

SEA STATEMENT

OF THE

**NEWCASTLE LOCAL AREA PLAN
2012-2018**

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

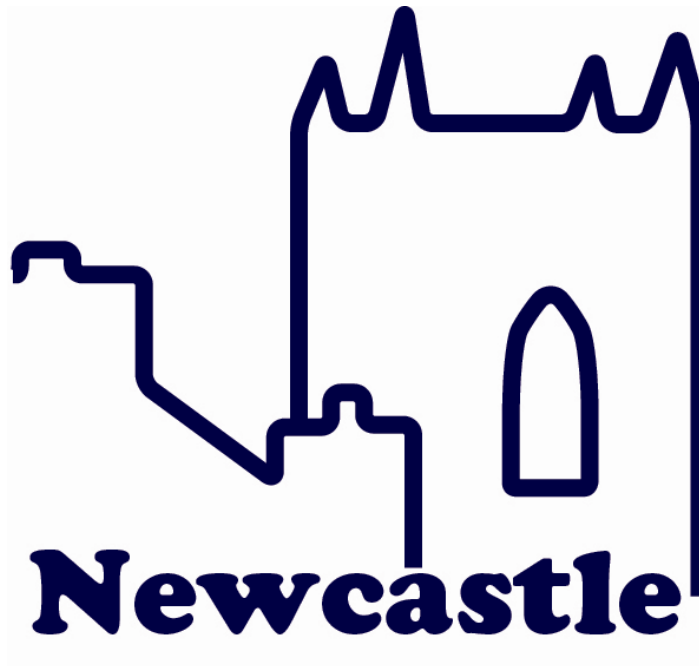


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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Report

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement of the Newcastle Local Area Plan (LAP) 2012. The main purpose of the SEA Statement is to indicate how environmental considerations, the views of consultees and the recommendations of the Environmental Report have been incorporated in the decision making process in the formulation of the LAP.

1.2 Legislative Context

The requirement to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment stems from the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) which states:

'The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans.....with a view to promoting sustainable development.....'

The Directive was introduced into Irish Law in 2004, through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans & Programmes) Regulations 2004, S.I. No. 435 of 2004 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (additional supplementary Regulations were introduced in 2011).

Article 9 of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) provides that the environmental authorities and the public must be provided with an SEA Statement as soon as is practical after a plan is adopted. The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan,
- b) how
 - the environmental report,
 - submissions and observations made on the Draft Plan and Environmental Report, and
 - any transboundary consultationshave been taken into account during the preparation of the plan.
- c) the reasons for choosing the plan, as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives and
- d) the measures selected to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan.

1.3 Implications of SEA for the Plan Making Process

While the requirement for a mandatory Strategic Environmental Assessment for Local Area Plans applies only to areas in which the population is in excess of 5,000 persons, South Dublin County Council was of the opinion that development in the Newcastle LAP area was likely to potentially have significant effects on the environment due to the unique heritage within the area: accordingly, an Environmental Report was prepared in parallel with the production of the Draft LAP and was submitted to the Elected Members alongside the Draft Plan. The purpose of the report was to provide an understanding of the likely environmental consequences of various alternative scenarios and of the policies and objectives contained within the LAP.

Submissions on the Environmental Report and the draft LAP were evaluated in order to ascertain any further environmental consequences to those already identified. These evaluations were included within the Managers Reports to Council Members on the proposed amendments to the Plan. The Elected Members were required by the legislation to take into account the Environmental Report before the adoption of the Plan.

1.4 Production of the SEA

The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Newcastle Local Area Plan 2012 was undertaken internally

in the Council by a separate SEA team who closely liaised with the LAP Team.

SECTION 2 HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE INTEGRATED INTO THE PLAN

Environmental considerations were integrated into the LAP process at a number of stages in the SEA i.e. the Scoping stage, at the Environmental Report stage and following the submissions and observations from the Environmental Authorities and the public.

In addition, the environmental sensitivities of the LAP area were communicated to the Plan-preparation team on a regular basis from the outset of the Plan preparation process. This process helped identify those areas with the most limited carrying capacity and helped ensure that either future growth was diverted away from these areas or that appropriate mitigation measures were integrated into the Plan.

The Local Area Plan was also subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) at both the draft and amendment stage.

2.1 Scoping Report

An SEA Scoping Issues Paper was sent to the designated Environmental Authorities on the 30th September 2011. The Paper set out a description of the Newcastle LAP area and a baseline of environmental data (grouped under the environmental themes/receptors – biodiversity, flora and fauna, population and human health, soil and landscape, water, air, climate, material assets and cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological). Submissions were received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The most important strategic environmental issues in the Newcastle LAP area arising from the scoping exercise and from the consultations were identified as follows:

- The need for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in the LAP lands as a primary strategy in the plan.
- The presence of extensive archaeological monuments and protected structures within a unique historic area landscape.
- The need to maintain the Biodiversity Network, in particular along existing burgage hedgerows and the need to comply with the Habitats Directive.
- The loss of habitat due to hedgerow removal in recent developments, thus impacting on the presence of a significant number of bats in the area, which are a Protected Species under domestic and EU legislation.

