LAP lands.

The LAP area comprises c.13 fields separated primarily by mature hedgerows. The lands are in agricultural use and are generally flat. There is modest undulation with a fall from north to south towards the Rye Water River. A number of small watercourses and drainage ditches traverse the LAP lands, draining to the Rye Water River.

Development to date within the LAP lands consists of low density dwellings forming ribbon development along the local road network. These dwellings consist of single, dormer and two storey dwellings in a variety of designs and materials. Close to the County Bridge and south of the R125, a cluster of buildings includes a stone farmhouse building and a gable fronted church.

Mature trees and hedgerow belts consist of a mix of mature native species and form natural visual and landscape features in the area. Three sets of power lines traverse the lands, including 2 no. 10kv lines and a 38kv line.

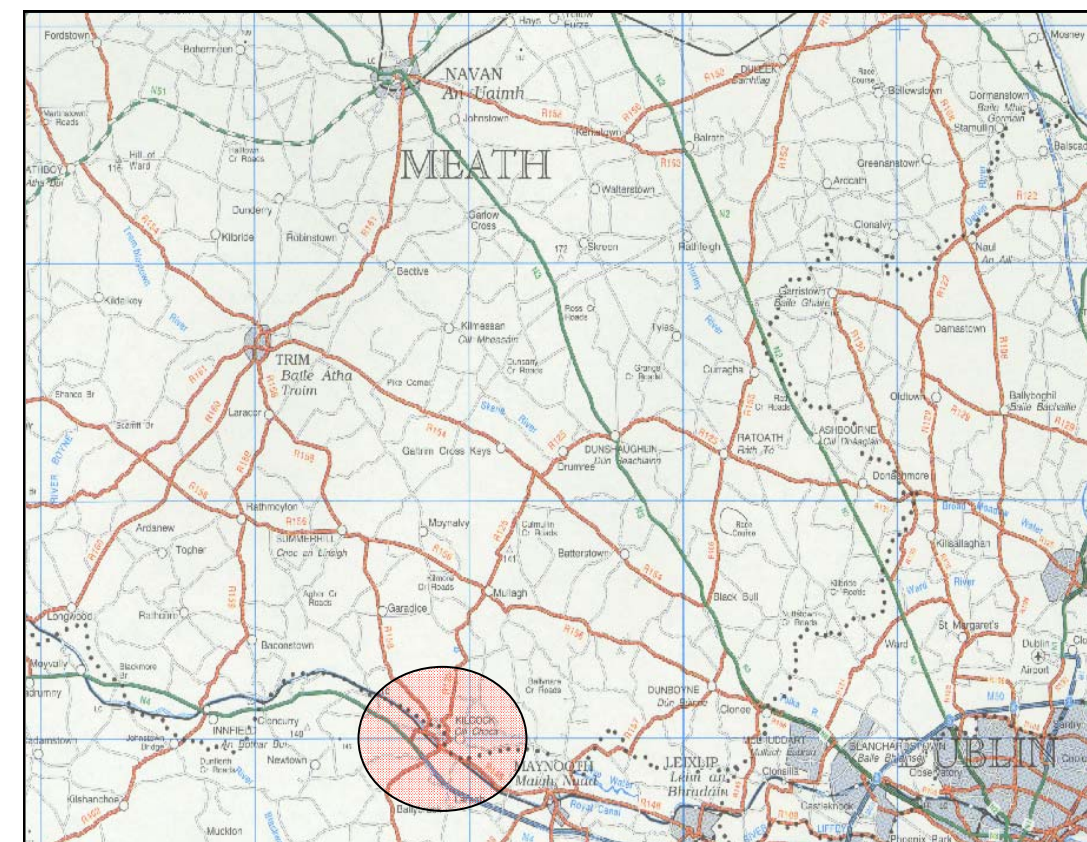


Figure 1: Location Map



#### 4.0 Population

The population of County Meath in 1996 was recorded at 109,732 persons. The population of the County increased by 24,273 persons in the next 6 years up to the 2002 Census of Population. This roughly equates to the current population of Navan moving into the County over a 6 year period or the current population of Kells moving into the County on a yearly basis. The population increase of 22.1% between 1996 - 2002 was the highest experienced by any Irish County over the same period. The overall population increase in the State over the same period was 8.0%. The population growth was accounted for by natural increase 6,402 persons (26.4%) and estimated net migration 17,802 (73.6%).

