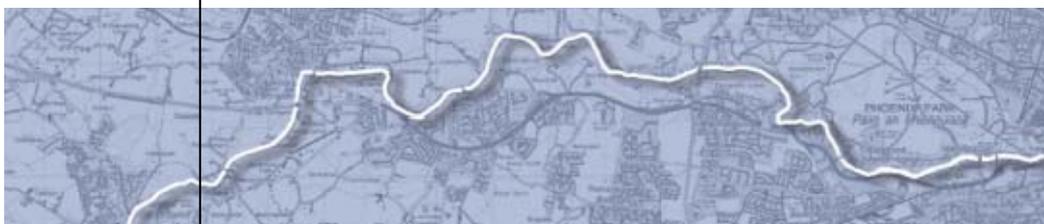


# TOWARDS A LIFFEY VALLEY PARK

**STRATEGY DOCUMENT**



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## FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Strategy document represents the first comprehensive strategy for the River Liffey and its adjacent lands. The river itself has played a central role in the development of the capital city and its surrounding counties; in particular County Kildare through which much of the River Liffey flows.

The historical associations with the Liffey are of national significance and the river valley has long played a critical role in the social, economic and cultural life of the country.

This Strategy provides for a process that will lead to the delivery of a Liffey Valley Park. It represents a contribution to the policy-making process in relation to the management of the valley. As such it will help inform the local authorities responsible for the valley.

The development of this Strategy is the result of the involvement of many individuals and public agencies. In particular the Office of Public Works, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council and Kildare County Council were represented on the steering group that guided the development of this document.



OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

ERM IRELAND

foreward

**THE LIFFEY VALLEY**

The River Liffey rises at Kippure in the Wicklow Mountains, and flows from there in a great meandering arc for almost 100 kilometres, until it encounters the salt water of the tidal reach at Islandbridge. The River has had a major impact on the settlement patterns, economic development and built environment of the City of Dublin and the satellite towns, villages and countryside of the river valley. The broad sixty-kilometre plain between the Mourne Mountains to the north and the Wicklow Mountains to the south combined with the wide estuary of the Liffey serve to create an accessible gateway for entry to Ireland from the east. This allowed the penetration inland of Vikings, Normans, English and earlier peoples. Dublin itself is Viking in origin. The original settlement site was located south-east of the shallow ford that prevented seagoing vessels from navigating further upstream. Later, in smaller boats or perhaps overland, the Dublin Vikings travelled up the Liffey Valley at least to the falls at Leixlip, which takes its name from the Norse words for salmons' leap, a reminder of the long historical exploitation of the river's salmon fisheries.

From its source to the sea, the Liffey and its immediate environs contain examples of almost the full range of Irish historic settlement. Prehistoric sites include megalithic tombs, ringforts and a stone circle in the vicinity of Pollaphuca. Lyons Hill near Straffan was a royal seat and place of assembly for the Celtic kingdom of Leinster. Early Christian settlement is represented by numerous holy wells and by high crosses at Blessington, Ballymore Eustace, Old Kilcullen and Kilmainham. From the medieval period there are Norman mottes, such as Newbridge and Clane; stone castles such as Castleknock and Leixlip; well-preserved parish churches such as St James's Coghlanstown and Blessed Virgin/St John's Lucan, and fragments of some of the great monasteries of the Dublin Pale at Kilcullen, Greatconnel, Clane and St Wolstan's.

The renaissance, which the Duke of Ormond initiated in Ireland after 1660, gradually transformed Dublin into the 'second city of the British empire'. Amongst the achievements of the transformation were the building of the



*Near Chapelizod*



Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, the development of the Phoenix Park north of the river and the construction at Chapelizod of a residence for the Viceroy, recalled now only in the placename King's Park. The neo-classical Wellington monument came to dominate the Phoenix Park skyline. Upstream, the landscape was transformed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the addition of riverine villas erected by the burgeoning Dublin merchant and the political/administrative class. Many of these were set in landscaped parkland. Older castles were replaced or remodelled at Leixlip, Lucan and Luttrellstown. Castletown, Russborough, Lyons and Farmleigh are amongst the finest country houses ever erected in Ireland, and all along the river there is a rich heritage of lesser villas in classical and Gothic/Tudor-revival styles.



*Near Celbridge*

Despite the pressure of modern development, many of the settlements along the river preserve a town/village atmosphere. Ballymore Eustace, Celbridge, Leixlip and Lucan all benefited from the Georgian enthusiasm for creating wide, new streetscapes. These historic Liffey towns and villages today retain a distinctive character associated with the River Liffey and should be celebrated as such. Their distinctive wide streetscapes with Georgian frontage, and the building of cutstone arched bridges across the Liffey remain amongst the most attractive features of these historic towns.

There are many handsome nineteenth-century protestant churches, while the catholic revival added churches, such as those by J.J. MacCarthy at Kilcullen and Celbridge. An impressive industrial infrastructure of water mills was established, powered by means of weirs, sluices and millraces, of which Ballymore Eustace, Celbridge, Palmerstown and Islandbridge are excellent examples. Terraces of industrial cottages, which provided accommodation for the mill workers, survive at Lucan and Palmerstown. There is a heritage of canal and railway architecture. A spa, with associated hotel and resort accommodation adds an unusual dimension to Lucan.



The Liffey Valley has many associations with famous personalities. Chapelizod is said to take its name from Iseult, the Celtic princess who was the inspiration of Wagner's opera Tristan and Isolde. Reference to Chapelizod in James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" inspired the modern re-naming there of Anna Livia Bridge. Patrick Sarsfield, the famous soldier, was from Lucan. St Edmundsbury was built by Edmund Sexton Pery, the Speaker of the Irish Parliament. William Connolly, another Speaker, Swift's Vanessa and the talented Napier family were all associated with Celbridge. The poet, Emily Lawless, lived at Lyons, while Theobald Wolfe Tone is buried at Bodenstown. At Islandbridge, Sir Edwin Lutyens's memorial park commemorates the Irish dead of World War I. Nearby, Kilmainham Gaol was the scene of the execution of the 1916 leaders.

In tandem with the human development and utilisation of the resources of the Liffey Valley, the area has long fulfilled an important cultural and recreational function for the surrounding urban areas. A number of natural spring waters are found in the river valley, and the spa water were exploited from the eighteenth century onwards for their restorative properties. For example, Lucan remained a popular resort for the 'taking of the waters' up to the twentieth century. The Strawberry Beds which supplied strawberry crops to Dublin from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, were the subject of one of Thomas Cooke's first tourist trips to Ireland (his second site in his Tour of Ireland was the Killarney Lakes). In addition, the river valley has long played an important role in fishing and angling and provided a scenic environment in which urban dwellers could enjoy a serene landscape with a variety of natural and cultural features.

The Liffey Valley today is a testament to strong local interest and usage from the adjacent communities. It is therefore now time to urgently manage the Liffey Valley as a unique recreational resource to the Dublin and Mid-East Regions and beyond.

## 1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

The purpose of this Strategy is to clearly demonstrate the need to create a management framework for the whole Liffey Valley in one of the few remaining green space areas within the Dublin/Mid-East Regions. The surrounding areas have seen extensive population growth in the past decade and there is now an urgent and pressing need to ensure that the valley can function and contribute to recreational and green space facilities for the wider area. In addition the Strategy provides for a process that will lead to the delivery of a Liffey Valley Park.



This Strategy presents a Vision for the Liffey Valley as a corridor in its own right but also sets a series of objectives to realise the Vision through building up the public parks and spaces in the Liffey Valley. It proposes this through a series of identified actions and priorities. These are required in order to establish the Liffey Valley as a recognised asset for the benefit of the populations in the surrounding areas. The Strategy is a contribution to the policy making process in regard to the management of the Valley. As such it will help inform the Local Authorities responsible for the Valley.

### 1.3 THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

The geographic area of the Strategy extends from Ballymore Eustace in South Kildare to Islandbridge in Dublin City. However, in terms of a priority area, it is the Consultants opinion that in the first instance, actions to create the Liffey Valley Park should concentrate on the area between Islandbridge in Dublin City to Celbridge in County Kildare. Therefore, this Strategy concentrates on this geographic area, whilst providing more general policy guidance for the remaining Liffey Valley which extends as far as Ballymore Eustace. Within the Islandbridge to Celbridge area, the Strategy has a particular focus on creating a recognised body or necklace of public lands that will be centred to the creation of a larger Liffey Valley Park, and thus establish a clear regional framework for public spaces.

*Figure 1* illustrates the study area.