2.2 Environmental Report

The Environmental Report was prepared alongside the LAP and investigated, described and evaluated the effects of implementing the LAP on the receiving environment. The report also assesses and identifies development alternatives for the LAP area, and identifies the most sustainable development strategy.

Overall, the preparation of the Environmental Report influenced the formulation of the Local Area Plan as follows;

- It raised the awareness of the existing level of environmental information in the LAP area and also the EU and National legislation governing the environment
- It facilitated the introduction of the concept of Green Infrastructure into the LAP
- It emphasised the necessity of maintaining the Burgage Hedgerows and their adjoining swales
- It provided a transparent assessment of each proposed policy and objective which allowed further fine-tuning to reduce negative environmental impacts

The detail of these influences is expanded on below.

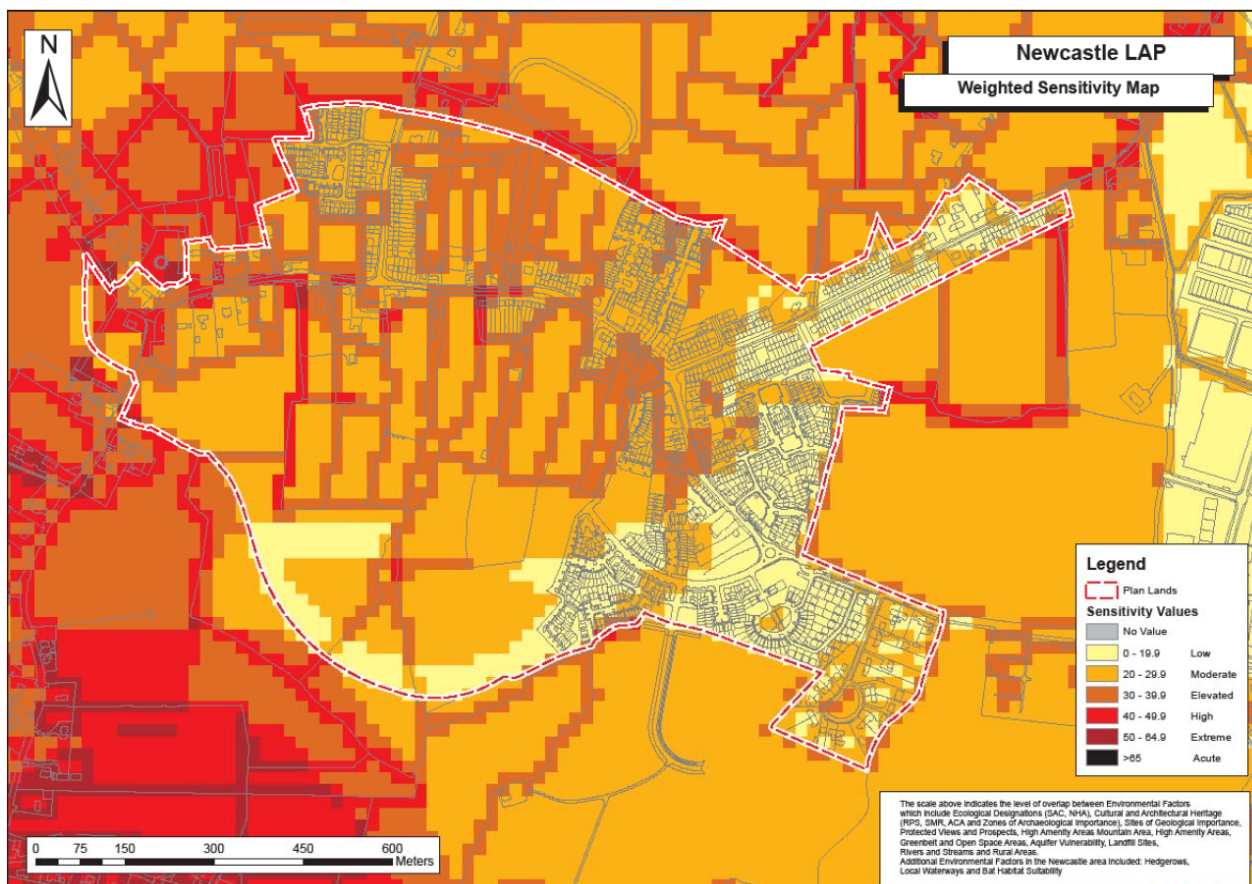
2.2.1 Baseline: The Environmental Report contains a range of baseline information in the Newcastle LAP area on key environmental headings such as

- 1 Population and Human Health
- 2 Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)
- 3 Landscape/Geology/Soil
- 4 Agriculture and Forestry
- 5 Water Quality
- 6 Air Quality
- 7 Waste Management
- 8 Material Assets
- 9 Cultural Heritage and
- 10 Climate Change and Sustainability

2.2.2 Mapping of Environmental Sensitivities

Geographical Information System (GIS) software was used in order to weight a number of environmental sensitivities and map them in layers; this allowed for the identification of concentrated areas of sensitivity within the area. Environmental sensitivities are indicated by colours which range from extreme vulnerability (red) to high vulnerability (orange) to moderate vulnerability (yellow) and low vulnerability (grey).