The area of the LAP is located within the Electoral District (ED) of Rodanstown within the administrative area of Meath County Council, with a population of approximately 1,068 persons. The population within the LAP area lands is negligible (the 2003 Kilcock LAP within Meath indicated a population of c.100 persons). For the purposes of this Plan and having regard to the study area location within the environs of Kilcock Town, it is considered appropriate that population trends for County Kildare and Kilcock Town are considered.

The most recent census of population taken by the Central Statistics Office CSO was taken in April 2006. Demographic trends for the study area have been analysed at region, county, town and local levels. The populations of Meath and Kildare have increased consistently over the 20 year period. County Meath recorded an increase of c.56.5% between 1986 and 2006, while County Kildare experienced a c.60.3% increase over the same period. The population of County Meath recorded in 2006 of 162,621 persons represented a 21.4% increase on the figure for 2002. The population of County Kildare increased by 13.6% between 2002 and 2006. According to the 2006 Census, the population of Kilcock Town was 4,100 persons (previously 2740 in the 2002 census), giving rise to a 49.6% increase during the last census period.

#### 5.0 Criteria for determining the likely significant environmental impacts (Schedule 2 (A) of SEA Regulations 2004).

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance environmental effects. The proposed LAP must be assessed against the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. The most relevant considerations are 1) Characteristics of the Proposed LAP and 2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed LAP.

#### 5.1 Characteristics of the Proposed LAP.

The proposed LAP is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 2.1.9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, Policy SS OBJ 1 & SS OBJ 2 refers and Variation no. 2. The lands the subject of this LAP are identified for development by way of their development boundary in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. (Please refer to attached zoning map). The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 adheres to the principles of sustainable development, in accordance with the requirements of Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2006. The Local Area Plan will be consistent with the principles, objectives and policies of the Meath County Development Plan and associated Environmental Report and therefore will have a strong emphasis on promoting the sustainable development of the area.

Variation no. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 relates to an Order of Priority which was adopted for the release of existing residentially zoned lands (i.e. phasing) that shall conform to the scale and quantum of development indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. (Please refer to attached Order of Priority Map)

Under Variation No. 2 it is stated that 56 ha have been released within Phase 1. The number of units indicated to meet household targets in Kilcock is 1150. No further lands are denoted for residential release and the development of lands is subject to the availability of water and waste water infrastructure.

##### 5.1.1 Environmental considerations relevant to the Plan Area

There are a number of features of the built/natural environment which are subject to heritage and environmental designations in the study area as outlined below.

##### 5.1.1.1 Conservation and Heritage

##### Protected structures

There are 2 no. structures in the Kilcock Environs which are registered as protected structures in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 as detailed below:

1. The first is a two storey 4 bay farmhouse with three stacks (ref no. MH049-102), adjacent to the Little Chapel of the Assumption.
2. The second protected structure is denoted as the Little Chapel of the Assumption (ref. no. MH049-103), which is described as a detached single cell church, built in c.1820, with four bay north elevation, blank elevation to the south, single bay porch to north elevation and single bay apse to the east. Finishes include slate roof with limestone copings.

##### Architectural Conservation Area

There is no Architectural Conservation Area designated in the Kilcock Environs study area .

##### Protected Views and Prospects:

There are no protected views or prospects which affect the subject lands, however the Kildare County Council Development Plan and Draft Kilcock Town LAP identify a view and prospect to be preserved from the Royal Canal Bridge (however views of the subject lands are very limited from this vantage point).

##### National Monuments:

There are no national monuments of historical site/monuments within the study area as identified in the Sites and Monument's Record for County Meath. A zone of archaeological potential is identified south of the study area (between the 'Square' and 'Meath Bridge').

##### NHA's, SACs, SPAs

It is noteworthy that the study lands do not include any areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. There are no Natural Heritage Area(s), Special Area(s) of Conservation, Candidate Special Areas of Conservation(s) or Special Protection Area(s) in the study lands. However a section of the Royal Canal, which runs in close proximity to part of the southern boundary of the LAP study area (and is located in County Kildare), is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).