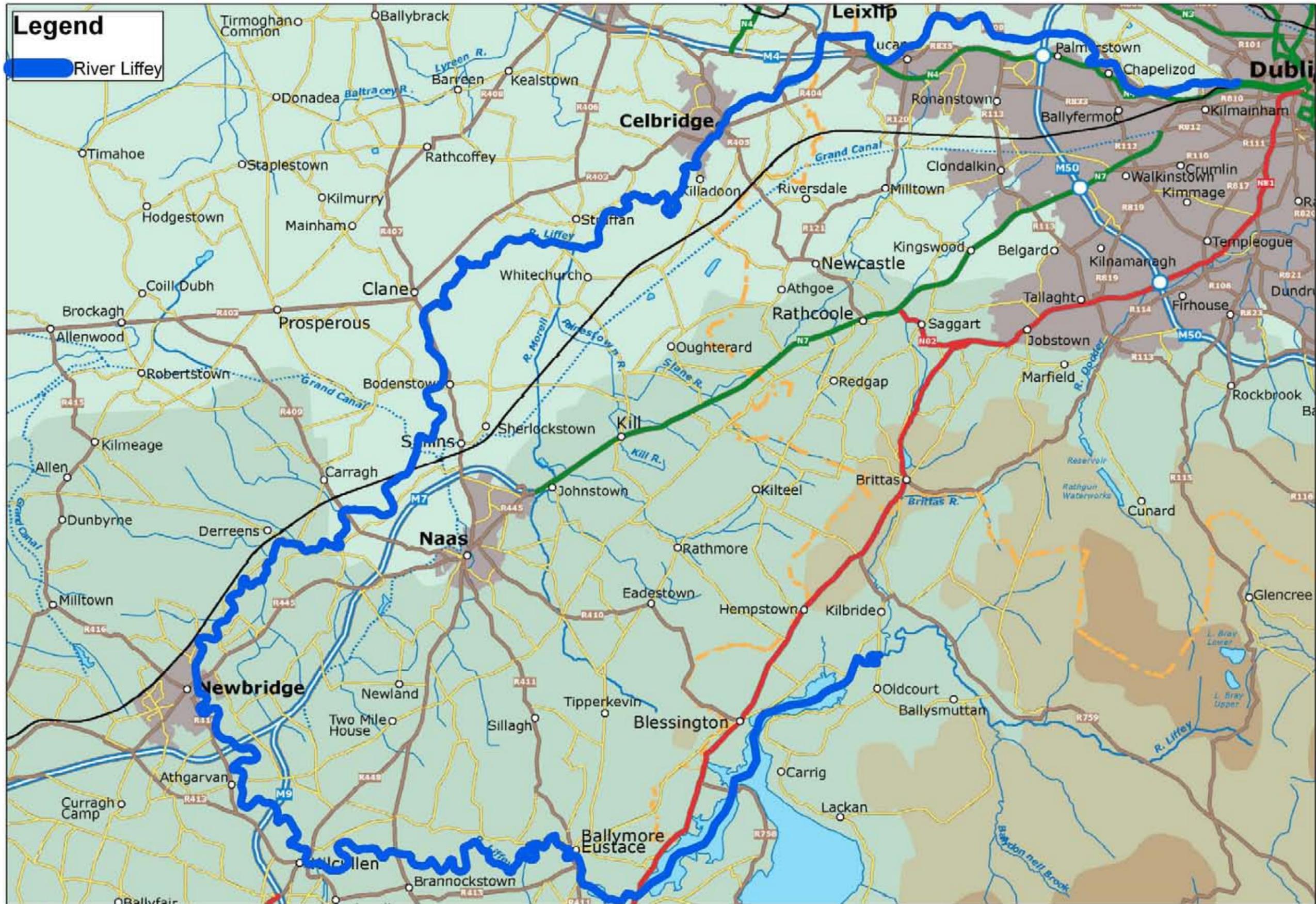
In defining initial Liffey Valley, the following criteria were considered:

- How the Liffey Valley can function as a viable open space that provides recreational opportunities to the Dublin and Mid-East Regions;
- Public submissions that identified particular areas in need of stronger protection for conservation and recreation;
- A necklace of lands that is already in public ownership;
- Access opportunities along the Valley;
- Visual catchment along the River Liffey (i.e.: lands that can be viewed from the River Liffey, key viewpoints along the River Liffey protected in County Development Plans, and the visual character of the Liffey Valley landscape).
- An existing 'start' and 'end' point defined by existing recreational and tourist attractions along the Valley.

The importance of the River Liffey in the development of Dublin, the Mid East and beyond has long been recognised. The Liffey Valley provides a fantastic opportunity for the provision of excellent recreational and educational facilities for all ages in the surrounding and wider area.







**Legend**  
 River Liffey

Figure 1. Liffey Valley Study Area



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The Liffey Valley itself is a landscape of great scenic and heritage value. The enhancement and protection of that landscape is required, therefore, not only from a public perspective but to provide for recreational needs of the Dublin and Mid East Regions.

## **1.4 HOW THE STRATEGY WAS DEVELOPED**

A key series of tasks were undertaken in the development of this Strategy and these are outlined below:

1. Completion of a baseline audit of the recreational, access, ecological, and built heritage resources along the River Liffey from Ballymore Eustace to Islandbridge; (See *Annex B*)
2. Undertaking of fieldwork by a team of landscape architects, planners, ecologists and cultural heritage specialists to support this baseline audit and to assess the condition of these resources;
3. The development of a Geographical Information System (GIS) to map all the existing recreational, ecological and cultural heritage resources. This GIS will be a key planning tool in the management of the Liffey Valley.
4. Engagement in a Public Consultation Process (see *Annex A*), and a series of meetings with key personnel in the four Local Authorities, locally elected representatives and the Office of Public Works.
5. Organisation of a workshop to discuss opportunities, threats and actions to deliver the Liffey Valley. This workshop was attended by the study team and relevant Local Authority Staff.
6. Completion of a comparison of relevant international case studies.

### **1.4.1 Consultation Undertaken**

An initial four week public submission period was undertaken at the outset of the project. Advertisements were placed in the national press requesting information on the baseline recreational, ecological and heritage assets of the Liffey Valley. In addition, identification of pressures and opportunities were also requested. This submission period proved extremely useful and provided important local information on the Liffey Valley.

In addition, each relevant Local Area Committee, in the four Local Authority areas, was briefed about the project at the start. The study team also attended a number of meetings with planners, heritage officers, engineers and parks managers within the local authorities. The information gathering exercise was also supplemented by a number of



meetings with tourism organisations, fisheries boards and other relevant organisations.

Once the Draft Strategy was made available in February 2006, a further six week submission period commenced, which again yielded a large number of submissions, many of which contained recommendations of merit. For further information on the consultation process please see *Annex A Consultation Report*.

## 1.5 WHO IS GOING TO OVERSEE ITS IMPLEMENTATION?

A new Steering Group will be established to oversee the delivery of the strategy.

In regard to the detailed implementation of the Strategy it is recommended that in line with the detailed actions outlined in Section 3, each Local Authority takes direct responsibility for such actions that fall within current statutory mandates.

Budgetary provision, and the operational aspects that will ensure that the implementation of the Strategy is equally applied through the Authorities should remain within the current local authority structure. It is recommended that no specific legislative amendments be adopted as the current statutory mandates of the Authorities will be sufficient to enable the delivery of all the actions outlined in the Strategy.



Looking North towards Phoenix Park

The imperative is to commence application of the Strategy rather than spending unnecessary time and limited resources establishing further institutional arrangements that would have limited “value added” in regard to the achievement of the strategic objectives of this Strategy.

Additionally, the OPW should continue to play an active part at a national level in terms of the management of key properties in its care and by providing an overall leadership role through the creation of the new Strategy Steering Group.



### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the key planning and policy elements that provide the framework to deliver coordinated and appropriate development control and enhancement along the Liffey Valley. The next section of this chapter summarises key access, recreational, built and natural heritage features that are located within the Liffey Valley. Further baseline information is presented in *Annex B Baseline Resources*.

### 2.2 PLANNING FOR THE LIFFEY VALLEY PARK

*The National Spatial Strategy for Ireland (NSS)*

The NSS was launched in November 2002, and sets out a vision for the spatial development of Ireland to 2020. For the east of the Country, the NSS highlights a number of key requirements. Of particular relevance is the need to ensure “...a strong green structure that maintains the distinction between urban and rural areas, and provides a green setting for everyday living with opportunities for outdoor recreation within easy access.” The NSS further states that the continuing health of Dublin is critically dependant on “...protecting Dublin’s outstanding natural setting...surrounding rural hinterlands, river valleys like the Boyne and Liffey, and physical amenities such as parks.”

A clear message emerging from the National Spatial Strategy is the need to ensure that the sustainable growth of Dublin City does not encroach into the City’s valuable hinterlands and surrounding counties.

*Regional Planning Guidelines for the Dublin and Mid East Regions*

Published in July 2004, the RPGs for both the Dublin and Mid East Regions superseded the previous Strategic Planning Guidelines within the overall spatial vision established in the NSS.