Where the mapping shows a concentration of environmental sensitivities, there is an increased likelihood that development will conflict with these sensitivities and cause environmental deterioration. The map (see below), was utilised in the evaluation of policies and objectives and in association with the assessment of alternative development scenarios (see Section 4).



Mapping of Environmental Sensitivities

2.2.3 Key Environmental Issues Identified: The key environmental issues in the Newcastle LAP area were identified in the Environmental Report as

- The intensity of recent development throughout the plan lands leading to a reduction in the extent of burgage plots despite policy and objectives in the 2003 LAP requiring their retention. This loss has had a negative impact on the archaeological heritage of the area and on Newcastle's historical landscape character.
- The need to create a robust biodiversity network within the Newcastle LAP lands by enhancing ecological connectivity, preventing further habitat fragmentation through the removal of hedgerows and disturbance to the bat population in the area.
- The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in Newcastle rather than the use of underground attenuation tanks as a means of dealing with surface water run-off.
- The opportunity to provide enhanced walking and cycling routes within the area and connecting to surrounding areas.

There are still a number of **data gaps in the Baseline** information for Newcastle. These are detailed below;

- The lack of a Biodiversity Plan for South Dublin.
- An incomplete Landscape Character Assessment for South Dublin.
- Lack of information on air quality in the vicinity
- Flood Risk information is confined mainly to the OPW's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)

A Biodiversity Plan will be commencing shortly and is expected to be finalised by mid 2013. Some, though not all, of the information gaps caused by the absence of a Biodiversity Plan and a detailed Landscape Character Assessment have been addressed in the Heritage Plan. Detailed information concerning floodplains will become available following the completion of Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Management Studies (CFRAMS) for the River Liffey which is part of the Eastern CFRAM study.

2.2.4 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO)

The SEOs, listed below, are measures against which the environmental effects of the Newcastle Local Area Plan can be tested in order to help identify areas in which significant adverse impacts are likely to occur, if unmitigated. The SEOs are objectives derived from international, E.U. and national strategies, policies, directives and plans that are relevant to the LAP. The SEOs are linked to indicators and targets which facilitate monitoring of the implementation of both the LAP and the County Development Plan (the SEA Monitoring System¹ initiated by the Council following the adoption of the County Development Plan is also suitable for use at the LAP level) and are as follows;

¹ As the Development Plan SEA Monitoring framework included a range of indicators for which there was no existing source, the Council has created an SEA Monitoring System using Development Management derived Indicators to both monitor the significant environmental impacts of Development Plan policies and to begin the process of introducing meaningful indicators to monitor spatial planning. The system became operational at the start of 2011 and records all planning applications made since the coming into operation of the Plan in October 2010.

Biodiversity 1 (B1)	To avoid loss of relevant habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites
Biodiversity 2 (B2)	To avoid significant adverse impacts, including direct, cumulative and indirect impacts, to relevant habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites by development within or adjacent to these sites
Biodiversity 3(B3)	To sustain, enhance or - where relevant - prevent the loss of ecological networks or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity
Human Health 1 (HH1)	To protect human health from hazards or nuisances arising from traffic and incompatible landuses
Soil 1 (S1)	To maximise the sustainable re-use of brownfield lands and the existing built environment, rather than developing greenfield lands
Water 1 (W1)	To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality of rivers, lakes and surface water
Water 2 (W2)	To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water
Water 3 (W3)	To prevent development on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future – a significant flood risk
Climate and Air 1 (C1)	To minimise increases in travel related greenhouse emissions to air i.e. minimise travel demand
Climate and Air 2 (C2)	To reduce car dependency within the County by way of, inter alia, encouraging modal change from car to more sustainable forms of public transport and encouraging development which will not be dependent on private transport
Material Assets 1 (M1)	To serve new development under the CDP with appropriate waste water treatment
Material Assets 2 (M2)	To maintain and improve the quality of drinking water supplies
Cultural Heritage 1 (CH1)	To protect the archaeological heritage of South Dublin with regard to entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential - and the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant
Cultural Heritage 2 (CH2)	To preserve and protect the special interest and character of South Dublin's architectural heritage with regard to entries to the Record of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, and their context within the surrounding landscape where relevant
Landscape 1 (L1)	To protect and avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape, landscape features and designated scenic routes; especially with regard to areas of high amenity, the Dublin Mountain Area

2.2.5 Environmental Assessment:

The policies and objectives of the LAP were assessed against the SEOs at a number of stages during the process. This allowed for early identification and mitigation of environmental conflicts. This resulted in amendments to existing policies, the addition of environmentally beneficial policies and the removal of policies with significant negative effects. Local Area Plan policies were also assessed for **secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium, and long term, permanent and temporary, positive, neutral and negative** effects as required under the SEA Directive.

Assessment of each Local Area Plan policy is contained within the Environmental Report (July 2012).

The policies and objectives proposed in the Manager's Report and agreed by the Elected Members after the Draft Plan went on public display (17th July to the 3rd September 2012) were also assessed and

incorporated into the amended Plan.