## 5.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed LAP

### 5.2.1 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected.

#### a) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

As noted above the plan area contains cultural heritage, in the form of Protected Structures. Detailed policies and objectives are prescribed in the County Development Plan 2007 which relate to the protection of the built and natural heritage. These objectives will be fully adhered to in the LAP.

While there is no identified zone of archaeological potential (zap) within the study area, given its proximity to a 'zap' area adjoining the study boundary, detailed archaeological investigation will be required at application stage to determine the extent of resource areas and any required associated buffer zones that may be necessary, and ensure their preservation.

With respect to the 2 no. protected structures, the LAP will ensure that the character and settings of these structures are retained, respected and protected. Meath County Council's Conservation Officer will be consulted with respect to any developments which would have the potential to affect the protected structures.

#### b) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit value:

It is anticipated that environmental quality standards will not be exceeded and that the value of the area will not be limited as a result of the LAP implementation.

#### c) Intensive land use

The implementation of the LAP will give rise to intensive land use on lands that are currently agricultural in nature. The LAP Plan will ensure that the development of this area is undertaken with due cognisance to its surrounding environment and that any development and intensification will sustain and improve on existing amenity. The plan will improve the public realm through encouraging a landscaped linear park along the edge of the Royal Canal. It is not expected that existing land use in the study area will be intensified such that vulnerable areas will be significantly negatively affected.

### 5.2.2 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.

It is considered that there will be no significant negative effects on the implementation of the LAP subject to adherence with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan and best practice guidelines. However, with regard to other effects, it is considered that the probability of neutral effects and some positive effects occurring, is high. It is expected that the effects will be for the most part permanent and therefore irreversible, until such time that any new policies and/ or objective are identified in a revised LAP.

### 5.2.3 The Cumulative nature of the effects

The cumulative nature of the effects of the LAP on the Environment are expected to be neutral and the LAP will focus on the principles of sustainable development. In addition to residential land use zoning, significant areas are designated as open space and amenity space, including a linear park along the edge of the Rye Water River.

### 5.2.4 The Transboundary nature of the effects

The LAP area is located entirely within the administrative boundary of Meath County Council. While noting the lands are located adjacent to Kildare County Council Administrative area, the study area does not have any national, regional or inter-county trans boundary effects.

### 5.2.5 The risk to human health and the environment

There are no designated SEVERSO sites within the LAP study area. As such, the implementation of the Local Area Plan is not likely to result in any risks to human health with the inclusion of appropriate health and safety measures being introduced. Any future development in the area will conform to the LAP, of which the fundamental essence is to create a healthy environment for people to live, work and recreate.

### 5.2.6 The magnitude and special extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be effected).

The Plan area comprises of approximately 95 ha. It is anticipated that c.56 ha will be utilised to accommodate residential and related development while the remainder of the lands shall be designated for a variety of supporting uses, such as open space, community and amenity uses etc.

The Draft Kilcock Environs LAP lands are situated within the 'M4 Dynamic Cluster', as identified by Meath County Council. Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 designates Kilcock Environs as a Moderate Growth Town in the Settlement Strategy within the Metropolitan area as designated by the RPG with an indicative level of residential development of approximately 1150 residential units.

The 1150 residential units identified for the Kilcock Environs, set out in Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, could result in approximately 4,500 persons calculated using an average of 3.0 persons per household (based on 2006 Census average for County Meath).

The study area consists primarily of green field sites with little or no existing development. Therefore in order to achieve the vision for the area, and timely delivery of development, the approach of the LAP will be to design and provide essential services infrastructure in the early stages of the development in order to achieve coherent and planned development.

The disposal of wastewater from the LAP lands will require the agreement of Kildare County Council for connection to the network and treatment at Leixlip Wastewater Treatment Plant. Development proposals in the LAP area will be considered premature in the absence of the delivery of such primary infrastructure.

### 5.2.7 Effects on areas or landscapes, which have a recognised national, Community or International protection status

As noted above, there are no landscape features within the Plan boundary which have a recognised European and international protection status.