The spatial policy for the Regions reflects the policy requirements of the NSS, and in particular the need to protect the Liffey Valley. In relation to recreation and open space, the guidance to the Local Authorities is to “...extend and enhance the existing open space network, secure landscape and biodiversity enhancement and improve access to the coast, river valleys and canals.”



## 2.3

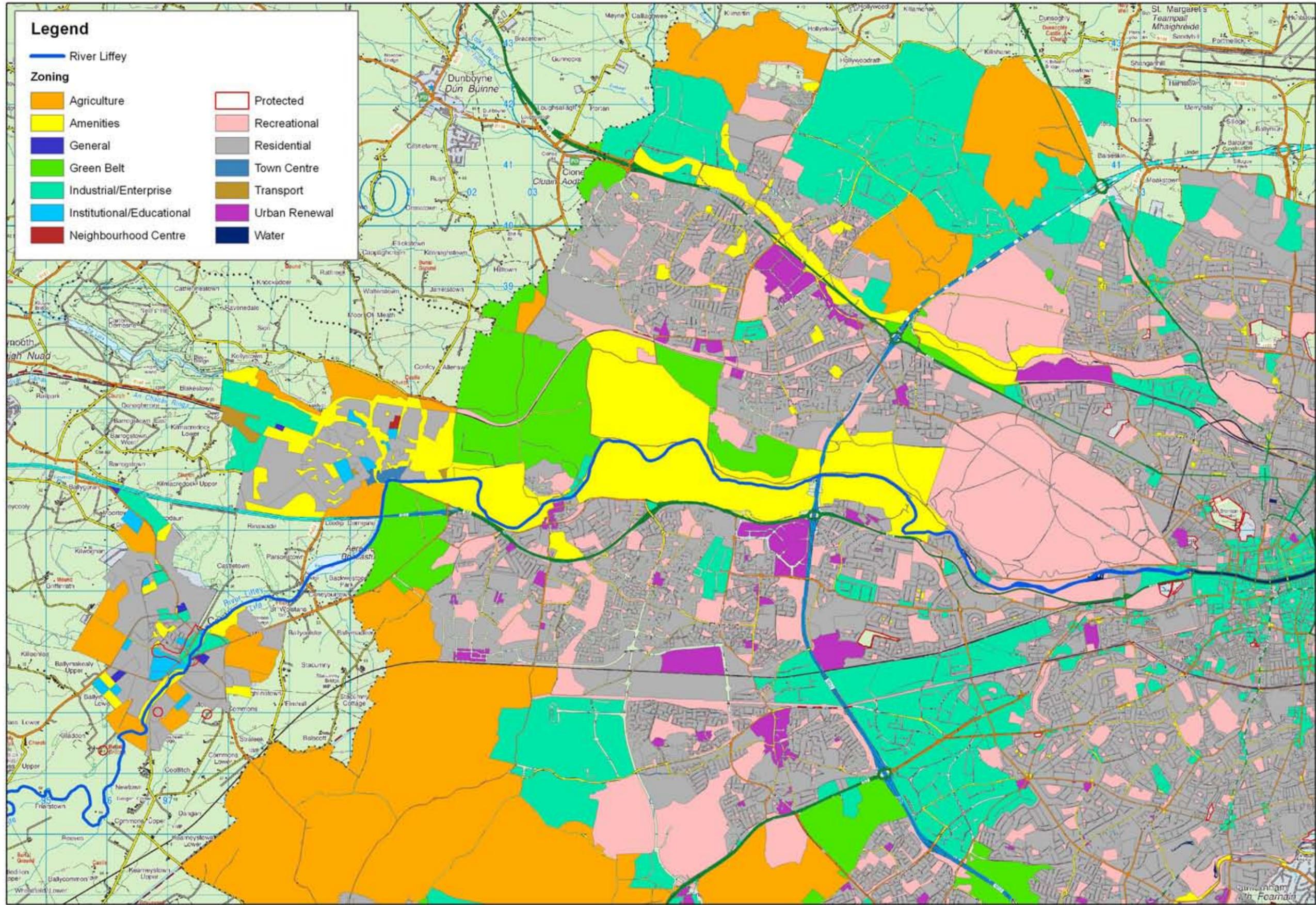
### CITY/COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

An assessment of planning policy amongst the four relevant Local Authorities was undertaken as part of this study, to identify consistent and conflicting planning policy around the Liffey Valley.

Each County Development Plan contains a specific statement supporting the creation of a Liffey Valley Park and the recreational use thereof. In addition, a number of objectives also provide for enhanced habitat protection/creation, recreation and amenity, improved access and appropriate design within the Liffey Valley. *Figure 2* illustrates simplified landuse zoning along the Liffey Valley.

The key Policy Objectives from each City/County Development Plan are listed below in *Table 2.1*

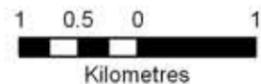




**Legend**

- River Liffey
- Zoning**
- Agriculture
- Amenities
- General
- Green Belt
- Industrial/Enterprise
- Institutional/Educational
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Protected
- Recreational
- Residential
- Town Centre
- Transport
- Urban Renewal
- Water

**Figure 2 - Liffey Valley Study - Simplified Zoning**



Scale: 1:60,000

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**Table 2.1 City and County Development Plans Policy**

Dublin City Council 2005-2011	<p>In respect of the proposed Special Amenity Area Order for the Liffey Valley (Policy H44, Chapter 10), Dublin City Council shall pursue the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To develop lands adjoining Islandbridge House and the River Liffey for passive recreational use.</li><li>• To provide for a footpath along the north bank of the River Liffey from Islandbridge to Chapelizod.</li><li>• To investigate the feasibility of providing a footbridge across the River Liffey to allow for the development of a pedestrian route linking Liffey Valley Park and the War Memorial Gardens with the Phoenix Park.</li><li>• To retain areas of semi-wilderness along the bank of the River Liffey to allow for the survival of flora and fauna and the maintenance of wildlife habitats.</li><li>• To investigate the feasibility of altering the existing weir on the River Liffey at Islandbridge in order to improve access to the city centre section of the River by the rowing community.</li><li>• To carry out a feasibility study to examine the issues involved in constructing a barrage on the River Liffey including the maintenance of water levels to facilitate river based transport, the protection of all flora/fauna habitats and other ecological factors.</li></ul>
-------------------------------	---

The Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011 identifies a number of Framework Development Areas of which two are relevant to this Strategy, the Chapelizod Framework Development Area and the Heuston Framework Development Area.

The objective of the Framework Development Areas is:

- To seek the social, economic and physical development and/or rejuvenation of (the) area with mixed use of which residential and enterprise/employment would be the predominant uses.

Proposals for comprehensive development or redevelopment have been, or are in the process of being prepared, and a number of development principles to guide this process in each Framework Development Area have been set out.



South Dublin  
County Council  
2005-2011.

- It is a policy of the Council to secure, as an amenity of national significance, the preservation of the Liffey Valley and its landscapes and to seek to have the lands brought into public ownership for the purpose of designation as a Liffey Valley National Park.
- It is an objective of the Council to pursue the creation of a Liffey Valley National Park together with the adjoining Local Authorities of Fingal and Kildare.
- It is an objective of the Council to preserve all areas within the Liffey Valley from major housing developments.

Fingal County  
2005 - 2011

- To protect and enhance the character, heritage and amenities of the Special Amenity Areas in accordance with the relevant Orders
- To investigate the feasibility of extending the Liffey Valley Special Amenity Area Order to include lands from the Dublin City Council boundary to the boundary with County Kildare.
- To protect the Liffey Valley, its heritage and landscapes, whilst facilitating its enjoyment by the public.

Kildare County

- To protect and improve amenities and recreational assets in the interests of residents and tourists alike.
- To seek an extension of the proposed Special Amenity Area Order for the Liffey Valley from Lucan to Leixlip (which is envisaged by the Dublin Local Authorities) to other parts of the Valley within County Kildare.
- To pursue the creation of a Liffey Valley Regional Park together with Fingal and South Dublin County Councils.

## 2.4 ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Existing and planned infrastructure has a critical impact on the accessibility and the environmental quality of the Liffey Valley. Currently the area is served by a number of roads, principally the N4 (Galway/Sligo Road), the Lower Lucan Road, and the old Mullingar Road. With the exception of Heuston Station and the Luas Stop at the same site (which provides an important public access point to the eastern part of the Liffey Valley), there are few other public transport links. However a number of bus routes serve the area and a consistent signage and interpretation network may offer a means for people accessing key sites by bus and foot. There are a small number of designated cycle routes but submissions received suggest that these are not adequate and do not currently provide a safe means of transport as they share space with busy roads.

A considerable number of submissions also expressed concern about access to the Liffey Valley; in certain areas, particularly in the large public open





spaces, access is quite good, although submissions recommended improved signage and in some instances more visible access. Elsewhere, a number of submissions expressed strong concern about the restriction/curtailment of access to the Liffey Valley. This Strategy makes a number of recommendations concerning enhancement of access around the Liffey Valley.