2.2.6 Mitigation.

The introduction of the concept of Green Infrastructure to the Newcastle LAP at the draft stage ensured the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, the provision of accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities, the sustainable management of water, the maintenance of the historic landscape character and the protection and enhancement of the architectural and archaeological heritage.

A series of policies/objectives evolved in discussion between the LAP and SEA Teams and these were recommended as mitigation measures in the Environmental Report for integration into the Local Area Plan; these are listed below.

Selected Mitigation Measures.

<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>It is an objective of the proposed Local Area Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all extensive development proposals maximise the opportunities for enhancement of existing ecology and biodiversity and are accompanied by a full ecological assessment, carried out by a suitably qualified professional, that includes measures to enhance ecology and biodiversity and avoid or minimise loss to local ecology and biodiversity. (Objective GI27)
<p>Water and Water Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote the sustainable collection and on-site retention of surface water for delayed discharge to the local water system and for use as an on-site resource and as a means of creating a biodiversity network that will retain and develop existing flora and fauna. (Objective GI12) • That a linked SUDS network shall be implemented fully across the Plan Lands in accordance with national and regional SUDS requirements including the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study and all proposed developments shall contribute to the achievement of this integrated network in order to reduce surface water run-off and to minimise the risk of flooding of the Plan Lands and surrounding lands. This shall include for a large attenuation wetland area to form part of a neighbourhood park to the north of Main Street, which will collect the remaining surface water from the developed SUDS network to the south prior to it feeding the stream system to the north of the village. (Objective GI13) • That all development shall incorporate on site SUDS technologies detailed in the standards section (Section 7) of this Local Area Plan such as porous grass paviers, green roofs, rainwater recycling systems and soakaways. (Objective GI14) • That SUDS elements such as swales, detention and retention basins and other landscape based attenuation features be planted with suitable riparian vegetation and water tolerant tree planting that will clean and attenuate surface water flow. The planting of such species will be particularly required within parkland areas and along the east-west running SUDS elements in order to help intercept and direct waterflows. (Objective GI16) • That all swales utilised within the SUDS network shall be of an appropriate (shallow and wide) dimension to allow for ease of maintenance including mowing and be designed in the interest of health and safety where practical. (Objective GI17)

<p>Groundwater Vulnerability and Protection</p>	<p>It is an objective of the proposed Local Area Plan that development proposals in the vicinity of the high vulnerability area shall be accompanied by sufficient detail to protect existing groundwater sources from pollution during construction and development phases. The detail shall be in accordance with the requirements of the 'South Dublin Groundwater Protection Scheme' (Geological Survey of Ireland, 2011). (Objective GI19)</p>
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>No more than 3-4 single storey dwellings (low profile roof) be provided on the parcel of land at the south-west corner of the junction of Hazelhatch and Athgoe Road provided that such development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides an appropriate green buffer with adjoining agricultural lands; • preserves views of Athgoe Hill and Lyons Hill at the eastern end of Hazelhatch Road to the south-west and; • Is sensitive to the setting of Newcastle Farm, a Protected Structure. (MSW6a)
<p>Transportation and Climatic Factors</p>	<p>Create open ended routes through existing and new development in a manner that ensures greater permeability and convenient pedestrian access to community facilities, schools, open spaces, shopping facilities, local employment and public transport stops. (Objective AM13)</p> <p>7.2.28.5 Green Roofs Green roofs can be an effective means of reducing runoff volumes for ordinary rainfall events and can contribute to visual amenity. The implementation of green roofs should be considered throughout all development especially within the design of civic/cultural/retail buildings and residential properties in the Settlement Edge. It is noted that green roofs can have a significant impact on the sizing of main drainage components unless combined with rainwater harvesters.</p> <p>7.2.28.6 Rainwater Harvesting Rainwater harvesting can reduce demand on potable water supplies whilst reducing the size of some main drainage components. All suitable dwellings or groups of dwellings should therefore be provided with such facilities. Detailed evaluation of the benefits of rainwater harvesting requires the use of time series rainfall data.</p>
	<p>It is an objective of the Plan to require all new buildings to be high in energy efficiency and use energy sources that minimise damage to the environment. All new buildings proposed within the Plan Lands shall comply with Section 5.4 'Sustainability and Energy Efficiency' of the document Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, 2007 and the relevant Building Regulations. (Objective BF7b)</p>
<p>Noise</p>	<p>7.2.7 Traffic Noise Softer methods of reducing the impact of traffic noise on residential amenity shall be implemented rather than measures that detract from the quality of streetscapes such as noise barriers and wide building setbacks. Examples of measures that can be implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing speed limits along streets; - Dispersal of traffic; - Use of noise absorbing construction materials on carriageway surfaces and in the construction of buildings that adjoin streets;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of additional tree planting and other landscaping along and between streets; - Distribution of uses across sites in a manner that places less sensitive uses such as commercial uses closer to busy streets and shields residential uses.
<p>Architectural Heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Structures and upstanding archaeological remains, including their environs shall be protected, preserved and enhanced as part of any surrounding or adjoining development and incorporated into a heritage trail/network for the village and its hinterland. (Objective GI20) • An Archaeological Assessment Report shall be submitted with all planning applications within the 'Zone of Archaeological Potential'. All such reports shall fully assess the archaeological implications of the proposed development. Where archaeological features are discovered it shall be demonstrated how the design and layout of development protects, incorporate and enhances these features. (Objective GI21) • Development within the vicinity of an upstanding monument(s) shall enhance the setting of the feature(s) and shall be sited and designed appropriately. Views of the Motte from Main Street and Hazelhatch Road shall be protected from sensitive surrounding development. Development of the derelict public house site (previously known as McEvoy's) at the north-east corner of the junction between Main Street and Hazelhatch Road should be especially designed to enhance and protect the view of the Motte. (Objective GI24)