## 6.0 Statutory Consultation

The specified environmental authorities that should be consulted in relation to Local Area Plans are:-

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG);
- The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

## 7.0 Conclusion

On consideration of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Regulations, it is considered that the proposed LAP will not result in any substantial further impacts on the environment, beyond what was envisaged within the context of the Meath Development Plan 2007-2013. The Planning Authority is satisfied that the LAP will ensure that the lands will be developed in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner fully consistent with the policy and objectives prescribed in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. In view of this, it is considered that a strategic environmental assessment is not required in respect of the proposed Local Area Plan. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of issues which will be considered during the preparation of the Local Area Plan and where appropriate, included in the objectives/policies of the LAP. These are outlined in the attached Appendix 1.

## 8.0 Recommendation:

It is not considered necessary to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the proposed Kilcock Local Area Plan.

Some of the issues to be considered in the preparation of the Kilcock Local Area Plan include the following:

- Urban Waste Water Discharge Licensing
- Waste Management
- Soil and Contamination
- Energy/Energy Conservation
- Traffic Management
- Human Health/Quality of Life
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape/Townscape
- Environmental Policies and Objectives set out in the Meath County Development Plan.
- EIA
- Bathing Water
- Flooding
- Biodiversity and Designated Sites
- Climate Change
- Water Treatment Infrastructure
- Water Quality
- Drinking Water
- Waste Management

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## 1.0 Introduction

Meath County Council has prepared a Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Environs of Kilcock, Co. Meath. A number of amendments have been proposed to the draft Plan following consideration of the Plan by the elected Members of Meath County Council. As part of this process, consideration has been given to the likely environmental effects of implementing the local area plan with the amendments, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2004.

Section 3.4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines states that screening (i.e. the process for deciding whether a particular plan other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA) is required in the case of Local Area Plans where the population is less than 10,000 persons. As the population of Kilcock is below 10,000 persons, the purpose of this report is to determine if the amendments to the local area plan require a Strategic Environmental Assessment i.e. screen the local area plan. In preparing this report reference was made to the Guidelines for the Implementation of SEA Directive as prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) and in particular Schedule 2A of SI 436 of 2004.

## 2.0 Policy Context

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According to the settlement hierarchy for County Meath set out in the County Development Plan, Kilcock Environs is categorised as a moderate growth town, with the role of these settlements envisaged as having an interacting and supporting role to their adjacent large towns. Having regard to its locational context, Kilcock is considered to be closely associated with the M4 Economic Development Corridor for the purposes of the County Development Plan (CDP) Settlement Strategy and the LAP. In this regard, Meath County Council, are keen to facilitate the realisation of the Dynamic Cluster of Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge and Kilcock contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. This will be achieved through continued partnership with Kildare County Council in the preparation of complimentary and integrated spatial planning frameworks and the delivery of necessary physical infrastructure for the environs of Kilcock including, inter alia, a services infrastructure for the envisaged development in the wider area.

## 3.0 Location and Physical Context

The study area, which comprises approximately 95ha of lands is located in the administrative area of Meath County Council and contiguous to the County Kildare administrative boundary. The lands are separated from Kilcock by the Rye Water River and are currently accessed from the town

by the County Bridge (Meath Bridge) from the town square and by Balfeaghan Bridge to the west of the Trim Road. The lands are approximately 1.2 km from the Kilcock Interchange on the M4 Motorway. The Royal Canal passes through Kilcock to the south of the LAP lands.

The LAP area comprises c.13 fields separated primarily by mature hedgerows. The lands are in agricultural use and are generally flat. There is modest undulation with a fall from north to south towards the Rye Water River. A number of small watercourses and drainage ditches traverse the LAP lands, draining to the Rye Water River.

Development to date within the LAP lands consists of low density dwellings forming ribbon development along the local road network. These dwellings consist of single, dormer and two storey dwellings in a variety of designs and materials. Close to the County Bridge and south of the R125, a cluster of buildings includes a stone farmhouse building and a gable fronted church.