Key urban centres within the priority area are: Chapelizod, Palmerstown, Lucan, Leixlip, Celbridge.

## 2.5 RECREATIONAL & AMENITY USES OF THE LIFFEY VALLEY

As part of this study, a postal survey was conducted to assess current usage of public spaces along the Liffey Valley and to identify what people would like to see in a Liffey Valley Park. The results of the current use survey are summarised below:

1. The usual green spaces visited by respondents were the Phoenix Park and various parks and green spaces in Lucan and Leixlip of which Lucan Demesne, Castletown House and St Catherine's Park were most popular. Smaller numbers of respondents also visited the Griffeen Valley Park, the Memorial Gardens, Glenaulin Park and the Donadea Forest. Sections of the river at Lucan also featured prominently, including Lucan Demesne and the Strawberry Beds.
2. A large proportion i.e. some 39% of visits to these green spaces, are made at least weekly. A further 20% of visits are made at least monthly. Only one individual visited just twice a year or less. Of the most regular visits, the largest absolute number of trips are made with family members.

### 2.5.1 Land-based Recreation & Amenity Activities

Land based recreation and amenity activities compose a mixture of formal and informal activities. For example, people may use parks to play or watch ball sports, or they may use parks to walk the dog or read a book. In addition, several submissions highlighted the importance of some of the public areas in providing recreational opportunities for the individual /community. Recreation activities are outlined in *Figure 3a*.



Shakelton Mills



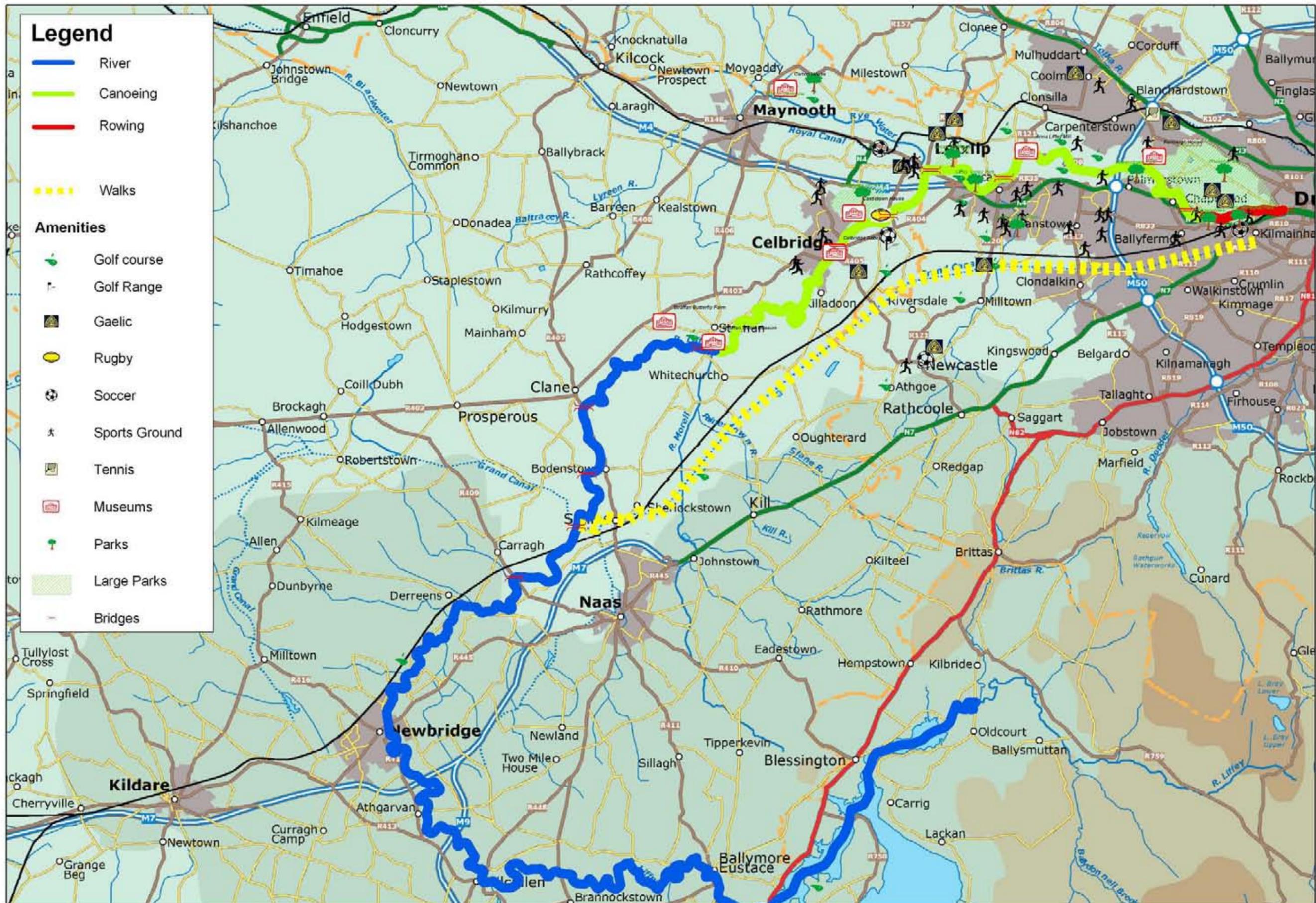


Fig. 3a. Liffey Valley Study - Recreation



Canoeing, rowing and angling are the three primary recreation uses of the River Liffey:

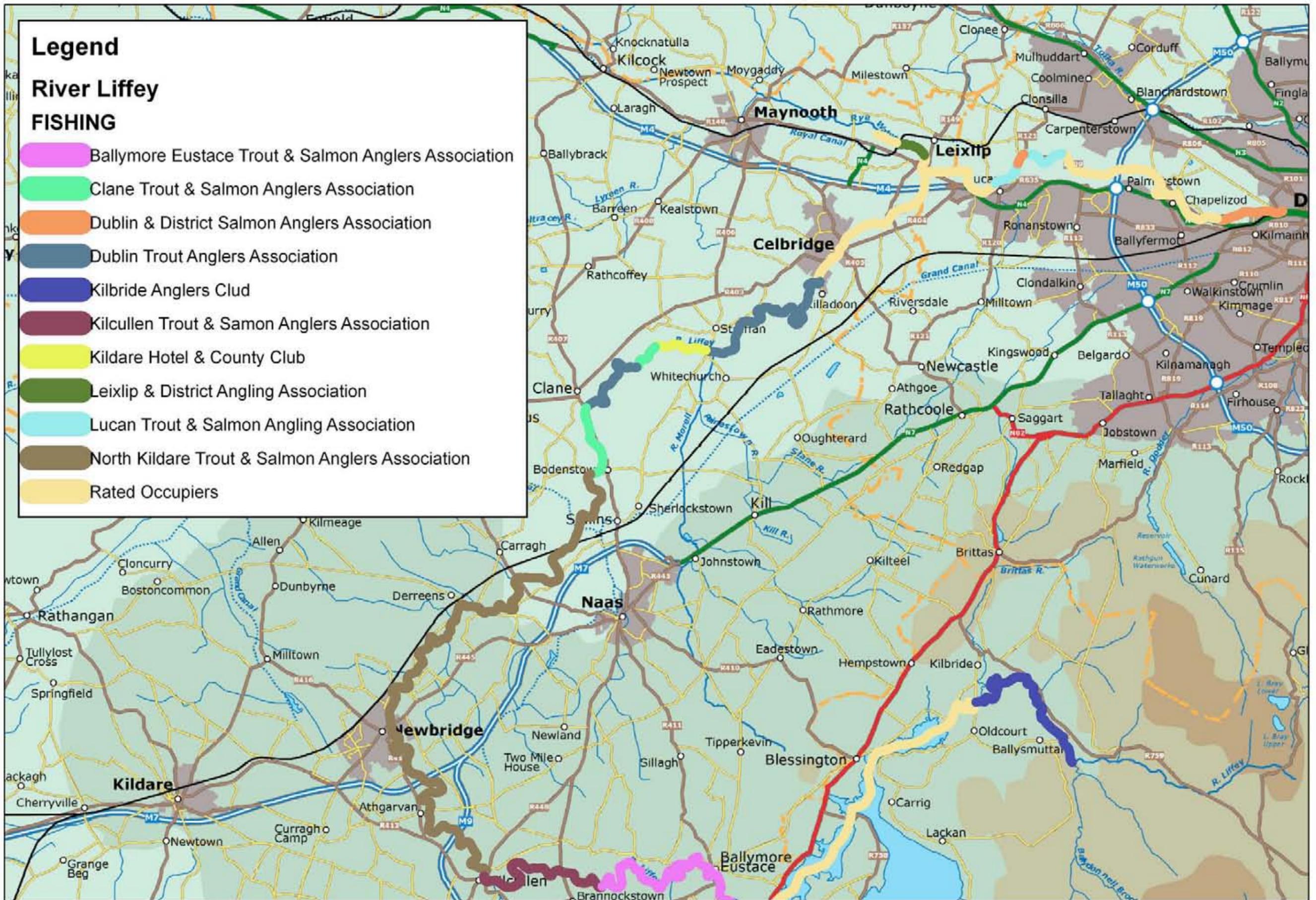
- *Canoeing* – takes place along the stretch of river between Straffan and Islandbridge. The most popular section is at the Sluice Weir near the Spa Hotel in Lucan. The Irish Canoe Union training centre is located at Strawberry Fields (and they hope to eventually move their headquarters to this location). On average, up to 200 people can be found canoeing on the river over a weekend. Annually, on the first weekend of September the ‘Liffey Descent’ canoe race takes place. This is an international event which is almost 28.5 kilometres in length, and includes 10 weirs. Some 900 to 1,200 entrants participate annually. Regular upkeep of the weirs and clearing of trees from the river is required to maintain a safe environment for canoeing.
- *Rowing* – This takes place on a 1,500 metre stretch of the river between Islandbridge and Strawberry Fields. Eight clubs row here. This stretch of the river is relatively straight and, as such, is ideal for rowing. Many other stretches of the river are either not straight enough for the required distance, or contain too much growth to be suitable for rowing.
- *Angling* – takes place along approximately 80% of the Liffey Valley. Trout and salmon are the predominant fish species landed. There are seven angling clubs (with a combined membership of approximately 800 people) who control these waters, which cover:
  - a stretch of the river at Ballymore Eustace;
  - the stretch of river between Kilcullen and Pausdeen Bridge (just upstream of Celbridge);
  - a small area at Lucan; and
  - a small area at Chapelizod.