SECTION 3: SUBMISSIONS & OBSERVATIONS DURING PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

The following section details the significant issues which were raised by the Environmental Authorities prior to, during and after the preparation of the Draft Newcastle Local Area Plan and the accompanying Environmental Report and how these were incorporated into the Plan. The submissions range from the initial scoping responses on environmental issues from the Statutory Authorities (October/November 2011) to submissions on the Draft Plan Report (September 2012). A number of submissions from the non-environmental authorities which resulted in amendments to the Plan are also included.

3.2 SEA Scoping Consultations

An SEA Scoping Issues Paper was sent to the designated Environmental Authorities on the 30th September 2011. The responses to the issues paper were taken into account during the carrying out of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. The most significant issue/point raised was that from the EPA was as follows:-

- It is noted that surface water quality in the Plan area is classified as being of "bad" status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) for the Lower Griffeen River and the Lower Camac River, which are located within / adjacent to the Plan area respectively. The River Liffey, located downstream of the Plan area, was classified as being of "moderate" status under the WFD and as being of "moderate" (Q3-4 in 2010) quality by the EPA. It should be ensured that a commitment is given to implementing the recommendations of the Eastern River Basin District Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures, as relevant to Newcastle-Lyons, in order to improve water quality within the Plan area.

This issue was incorporated into the Environmental Report and a number of relevant Programme of Measures was listed. In addition, the LAP Team adopted a robust approach to the use of SuDS in the Plan as a means of dealing with surface water run-off.

3.3 Submissions and Observations on the Draft Plan and the Environmental Report.

The written submissions received from the Environmental Authorities following the public display period (17th July to the 3rd September 2012) of the Draft Newcastle Local Area Plan (and accompanying Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessment Screening) and the responses are summarised below. The full response to the submissions (Managers Report October 2012) from both the Environmental Authorities and the non-environmental submissions is available.

Submission Summary	Response
<p>DoECLG</p> <p>The submission stated that the Draft Plan is well thought out and well presented.</p> <p>The DoECLG also included some additional points (house unit numbers, phasing and school infrastructure) in relation to non-environmental aspects</p>	
<p>Environmental Protection Agency</p> <p>The submission acknowledged that the protection of the environmental sensitivities identified in the SEA Environmental Report has been well</p>	

<p>integrated into the Plan. In particular the implementation of green infrastructure, SUDS, retention and reinstatement of Burgage plot boundaries and hedgerows, the provision of cycling and pedestrian routes.</p> <p>The EPA submission raised an extensive number of points that were dealt with by providing clarification, additional information or indicating that the Council had policies and objectives at a County level on particular issues raised and that it was not felt appropriate that all of these would be reiterated at a Local Plan level. There were a number of additional points that were incorporated;</p> <p>Mitigation measures should be linked with the specific significant effects that have been identified in the Environmental Report, in order to clarify which Plan policies/objectives are being mitigated for.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Sensitivity Map required clarification on the underlying methodology and that it should be included in the Non Technical Summary (NTS).</p> <p>Requested that the Non-Technical Summary include a summary of the likely significant effects identified in the SEA.</p> <p>The Plan should promote the use of renewable energy systems such as solar, wind, geothermal and should promote the development of energy efficient buildings in the interests of promoting sustainable development. The implementation of an Energy Conservation Strategy for the Plan area should be considered.</p>	<p>The Strategic Environmental Objective against which the original policy/objective was assessed and the mitigation measure subsequently introduced, were referenced in the response.</p> <p>An explanation of the GIS based Sensitivity Map was subsequently included in the response and a commitment was given to reproduce the map in the NTS.</p> <p>A summary of the likely significant effects identified in the SEA, including reference to the Strategic Environmental Objective, was included in the response.</p> <p>The LAP was amended to include the statement that " The Plan seeks to promote the use of renewable energy systems to meet the needs of all new and existing buildings contained within the boundary of the Plan Lands" and a New Objective (BF8) was included as follows</p> <p>"It is an objective of the Plan to require all new buildings to be high in energy efficiency and use energy sources that minimise damage to the environment. All new buildings proposed within the Plan Lands shall comply with Section 5.4 'Sustainability and Energy Efficiency' of the document Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, 2007".</p>
<p>Rail Procurement Agency</p> <p>There is an opportunity to create a cycle access to the Luas Saggart Stop by installing cycle lanes along</p>	<p><u>Response to both submissions</u></p> <p>Insert an objective into the Draft Plan's Accessibility and Movement Strategy that explicitly supports the provision of pedestrian and cycle</p>