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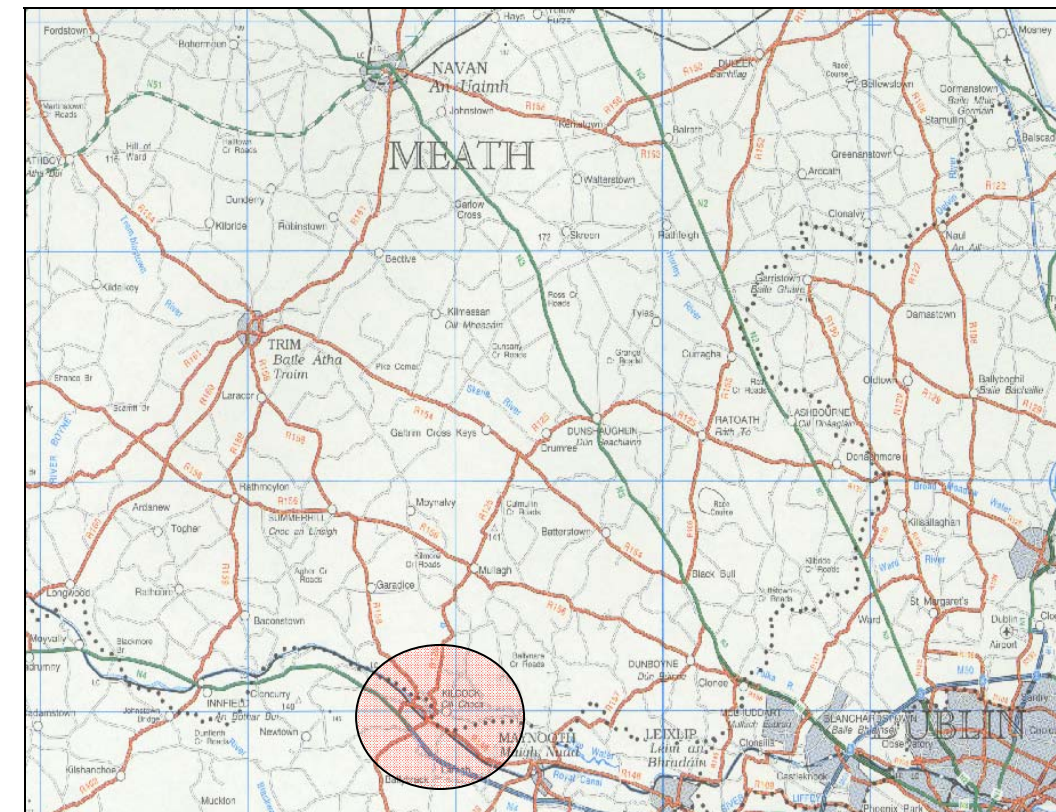


Figure 1: Location Map

## 4.0 Population

The population of County Meath in 1996 was recorded at 109,732 persons. The population of the County increased by 24,273 persons in the next 6 years up to the 2002 Census of Population. This roughly equates to the current population of Navan moving into the County over a 6 year period or the current population of Kells moving into the County on a yearly basis. The population increase





of 22.1% between 1996-2002 was the highest experienced by any Irish County over the same period. The overall population increase in the State over the same period was 8.0%. The population growth was accounted for by natural increase 6,402 persons (26.4%) and estimated net migration 17,802 (73.6%).

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The most recent census of population taken by the Central Statistics Office CSO was taken in April 2006. Demographic trends for the study area have been analysed at region, county, town and local levels. The populations of Meath and Kildare have increased consistently over the 20 year period. County Meath recorded an increase of c.56.5% between 1986 and 2006, while County Kildare experienced a c.60.3% increase over the same period. The population of County Meath recorded in 2006 of 162,621 persons represented a 21.4% increase on the figure for 2002. The population of County Kildare increased by 13.6% between 2002 and 2006. According to the 2006 Census, the population of Kilcock Town was 4,100 persons (previously 2740 in the 2002 census), giving rise to a 49.6% increase during the last census period.

#### **5.0 Criteria for determining the likely significant environmental impacts (Schedule 2 (A) of SEA Regulations 2004).**

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance environmental effects. The proposed LAP must be assessed against the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. The most relevant considerations are 1) Characteristics of the Proposed LAP and 2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed LAP.

#### **5.2 Characteristics of the Proposed LAP.**

The proposed LAP was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 2.1.9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 (Policy SS OBJ 1 and SS OBJ 2 and Variation No. 2 refer). The lands the subject of this LAP are identified for development by way of their development boundary in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 adheres to the principles of sustainable development, in accordance with the requirements of Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2006. The local area plan and proposed amendments are consistent with the principles, objectives and policies of the Meath County Development Plan and associated Environmental Report and therefore will have a strong emphasis on promoting the sustainable development of the area.

Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 relates to an Order of Priority which was adopted for the release of existing residentially zoned lands (i.e. phasing) that shall conform to the scale and quantum of development indicated in Table 5 and Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan. Under Variation No. 2 it is stated that 56 ha have been released within Phase 1. The number of units indicated to meet household targets in Kilcock is 1150. No further lands are denoted for residential release and the development of lands is subject to the availability of water and waste water infrastructure.

The draft Kilcock Environs LAP was prepared and placed on public display from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009 to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and a manager's report was prepared on the submissions received. The draft plan and manager's report were considered by the members of Meath County Council at a council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009. As a result of this, a number of material amendments have been proposed to the draft plan. These include minor mapping and zoning alterations e.g. changes to text, minor revisions in the scale and location of some zonings. The changes to the document include the addition of policies that relate to the need to acknowledge the location of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC downstream of Kilcock and to ensure that proposals in the Environs LAP area do not impact on the SAC site. A copy of the proposed amendments is included in Appendix 1 to this document.

#### 5.1.1 Environmental considerations relevant to the Plan Area

There are a number of features of the built/natural environment which are subject to heritage and environmental designations in the study area as outlined below.

#### 5.1.1.1 Conservation and Heritage

#### Protected Structures

There are 2 no. structures in the Kilcock Environs which are registered as protected structures in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 as detailed below:

3. The first is a two storey 4 bay farmhouse with three stacks (ref no. MH049-102), adjacent to the Little Chapel of the Assumption.
4. The second protected structure is denoted as the Little Chapel of the Assumption (ref. no. MH049-103), which is described as a detached single cell church, built in c.1820, with four bay north elevation, blank elevation to the south, single bay porch to north elevation and single bay apse to the east. Finishes include slate roof with limestone copings.

#### Architectural Conservation Area

There is no Architectural Conservation Area designated in the Kilcock Environs study area.

#### Protected Views and Prospects:

There are no protected views or prospects which affect the subject lands. However, the Kildare County Council Development Plan and Draft Kilcock Town LAP identify a view and prospect to be preserved from the Royal Canal Bridge (however views of the subject lands are very limited from this vantage point).

#### National Monuments:

There are no national monuments of historical site/monuments within the study area as identified in the Sites and Monument's Record for County Meath. A zone of archaeological potential is identified south of the study area (between the 'Square' and 'Meath Bridge').

#### Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas

It is noteworthy that the study lands do not include any areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. There are no Natural Heritage Area(s), Special Area(s) of Conservation, Candidate Special Areas of Conservation(s) or Special Protection Area(s) in the study lands. However a section of the Royal Canal, which runs in close proximity to part of the southern boundary of the LAP study area (and



is located in County Kildare), is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC site is located downstream of the plan area. The Rye Water flows along the southern boundary of the plan area.

## 5.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed LAP

### 5.2.1 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected.

#### a) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

As noted above the plan area contains cultural heritage, in the form of Protected Structures. Detailed policies and objectives are prescribed in the County Development Plan 2007 which relate to the protection of the built and natural heritage. These objectives will be fully adhered to in the LAP.

While there is no identified zone of archaeological potential (zap) within the study area, given its proximity to a 'zap' area adjoining the study boundary, detailed archaeological investigation will be required at application stage to determine the extent of resource areas and any required associated buffer zones that may be necessary, and ensure their preservation.

With respect to the two protected structures, the LAP will ensure that the character and settings of these structures are retained, respected and protected. Meath County Council's Conservation Officer and the relevant prescribed bodies will be consulted with respect to any developments which would have the potential to affect the protected structures.

The Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC site is located downstream of the environs area with the Rye Water River passing along the southern boundary of the plan area. The amendments to the draft plan include additional policies to ensure that development in the environs area will not give rise to negative impacts on the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC.

#### b) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit value:

It is anticipated that environmental quality standards will not be exceeded and that the value of the area will not be limited as a result of the LAP implementation.