There is reported excellent fishing for wild brown trout at Ballymore Eustace, Kilcullen and Newbridge. Just outside Dublin between Celbridge and Straffan there is also some excellent trout fishing while salmon and sea trout fishing is available between Lucan and Islandbridge.

Fishing is controlled by a number of Angling Associations and riparian land owners. These are outline in *Figure 3b*.

The opportunity for most of these recreation and amenity activities tends to be focused in the area from Straffan to Islandbridge, and often, from Lucan to Islandbridge. An overview of provision is provided below:





**Legend**

**River Liffey**

**FISHING**

- Ballymore Eustace Trout & Salmon Anglers Association
- Clane Trout & Salmon Anglers Association
- Dublin & District Salmon Anglers Association
- Dublin Trout Anglers Association
- Kilbride Anglers Clud
- Kilcullen Trout & Salmon Anglers Association
- Kildare Hotel & County Club
- Leixlip & District Angling Association
- Lucan Trout & Salmon Angling Association
- North Kildare Trout & Salmon Anglers Association
- Rated Occupiers

Fig. 3b - Liffey Valley Study - Fishing



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- *Walking tracks* – Walking is a popular activity in the individual parks located along the River Liffey; and resources such as the Lucan Demense, for example, are much valued for passive recreation. However, most of the length of the river does not have any public riverside walking tracks. Furthermore, there is little pedestrian access across the river. For example between Lucan and Chapelizod there is no cross-river access. The only major linear walking track within or near to the study corridor is along the Royal Canal.
- *Cycling tracks* – No dedicated cycling tracks are currently provided along the river.
- *Formal Sport* – There are a number of playing fields located within the Parks in the Liffey Valley area. These include GAA, soccer and rugby playing fields and general sporting grounds. There may be potential for a greater number of playing pitches to be provided within the Liffey Valley, however this would have to be balanced with other recreational, leisure, heritage and ecological uses of the river valley.
- *Informal Games & Leisure* – the Liffey Valley comprises a range of open space within the already established parks. However, such facilities tend to be spatially concentrated in the lower reaches of the river.
- *Golf* – A number of golf courses are located along the River Liffey. These include the K Club and Naas, Athgoe North, Celbridge, Newcastle, Finnstown, Lucan, Leixlip, Westmanstown, Luttrellstown, Castleknock and Hermitage golf courses.



Near Castletown House

*Tourism potential* – Along the River Liffey there is great potential for tourism. The region contains, for example, King John's Bridge, medieval churches and castles, 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century houses and churches, historic mills (including Shakleton's Mill and Celbridge Mill), Phoenix Park and the War Memorial Gardens, Farmleigh, Lucan Demense, Lucan House,

Primrose Hill, Lucan Spa. There are several accommodation providers ranging from exclusive hotels to family run guesthouses. In addition, there are many ideas circulating for future potential tourism and recreation opportunities.



## 2.6 RIVER MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### 2.6.1 River Catchment Management

As the River Liffey catchment is the most densely populated catchment in Ireland it is especially sensitive to water abstractions. While the Greater Dublin Area and the major towns of County Kildare support approximately 75% of the population in the Liffey Valley, they occupy only 6.6% of the land area within the catchment. Excessive abstraction of water from this catchment system may reduce the River's capacity to assimilate discharge which could lead to deterioration of water quality. Similarly discharges from urban storm water systems within these areas can carry significant nutrient loads particularly in 'first flush' run-off after a dry spell where material has settled. In addition these systems can be contaminated by sewage effluent through improper connections or overflows from sewage pumping stations during flood conditions. These systems can also discharge toxic substances to water courses due to spillage, inappropriate storage of materials in industrial facilities and leakage from illegal dumping.

Agriculture is the predominant land use in the Liffey catchment, with 75% occupied by arable lands or pasture. The impacts of agriculture on the water quality of the River Liffey are associated with diffuse pollution arising from the inappropriate application of fertilisers, pesticides and animal manures. Other potential negative impacts of agriculture include animal access to rivers, soil erosion associated with over grazing and some harvesting, and spillage or runoff of oils, chemicals or pesticides to water courses.

Other potential impacts on water quality arise when best management practices are not implemented for forestry activities and pollution from the "unsewered population" of rural and urban areas. It is for this reason and others mentioned above, i.e. the excessive nutrient loading of storm water run-off, that the river downstream of Leixlip has been classed as "high priority" with unsatisfactory sites also located at Lucan Bridge and Islandbridge.

Following on from the Three Rivers Project a more extensive and coordinated approach to catchment management is required with respect to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. This Directive comes full into force in 2015 and will provide an integrated framework to water resource management. It will have distinct benefits for the management of the River Liffey from a landuse, planning and ecological perspective.



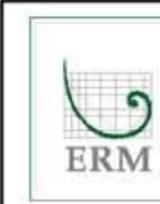
**Figure 4a: Land Uses along Liffey Valley - Celbridge to Barnhall**



**Legend**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  Trees       |  Industrial        |  Boat Club                  |
|  Recreation  |  River             |  Bridge                     |
|  Agriculture |  Transport         |  Hydro-Electric Power Plant |
|   |  Anna Liffey Mills |  Weir                       |

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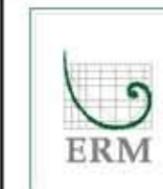
**Figure 4b: Land Uses along Liffey Valley - Barnhall to Leixlip**



**Legend**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  Trees       |  Industrial        |  Boat Club                  |
|  Recreation  |  River             |  Bridge                     |
|  Agriculture |  Transport         |  Hydro-Electric Power Plant |
|   |  Anna Liffey Mills |  Weir                       |

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**Figure 4c: Land Uses along Liffey Valley - Leixlip to Waterstown**



Legend			
	Trees		Boat Club
	Recreation		Bridge
	Agriculture		Hydro-Electric Power Plant
	Industrial		Weir
	River		Anna Liffey Mills
	Transport		

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**Figure 4d: Land Uses along Liffey Valley - Waterstown to Heuston Station**



Legend			
	Trees		Boat Club
	Recreation		Bridge
	Agriculture		Hydro-Electric Power Plant
	Industrial		Weir
	River		Anna Liffey Mills
	Transport Corridors		

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### 2.6.2 **Geology**

The underlying geology of County Dublin and County Kildare over which the River Liffey flows is formed principally from Carboniferous rocks with Lower Palaeozoic rocks dominant in the upper reaches of the river between the source at Blessington and Kilcullen. Most of the region of Carboniferous rocks is low lying ground and is covered by a thick blanket of quaternary sediments and peat deposits.

The quaternary is the most recent geological time period and is associated with the ice age which began 1.6 million years ago. Ireland experienced two separate glaciation episodes during the ice age. The present topography and surface features apparent along the Liffey Valley all relate to the latest of these glaciations. Along the lower reaches of the River Liffey alluvial deposits and till provide a basis for fertile soil.