<p>the R120 and this should be included as an objective of the LAP. Such an objective would encourage walking and cycling and overdependence on car transport.</p> <p>Minister Frances Fitzgerald T.D.</p> <p>Permeability between the two villages of Newcastle and Rathcoole should be encouraged, including public transport or cycle/footpaths linking the villages. This will also promote easier access to the cemetery. The following should be implemented: a cycle lane from Newcastle Main Street to the roundabout approaching Rathcoole, the extension of street lighting from Newcastle Village to Greenogue and footpath cleaning.</p>	<p>routes at a wider level outside of the Plan Lands that will integrate with Newcastle's planned cycle and pedestrian network and links Newcastle with Hazelhatch, Rathcoole and Saggart to include for access to Greenogue (with street lighting) and routes towards the Luas stop in Saggart and rail stop in Hazelhatch.</p>
<p>South Dublin Conservation Society</p> <p>All archaeological in-situ discoveries should be incorporated into green spaces and laid out in an appropriate pattern with signage explaining the site.</p>	<p>Augment objectives under Archaeology and Architecture to require in-situ preservation of, inter alia, significant archaeological features/deposits discovered during construction on lands to be occupied by planned open spaces and for such features to be accompanied by appropriate and sensitive explanatory signage.</p>
<p>Minister Frances Fitzgerald T.D.</p> <p>Requests that exercise equipment be considered within the planned parks.</p>	<p>Amend text in Table 5.1 (Hierarchy and Function of Open Spaces) of the Local Area Plan to include a requirement to provide exercise equipment within the Village Park and Neighbourhood/Local Parks.</p>
<p>National Transport Authority (NTA)</p> <p>Public transport accessibility should be a key factor in influencing the scale, density and location of future development in the Greater Dublin Area. Due to Newcastle's remoteness from high-quality rail and bus services and from retail and other services and the fact that the Newcastle ED is the second most car dependent in the GDA (69% car use) the settlement is not a preferred location for large-scale residential development. The extent of lands zoned for residential use in the LAP should reflect this.</p>	<p>While the extent of residential zoning in the LAP has remained the same, the density of dwellings permitted on these lands has been reduced from the 2003 LAP by 43%.</p>

3.4 Additional Recommended Amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan as outlined in the Managers Report

The Managers Report on the submissions made to the Draft LAP also included a series on recommendations to the LAP following reconsideration by the LAP Team. The recommendations were subjected to AA Screening and environmental assessment: the environmental assessments of the main proposed amendments were as follows;

Recommendation	Assessment
<p><u>Archaeology</u> Augment objectives under Archaeology and Architecture to require in-situ preservation of, inter alia, significant archaeological features/deposits discovered during construction on lands to be occupied by planned open spaces and for such features to be accompanied by appropriate and sensitive explanatory signage.</p>	<p>This amendment will strengthen the LAPs protection of Newcastle's archaeology by supplementing existing objectives to secure the preservation in-situ of features/deposits, discovered during construction, within planned open spaces. The explanatory signage will secure knowledge of the feature/deposit for future generations.</p>
<p><u>Cyclist and Pedestrian Links to Greenogue, Rathcoole, Hazelhatch and Saggart</u> Insert an objective into the Draft Plan's Accessibility and Movement Strategy that explicitly supports the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes at a wider level outside of the Plan Lands that will integrate with Newcastle's planned cycle and pedestrian network and links Newcastle with Hazelhatch, Rathcoole and Saggart to include for access to Greenogue (with street lighting) and routes towards the Luas stop in Saggart and rail stop in Hazelhatch.</p>	<p>This objective will support and encourage walking/cycling based movement patterns not only within the village settlement but between existing villages in the area. This will especially encourage a modal shift away from cars for those accessing public transport at Saggart and amenities, such as schools, in Rathcoole.</p>
<p><u>Parcel of Land at South-West Corner of Junction between Hazelhatch and Athgoe Roads</u> Include parcel of land at the south-west corner of the junction of Hazelhatch and Athgoe Road as part of Settlement Edge on Soft Settlement Edge Map (Fig 5.10).</p>	<p>Development on this site will have an adverse impact on protected views of Athgoe Hill, which forms part of the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and on the setting of Newcastle Farm, a Protected Structure. Mitigating measures such as limiting development to 3-4 single storey dwellings with a low profile roof will be required in order to avoid significant adverse impact to the landscape character of the area. It should also be a requirement to provide an appropriate green buffer with adjoining agricultural lands, to preserves views of Athgoe Hill and Lyons Hill at the eastern end of Hazelhatch Road to the south-west and that any development is sensitive to the setting of Newcastle Farm, a Protected Structure.</p>
<p>Where existing significant/historical structures exist along or immediately adjoining Main Street these structures, or parts thereof, and the</p>	<p>These additions to the LAP will strengthen the village settlement pattern and preserve and protect the special interest and character of Newcastle's</p>

settlement pattern will be incorporated, where possible, within the overall design scheme for any development site.	heritage.
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SECTION 4 ALTERNATIVES AND THE PLAN

4.1 Alternatives

An evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative strategies for accommodating future development in the Newcastle area was part of the SEA process. The scenarios were derived taking into account higher level strategic plans as well as the geographical scope of the area.