#### c) Intensive land use

The proposed amendments will result in a marginal increase in lands zoned for residential development and corresponding reduction in lands zoned for community uses. The implementation of the LAP as a whole will give rise to intensive land use on lands that are currently agricultural in nature. However, the LAP will ensure that the development of this area is undertaken with due cognisance to its surrounding environment and that any development and intensification will sustain and improve on existing amenity. The plan will improve the public realm through encouraging a landscaped linear park along the edge of the Royal Canal. It is not expected that existing land use in the study area will be intensified such that vulnerable areas will be significantly negatively affected. The proposed amendments include additional policies to ensure that the SAC site downstream of the Environs Area (Rye Water Valley/Carton) will be protected from negative impacts. These include that drainage proposals for the environs area take due cognisance of the SAC site and would not have any undue impact on the site and that proposals for the amenity walkway and other construction works along the Rye Water would be subject to appropriate assessment screening.

### 5.2.2 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.

It is considered that there will be no significant negative effects from the implementation of the proposed amendments subject to adherence with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan and best practice guidelines. However, with regard to other effects, it is considered that the probability of neutral effects and some positive effects occurring is high. It is expected that the effects will be for the most part permanent and therefore irreversible, until such time that any new policies and/or objective are identified in a revised LAP.

### 5.2.3 The cumulative nature of the effects

The cumulative nature of the effects of the proposed amendments to the LAP on the environment is expected to be neutral and the LAP will focus on the principles of sustainable development. In addition to residential land use zoning, significant areas are designated as open space and amenity space, including a linear park along the edge of the Rye Water River.

### 5.2.4 The transboundary nature of the effects

The LAP area is located entirely within the administrative boundary of Meath County Council. The proposed amendments do not alter the development boundary as set out in the draft LAP. While noting the lands are located adjacent to Kildare County Council Administrative area, the study area does not have any national, regional or inter-county trans boundary effects.

### 5.2.5 The risk to human health and the environment

There are no designated SEVERSO sites within the LAP study area. The implementation of the proposed amendments is not likely to result in any risks to human health with the inclusion of appropriate health and safety measures being introduced. Any future development in the area will conform to the LAP in its entirety, of which the fundamental essence is to create a healthy environment for people to live, work and recreate.

### 5.2.6 The magnitude and special extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be effected).

The overall Plan area comprises of approximately 95 ha. It is anticipated that c.57.5 ha will be utilised to accommodate residential and related development while the remainder of the lands shall be designated for a variety of supporting uses, such as open space, community and amenity uses etc.

The Kilcock Environs are situated within the 'M4 Dynamic Cluster', as identified by Meath County Council. Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 designates Kilcock Environs as a Moderate Growth Town in the Settlement Strategy within the Metropolitan area as designated by the RPG with an indicative level of residential development of approximately 1150 residential units.

The 1150 residential units identified for the Kilcock Environs, set out in Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, could result in approximately 4,500 persons calculated using an average of 3.0 persons per household (based on 2006 Census average for County Meath).

The proposed amendments do not alter the development boundary as set out in the draft LAP. They would result in a slight increase in the intensity of development as an additional 1.5 hectares would be used for higher density residential use. However this is not considered significant in the context of the overall extent of development taking place on the environs lands with the LAP.

#### 5.2.7 Effects on areas or landscapes, which have a recognised national, Community or International protection status

As noted above, there are no landscape features within the Plan boundary which have a recognised European and international protection status. The Rye Valley/Carton SAC site is located downstream of the environs area. The Rye Water River passes along the southern boundary of the environs lands. The proposed amendments include additional text and policies to safeguard the SAC site and ensure that development of the LAP lands will not result in any undue impacts on it.

### **6.0 Statutory Consultation**

The specified environmental authorities that should be consulted in relation to Local Area Plans are:-

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG);
- The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

### **7.0 Conclusion**

On consideration of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Regulations, it is considered that the proposed amendments will not result in any substantial further impacts on the environment, beyond what was envisaged within the context of the Meath Development Plan 2007-2013. The Planning Authority is satisfied that the LAP with the amendments will ensure that the lands will be developed in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner fully consistent with the policy and objectives prescribed in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. In view of this, it is considered that a strategic environmental assessment is not required in respect of the proposed local area plan amendments.

### **8.0 Recommendation:**

It is not considered necessary to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the proposed amendments to the Draft Kilcock Environs Local Area Plan.