## 2.7 **ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

The Liffey Valley comprises a mosaic of vegetation and habitat types that have evolved in response to the underlying surface geology, topography, soil and human activities. The predominant land use within the Valley is for agricultural purposes with pasture land accounting for approximately 60% of the land cover. Arable land cover is also significant, accounting for approximately 12% of the land cover. The high level of pasture and arable farmland reflects the fertile and well drained soils of the Valley. While semi-natural habitats account for a small proportion of the Valley's land cover the discrete pockets of habitat that do occur throughout the Valley are of high ecological and conservation value.

### *Juvenile River Stage – Source to Ballymore Eustace*

The River Liffey rises above the Blessington Lakes, which are designated as a Natural Heritage Area under the EU Habitats Directive 1992, in the Wicklow Mountains and meanders through the broad plains of County Kildare. The ecological resource along this section of the river has been significantly altered by intensive farming practises adjacent to the Liffey Valley. As mentioned above the predominant land use within the Liffey Valley is pasture and arable farming. Most of this activity is concentrated in the Kildare lowlands adjacent to the mature stretches of the River Liffey.

The land cover adjacent to the juvenile section of the River upstream from Ballymore Eustace is more varied and represents an area of higher ecological value. Natural moor and heathland habitats still exist at the



source of the River. These habitats are of high ecological value and are represented by dry siliceous heath, which is acidic and poor in nutrients. In the latter half of the 20th century much of the heathland habitat within the study corridor has been lost to intensive coniferous forestry plantations. These areas are characterised by even-aged stands of trees that are usually planted in uniform rows at the same time. In recent times planting of conifer plantations on naturally acidic areas, with low base buffering capacity, has been linked with adverse ecological impacts to groundwater and freshwater sources.



*A Kildare Bridge*

*Mature River Stage – Ballymore Eustace to Leixlip*

The pastoral heartland of the study corridor is situated west of Blessington Lakes and Ballymore Eustace where the River's characteristics change from a juvenile, high energy river to a wider, deeper and slower flowing mature river. The principal ecological resource along this section of the Liffey Valley is the riparian habitat. Both banks of the River along this section are well vegetated with hedgerows and associated treelines. The species composition of these linear woodland features varies due to factors such as age, management and exposure. In general land given over to pasture within old estates that are less intensively managed tend to correspond with older and more established linear woodlands. An example of this is the section of the River which flows through the Harristown House Estate. Some of the species associated with the riparian vegetation within this estate include Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Oak (*Quercus spp.*) Willows (*Salix spp.*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*).

Areas designated with a statutory conservation protection under the EU Habitats Directive, 1992, occur within the Liffey Valley close to Newbridge. This includes the Pollardstown Fen Special Area of Conservation, Oberstown Natural Heritage Area and the Grand Canal Natural Heritage Area which crosses over the River Liffey at Straffan. Pollardstown Fen is the largest spring-fed fen in Ireland and has well developed flora and fauna.



### *Old-age River Stage - Leixlip to Glenaulin*

The ecological resource of the Liffey Valley immediately to the west of the City at Palmerstown and Lucan is considerable; with a variety of habitats that sustain rare flora and fauna.

Of principal note in this area of the Valley is the proposed Natural Heritage Area (NHA), which stretches from the Glenaulin weir at Palmerstown upstream to the Dublin/Kildare border. The river is the focal point of this NHA but the Mill Race which runs parallel to the river for three kilometres upstream from the weir is also a significant feature of the site. The site also encompasses Waterstown Park and the Hermitage golf course on the southern bank of the Liffey, while the Strawberry Beds and St. Catherines Demesne are located on the northern bank.

This section of the River is a designated salmonid river. A lack of active management of the Mill Race in recent times has resulted in a drop in water level due to the colonisation of much of the banks and in-stream channel by thick vegetation, some of which comprises invasive species which threaten to dominate the bankside if appropriate action is not taken. These invasive species include very aggressive plant types such as Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) and Russian Vine (*Fallopia baldschuanica*).

The main terrestrial habitat included within the site is mixed deciduous woodland on fertile, limey alluvium and boulder clay, in which Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is dominant in some areas. St. Catherines Wood, located within St. Catherines Demesne is a mixed woodland of predominantly native broadleaves. The common woodland species include native species such as Ash and Oak along with Beech and Sycamore. The development of an open canopy within the woodland promotes a diverse herb layer, which has been noted as a valuable botanical resource and as such the woodland has been designated as an Area of Scientific Interest.

The threatened Green Figwort (*Scrophularia umbrosa*), a species listed in the Irish Red Data Book, is recorded from a number of stations along the river within the site. This stretch of the River Liffey has the greatest number of recently recorded populations of this species in Ireland.

The Strawberry Beds are another ecological feature within the pNHA. They occupy the north bank of the river between Knockmaroon Hill in the east and the Lucan Bridge in the west. The soil of the area is very fertile and up until the middle of the last century the predominant industry was agriculture. The topography of the Beds was intensively managed, with the construction of terraces for the cultivation of a variety of crops. These



terraces are now mainly landscaped gardens, however some areas are growing wild and exhibit a diverse ecosystem. There are large expanses of wooded areas within the Beds which are typically comprised of Beech, Oak, Sycamore, and Ash with scattered Conifers, especially Silver Firs.

#### *Glenaulin to Chapelizod*

At the city boundary on the north side of the river, at Glenaulin, there is a small but dense woodland. The dominant species are Sycamore and Ash. Willow and Alder line the river bank while patches of herbaceous vegetation are dominated by Reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), a particularly robust grass that can out-compete other species and reduce biodiversity.

The steep and well developed earth bank sides along this stretch of the river provide ideal nesting sites for Kingfishers. A pair of resident Kingfishers are known to nest and forage between Sarah Bridge and upstream to the western edge of the weir.

The islands associated with the weir at Chapelizod support a varying amount of semi-natural woodland dominated by Willow, Sycamore and Ash. These areas are inaccessible by foot which makes them ideal refuges for breeding birds and mammals.

#### *Chapelizod to Islandbridge*

Fennel pondweed is abundant in-stream within this section of the main channel. This plant is characteristic of eutrophic waters. Spiked water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) is associated with the fennel pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), while Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) and St. John Nuttall's waterweed grow in the slower waters of the river. Reed Sweet-grass forms a mono-specific layer in places along the river bankside. Areas dominated by this plant are low in diversity and of little ecological value.

Grasslands of value exist to the south of the River immediately west of the War Memorial Park. These grasslands are typical of dry calcareous conditions and support a diverse range of flora. They sustain a number of species of orchids, including Early Purple (*Orchis mascula*) and Pyramidal (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*). Yellow archangel is also associated with this grassland.

The ecological value of the grassland areas has decreased with a reduction in grazing, mainly by horses whose numbers have been restricted in more



recent times. In the absence of grazing animals an appropriate mowing regime will have to be introduced to improve and maintain the biological diversity of these grasslands and ensure that the area is not colonised by rank vegetation.

## 2.8 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The baseline landscape character of the majority of the study area is included in the County Landscape Character Assessment for Kildare. This is now part of the current County Plan 2005-2011. This identifies four General Landscape Zones as follows:

- **Water Corridor and River Valley Areas**, These character areas are associated with the environs of the River Liffey and the Grand Canal navigation.
- **Upland Character Areas**, located in the south eastern part of the study area. This character area extends from Ballymore Eustace and crosses the County boundary to include the adjoining Wicklow County and Wicklow Mountains complex from which the river is sourced.
- **Transition Areas**, relate to areas that represent a transition between the upland and lowland character areas generally. In the context of the River Liffey, this transitional character type interfaces with the river environs between Kilcullen and Ballymore Eustace
- **Lowland Character Area**, extends over much of the study area within the County boundary and interface with the River Liffey between Newbridge and Leixlip.