The scenarios provide alternative visions of how the future development of Newcastle might occur. They reflect a range of development pressures and responses that reflect current practice and conditions. The scenarios chosen were;

Scenario 1- Extend the lifespan of the 2003 Newcastle Local Area Plan

Scenario 2- Market Led Growth

Scenario 3- Consolidation of Village Expansion/Development of Character Areas

Scenario 1 - This scenario involves the continuation of the implementation of the 2003 Local Area Plan for Newcastle. Higher residential densities would be prevalent throughout the plan lands leading to a reduction in the extent of burgage plots that would remain intact. The removal of existing hedgerows would also impact on the biodiversity network in the area. Higher density development would also have an impact on the archaeological and architectural heritage and landscape character of the area. Under this scenario, the necessity for the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in Newcastle would be less likely. Commercial development would be partially focused on the Main Street, with an expanded mixed use Village Core extending to the south (rear) of the Main Street.

Scenario 2 – Market Led Growth

This scenario would involve allowing growth to follow the demands of the development industry as previously expressed through rezoning submissions to the Development Plan process (and more recent proposed variations to the Development Plan), regardless of conformity with planning guidelines, infrastructure capacity or environmental constraints. The demand for rezoning has focused largely on areas of the plan lands that are presently un-serviced and which are located on the outer settlement edges of the plan lands. The substantial untapped development capacity of the existing Plan lands has not been considered in this approach, with a drive to rezone further lands, prior to the development of the current substantial greenfield residential land bank. This scenario would also lead to an increased demand on existing water/wastewater services, with little or no provision of community infrastructure to accommodate the existing and future population.

Scenario 3 – Consolidation of Village Expansion/Development of Character Areas

Under this scenario, the commercial heart of the village would be concentrated along the Main Street and away from the backland location of a link road running in an east to west direction as proposed in the 2003 LAP. The scenario would create a transition from the Main Street to the outer settlement edges with lower densities and also from the higher densities at the eastern edge to the lower densities in the west. The concept of Green Infrastructure² would also be prevalent throughout this scenario as a guiding theme for development.

Furthermore, under this scenario, the built heritage of Newcastle which includes extensive Protected

² Green Infrastructure refers to the construction of a green network to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity; the provision of accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities; the sustainable management of water; the maintenance of landscape character; and the protection and enhancement of the architectural and archaeological heritage

Structures and Recorded Monuments and the Historic Landscape would be protected and utilized in such a manner as to enhance the overall historic character of the village. Cycle routes would be provided along the primary roads, with pedestrian routes provided throughout all the plan lands linking through the parks, enabling recreation whilst providing a pleasant environment for the existing and future populations.

4.2 Assessment of Alternatives

Evaluation using the SEOs

The scenarios were evaluated using the SEOs and the Baseline information. The full description of the impacts of implementing the differing development alternatives on the receiving environment is contained within Section 7 of the Environmental Report. The summary evaluation table assessing the alternatives against the Strategic Environmental Assessment Objectives (SEOs) is set out below;

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs unlikely to be mitigated	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs- likely to be mitigated	Uncertain interaction with status of SEOs	Neutral Interaction with status of SEOs	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
Alternative Scenario 1 Implement 2003 Newcastle Local Area Plan		B3 L1	M1 M2 W1-W3 CH1	HH1 C1 C2 CH2		B1 B2
Alternative Scenario 2 Market Led Growth		B3 HH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 C1 C2 M1 M2 CH1 CH2 L1				B1 B2
Alternative Scenario 3 Consolidation of Village Expansion/Development of Character Areas	W1 W2 W3 CH1 CH2 L1 S1		B3			B1 B2

Evaluation of Alternative Plan Scenarios

Scenario 1, (the implementation of the 2003 plan), results in significant uncertain interactions with the SEOs in the long-term, many of which can be mitigated, but some such as the impact on landscape character and on the burgage plots which are unlikely to be mitigated.

Scenario 2 would result in a range of environmental conflicts including biodiversity, water quality, landscape character and climate change (an increase in the number of unsustainable traffic patterns with a decrease in public transport journeys giving rise to the production of greenhouse gases).

Scenario 3 is more likely to bring about better environmental outcomes because of its ability to protect the historical heritage of the area and integrate it into the biodiversity networks as well as the ability to provide for the SuDS network in the plan lands, as well as providing for increased connectivity and permeability thereby improving the surrounding environment.

The Proposed Local Area Plan option that has emerged from the Plan preparation process has a close correlation to Scenario 3.

Synopsis of SEOs.