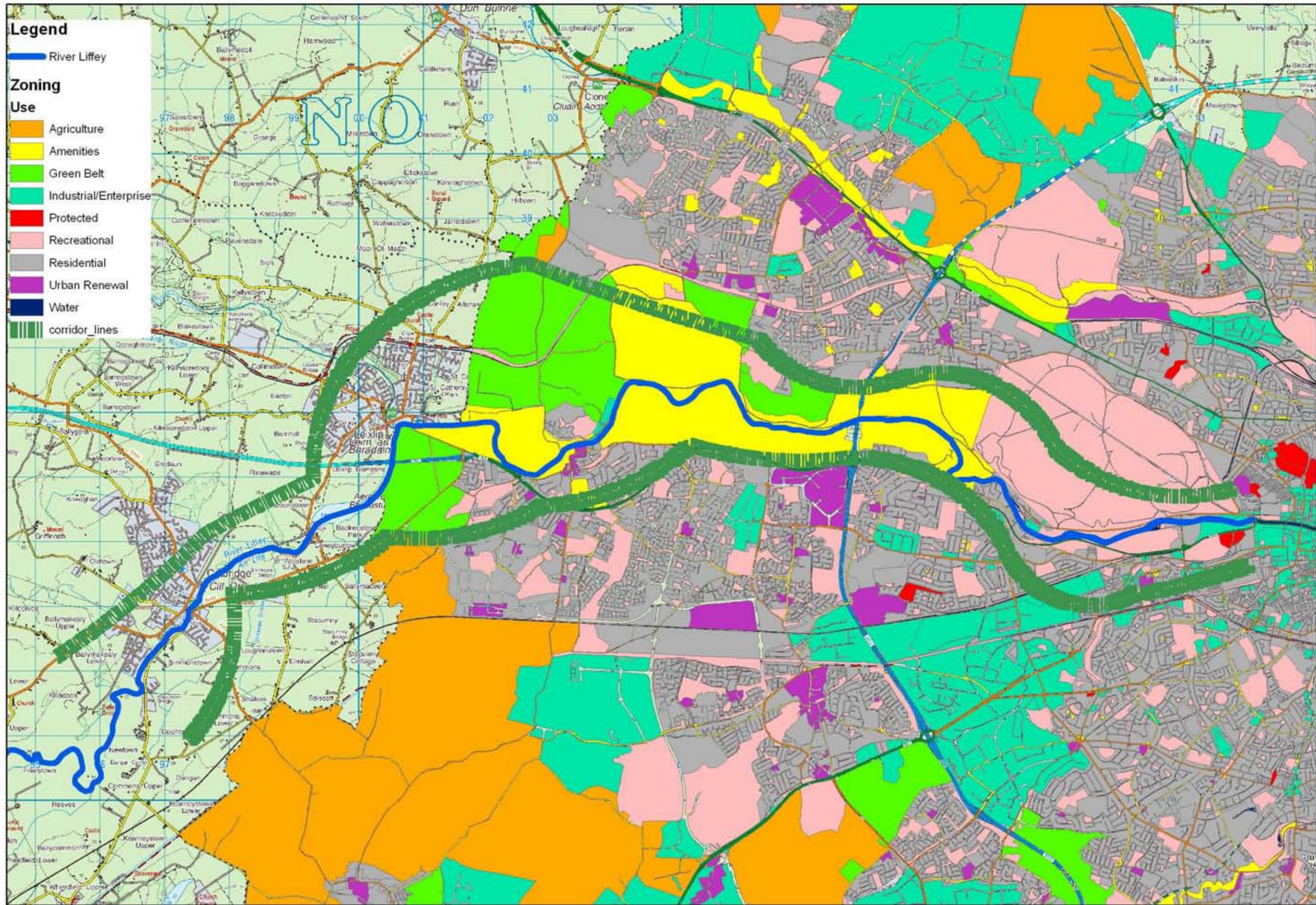
Landscape character units are identified within these four zones as outlined below and in *Figure 5*.

### 2.8.1 Local Landscape Character Areas

A Local Landscape Character Assessment was conducted specifically for the Strategy, the geographical scope of which extends from Islandbridge to Celbridge. The local character areas are identified as follows and descriptions of these are presented specifically in the context of the Strategy proposals.

1. Heuston and Islandbridge;
2. Islandbridge Memorial and Liffey Park;
3. Chapelizod;
4. Waterstown Park and Environs;
5. The Strawberry Beds;
6. Lucan and the Lucan Demesne;
7. Leixlip and St Catherine's;





**Fig. 5 - Liffey Valley Study - Landscape Character**  
 (note limits are not definitive, but indicate  
 the zone of influence of the River Liffey)



8. Backweston, and
9. Celbridge and Castletown.

The character areas are set out in *Figures 5 and 6*.

## 2.9 BUILT HERITAGE

The built heritage and cultural associations of the Liffey Valley create a unique resource and in many ways tell the story of the development of not only the capital city, but many of the settlements on the river. The industrial heritage of the Liffey is a unique national resource and the presence of mills, weirs, millraces and bridges contribute to the distinctive river landscape. In addition to the industrial heritage, the legacy of big houses and associated demesne landscapes are another feature with houses such as Castletown, Lyons, Farmleigh and Luttrellstown being some of the finest examples of Great Houses found in Ireland.



*The Hermitage*

This section presents a short description of each of the principal settlements along the priority area, a sample of some industrial heritage features, as well as a description of sites that are now in public ownership.

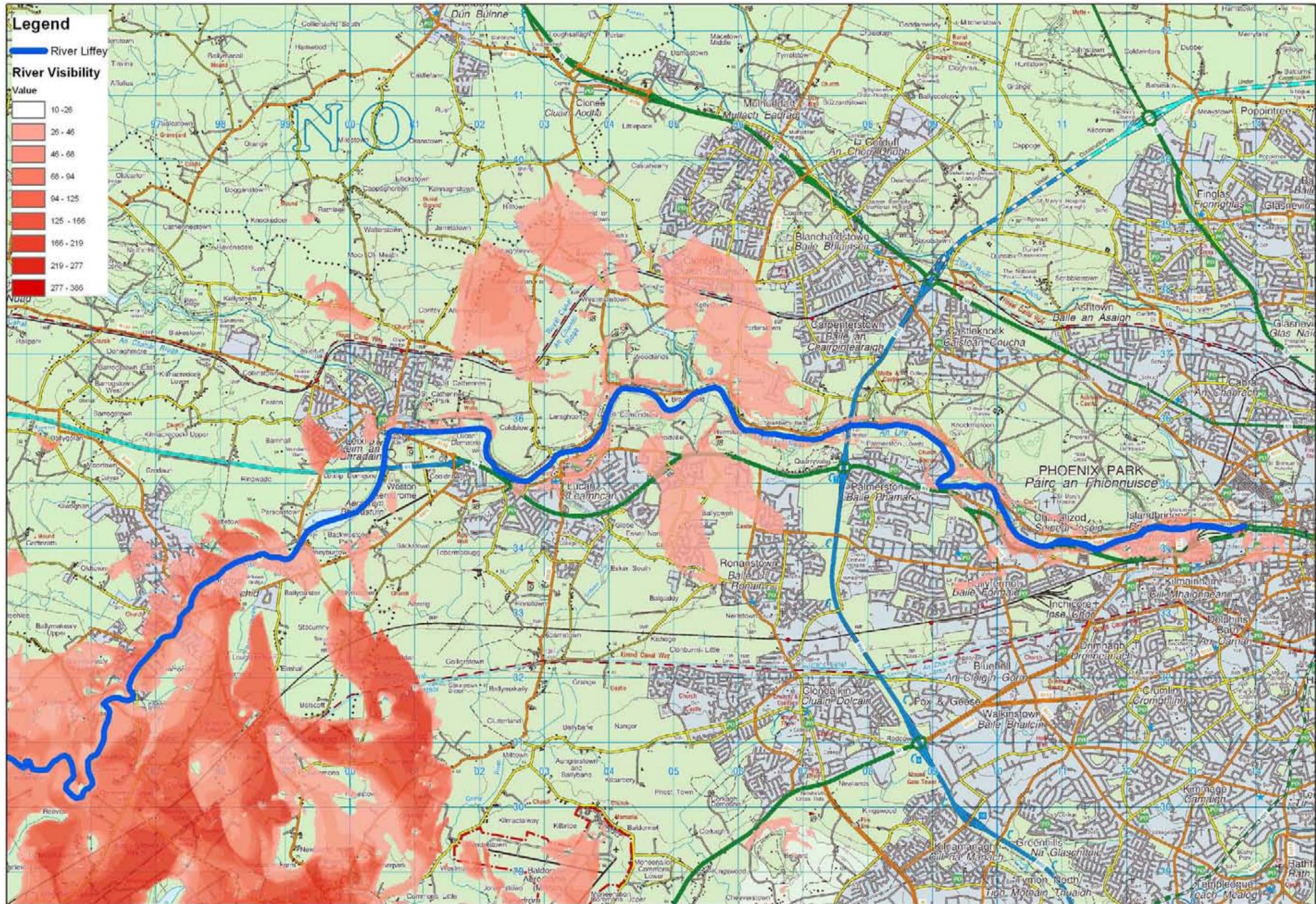
## 2.10 CELBRIDGE

Celbridge (*Cill Droighid*, the church of the bridge), a bridging point over the Liffey, which takes its name from this fact, was linked to the monastery of St Mo-Chúa of Clondalkin, whose well is near the mill. It subsequently developed into the pretty and well-endowed estate village of nearby Castletown House and a woollen-milling centre. It is now an expanding dormitory town of Dublin, and as such is having to face the challenges associated with rapid growth.