B1	Avoid loss of habitats etc in designated ecological sites
B2	Avoid impacts by development within or beside these designated ecological sites
B3	Prevent loss of ecological networks
HH1	Protect human health - traffic/ incompatible landuses
S1	Re-use of brownfield lands
S3	Operate sustainable waste management practices
W1	Maintain and improve river, lake and surface water quality
W2	Prevent pollution of ground water
W3	To prevent floodplain development
C1	Reduce greenhouse emissions from travel
C2	Reduce car dependency and improve modal choice
M1	Provide Appropriate waste water treatment for new development
M2	Maintain and Improve the Quality of drinking water
CH1	Protect archaeological heritage
CH2	Protect architectural heritage
L1	Protect and avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape

4.4 Effects of Amendments on Preferred Alternative

The amendments to the Draft Newcastle Area Plan by the Elected Members in November 2012, as recommended in the Managers Report, resulted in a small number of changes to the policies proposed within the Plan. It was considered that all of these amendments are likely to result in environmental improvements to the Plan apart from the reintroduction of some residential development at the western end of the Village at the Athgoe Hill / Hazelhatch Junction (this site is zoned for residential development in the current Development Plan). The potential conflict here with the Conservation and Landscape SEOs is likely to be mitigated by the introduction of height restrictions, setbacks and confining the development potential to reflect the density of the existing dwellings on the outer Village edge.

The small number of changes proposed to the LAP was accepted by the Elected Representatives and the plan was adopted on the 12th November 2012.

SECTION 5 SUMMARY OF INFLUENCE OF THE SEA PROCEDURE ON THE PLAN

Overall, the influence of the SEA process on the Newcastle Local Area Plan has been positive. The early identification of the important environmental issues within the plan area, and refinement of those issues during the scoping process and production of the Environmental Report allowed for adoption of meaningful environmental protection policies into the LAP. Continual assessment of policies and motions, as well as submissions and observations from interested parties also resulted in modification of policies for the benefit of the environment of South Dublin.

SECTION 6 MONITORING

6.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. This SEA Statement identifies the proposals for monitoring the Plan which were adopted alongside the Plan.

Monitoring enables, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action. In addition to this, monitoring can also play an important role in assessing whether the Plan is achieving its environmental objectives and targets - measures which the Plan can help work towards - whether these need to be re-examined and whether the proposed mitigation measures are being implemented.

6.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around the indicators which were chosen earlier in the process. These indicators allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives used in the evaluation. Focus has been given to indicators which are relevant to the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan. The Council has introduced a series of measures (mainly GIS based³) to allow monitoring through the Development Management system.

Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by targets which are derived from the relevant legislation and the advice of the EPA, see Section 10 of the Environmental Report. The table below summarises the indicators and information sources which have been selected with regard to the monitoring of the Plan.

6.3 Reporting

An SEA Monitoring Report, evaluating the effects of implementing the LAP, will be prepared within two years of the making of the Plan.

6.4 Responsibility

South Dublin County Council is responsible for gathering the monitored data, the preparation of the interim report and the implementation of corrective actions, where necessary.

SEO	Indicators	Information Sources
B1:	Percentage of relevant habitats and designated ecological sites lost	SDCC
B2:	No. of significant adverse impacts to relevant habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites	SDCC
B3:	Area of Biodiversity Network (County's primary ecological corridors) which has been lost without mitigation	SDCC
HH1	Indicator HH1: No of occasions that PM10 limits have been exceeded in at Air Monitoring stations	EPA Dublin

³ As the Development Plan SEA Monitoring framework included a range of indicators for which there was no existing source, the Council has created an SEA Monitoring System using Development Management derived Indicators to both monitor the significant environmental impacts of Development Plan policies and to begin the process of introducing meaningful indicators to monitor spatial planning. The system became operational at the start of 2011 and records all planning applications made since the coming into operation of the Plan in October 2010.

	Indicator HH2: Percentage of population that are exposed to unacceptable ⁴ levels of traffic noise	Agglomeration Local Councils
S1:	S1i: Area of brownfield land redeveloped	SDCC
	S1ii: Area of greenfield land developed	SDCC
	S1iii: Number of contaminated sites identified and remediated	SDCC
W1	Indicator W1i: Biotic Quality Rating (Q Value) and risk assessment	EPA, Eastern River Basin District Reports
	Indicator W1ii: EPA Trophic Status of Lakes	
W2	Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	As above
W3	Number of developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk	SDCC
C1	C1i: Percentage of population within the County traveling to work or school by public transport or non-mechanical means	Census information
	C1ii: Average distance traveled to work or school by the population of the County	As above
C2:	Extent of developments built within areas served by high quality public transport	SDCC
M1:	Number of new developments granted permission which cannot be adequately served by a public waste water treatment	SDCC
M2	Drinking water quality standards, (Microbiological, Chemical and Indicator parameters)	EPA
CH1	Number of unauthorised developments occurring which result in full or partial loss to entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential	SDCC
CH2	CH2i: Number of unauthorised developments occurring which result in physical loss or loss entries to the Record of Protected Structures	SDCC
	CH2ii: Number of additions to the Record of Protected Structures and the number of additional ACAs	SDCC
L1:	L1i: Number of developments permitted in the Mountain, High Amenity, Liffey Valley and Rural zones	SDCC
	L1ii: Percentage of developments permitted in the Mountain, High Amenity, Liffey Valley and Rural zones that have carried out landscaping proposals as required by condition	SDCC
		SDCC

⁴ As defined by the Dublin Agglomeration Noise Action Plan 2008 - 2013