### 2.10.1 *Castletown House.*

The earliest and largest Palladian house in Ireland, is set in mature parkland through which the Liffey flows. It was built for William Connolly MP (1662-1729), who was Speaker of the Irish parliament. It was designed





**Fig. 6 - Liffey Valley Study - Visual Catchment of River**

3 1.5 0 3 Kilometres

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by the Italian Alessandro Galilei and also in part by Sir Edward Lovett Pearse. The 13-bay centre block of three storeys over basement is joined by Ionic colonnades to 2-storey, 7-bay wings. The magnificent interior is decorated with rococo stuccowork by the master stuccadores, the Francini brothers. There are vistas from the house of the celebrated Connolly Folly (1740) and (in winter) of the 'Wonderful Barn', a corkscrew-shaped grain store of 1743. The gateway is a feature with sphinx-like figures by Sir William Chambers.

Castletown is now in state ownership. Its contents are owned by, or on loan to, the Castletown Foundation. It is open to the public. The parkland is an important Irish example of eighteenth-century landscape gardening, with deciduous trees, radiating avenues and long vistas. The area fronting the house towards the Liffey is open to the public. The farmyard has recently been reacquired, and is to be refurbished and opened. The exterior parkland and walks have tremendous improvement potential, but in the short term require more evident management.



## 2.11 LEIXLIP

Named from the Norse, meaning Salmon's leap, in relation to the falls on the Liffey (the falls are now harnessed for a hydro-electric scheme where it meets the Rye Water), the town became a medieval settlement and bridgepoint. In 1837 it was observed that the countryside around Leixlip

*"concentrates much that is pleasing and picturesque in landscape. The surface is finely undulating and richly diversified with wood and water, and the view embraces the town with its ancient bridge, numerous elegant seats and highly cultivated demesnes, ancient and picturesque ruins, distant mountains and a variety of other interesting features of rural scenery (S. Lewis, A topographical dictionary of Ireland [London, 1837], ii, 257)."*

Today, the town retains much of its Georgian character, with a handsome mid-eighteenth century mall and other Georgian buildings and many well



situated big houses along the Liffey Valley, although these and their parklands are under threat from development.

## 2.12 ST CATHERINE'S PARK

All that remains of the original structures in St Catherine's Park are the chapel walls and the well. The name comes from a priory of canons of the Order of St Victor which established the lands under the invocation of St Catherine shortly after the Norman invasion.



The Peche family, the owners of Lucan at the time, granted these lands to the Priory. The original priory house was built on each side of a small stream that flows into the Liffey. A ford called Athlouan crossed the Liffey under the priory house. Later owners included the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Sir William Davys. The final owner was the third Earl of Lanesborough, who built significant additions to the house. The estate then passed to the Earl's wife's family the La Touches, however under their occupancy the house was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt.

## 2.13 LUCAN

Lucan is situated amidst some of the most charming scenery of the Liffey Valley. Despite much urban development to its south, it largely retains a delightful village character. The home of the Sarsfield family in the seventeenth century, it passed by marriage to the Veseys in the 1690s, and from 1758 developed as a fashionable spa with a sulphuric 'boiling spring'. *'The water, though limpid, emits a peculiarly offensive odour, and the taste is equally disagreeable'*, but it was *'found efficacious in scorbutic, bilious and rheumatic affections'*. (S. Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* [London, 1837], ii, 321). The spa made Lucan a popular resort for those in pursuit of its medicinal waters up to the twentieth century. The main street dates from 1800-30.

## 2.14 ANNA LIFFEY MILLS

The Anna Liffey Flour Mills are located in Laraghcon townland. The Mills were operated by George Shackleton and Sons from 1860 to as recent as 1998. Waterpower was created by the nearby Anna Liffey weir of circa 1765, with a sluice and sluice gates.



Coates/Shackleton Mill Weir



There appears to have been a mill on this site, associated with the Luttrell demesne, from the eighteenth century. Anna Liffey Mill is now owned by Fingal County Council and is open by appointment.

## 2.15 STRAWBERRY BEDS

The south-facing slopes along the Strawberry Beds were most suitable for strawberry growing to supply the needs of Dublin from at least the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth. In fact when the fruit was ripe, a procession of sidecars carried passengers out from the City of Dublin, where *'the strawberry vendors, pipers, fiddlers and publicans reaped a rich harvest, the sounds of revelry filled the air, and when the shades of night had fallen numerous involuntary dismounts were made from the cars on the homeward journey'*. The south-facing slopes were also utilised for other market-gardening activities.

## 2.16 PALMERSTOWN

The settlement may take its name from the yew trees that provided 'palms' on Palm Sunday - in the Middle Ages the lands were owned by the Hospitaller Order of Fratres Cruciferi in Thomas Street, Dublin. The late Nessa O'Connor has provided a comprehensive and well-informed account of its history and antiquities in *Palmerstown: an ancient place* (2003). Palmerstown was an important milling centre in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite the expansion of Dublin, a surprising amount of riverside historic buildings and rural character remains extant. The historic Mill Lane area is in a very dilapidated and run-down state, but well capable of rehabilitation.

## 2.17 MILL RACE

A mill race built to power the mills at Mill Lane starts at the New Holland weir opposite Wren's nest/Hermitage Golf Club and runs parallel to the Liffey for *circa* three kilometres. Five single-arch stone bridges span the route. Most of the bridges have been vandalised, but could be refurbished as the stone work is dumped in the water. There has always been a right of way along the race, according to local residents. When Mr Somerville-Large owned Brooklawn - the present King's Hospital School lands - he had to put gates at both ends of his land to allow pedestrian access along the mill race.

- **Mills.** The mill race powered a series of mills and the pump house to supply Farmleigh with water and hydro-electricity, all at the end of Mill Lane. Listing downstream, they were as follows:



- **Scutch Mill.** The Building extant as the Sun Chemical Company of Coates Lorilleux has an associated retortory for breaking down the stems of the flax which survives in the form of a brick cylinder further downstream above the outflow of the millstream to the Liffey. Palmerstown was an important centre of linen printing in the eighteenth century.
- **A Power Station** to provide water and generate electricity for Farmleigh, (both carried there across the Silver Bridge) remains extant.
- **Oil Mill** in Palmerstown Lower townland. The property of M. McGarry and John O'Brien in 1852 remains extant.
- **A Cotton factory**, the property of M. McGarry and John O'Brien in 1852 also remains extant. Plans have been mooted for its conversion, along with the Oil Mill into apartments.

## 2.18 CHAPELIZOD/ST LAWRENCE

A liffeside village on the Dublin to Lucan Road. Strictly speaking Chapelizod relates to the settlement north of the Liffey, while the village on the south bank was St Lawrence. The name Chapelizod is said to derive from the chapel of Isolde/Iseult, the Celtic princess whose hand was sought from her father, King Aengus, by Sir Tristram/Tristaun. The legend was rediscovered by Wagner in his famous opera *Tristan and Isolde* (1865), and the event is depicted in a fresco in the City Hall, Dublin. The manor was part of the possessions of the Knights Hospitallers of Kilmainham. After the dissolution it passed through several hands, until in 1665 when it was acquired by the first Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant, on behalf of the Crown. This was as apart of a scheme to enclose the Phoenix Park. Thereafter, until 1726, the residence on the property at or near Chapelizod became the occasional country residence of the Lord Lieutenant or his deputy. A linen factory was established in 1671. As the Liffey flows into Chapelizod, a weir forms a large mill race to make an island that was formerly a considerable industrial centre. The old part of the village, north of the Liffey is a pleasant backwater of Georgian houses, some three storeys high. There are also millworkers' cottages; and a Church of Ireland parish church with a medieval tower.

## 2.19 PHOENIX PARK

Phoenix Park covers 713 hectares making it one of the largest enclosed parks in Europe. In 1662 the lands were acquired by the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant, for the purpose of creating a royal deer park.



The Phoenix, which was located at the modern King's Hall commercial park, at the east end of Chapelizod was the vice-regal country residence (not used after 1726). The present park received its layout in the lord lieutenancy of the Earl of Chesterfield (1744-7), who erected the handsome Phoenix Column in 1747. The Vice-Regal Lodge, now Áras an Uachtaráin, was developed from a smaller house after 1782. The 68-metre, neo-classical Wellington Monument Testimonial (1817) dominates the skyline.

## 2.20 MEMORIAL PARK

Islandbridge War memorial and gardens, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built to commemorate Irishmen killed in World War I. It was completed under the direction of the OPW and formally opened in 1940. It includes a large formal quadrangle, cross, classical pavilion, rose gardens and riverine park.



### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall aims of this Strategy are twofold - to provide an integrated management framework for the Liffey Valley, and to create a process towards the establishment of a Liffey Valley Park which would be composed of a necklace of publicly owned spaces within this area.

### 3.2 THE VISION

*The Liffey Valley will be a high quality, vibrant and attractive environment, securing the protection of its natural resources and cultural heritage.*

The Liffey Valley comprises a series of public parks and mixed landuses located along the river floodplain. There are considerable opportunities for recreation, tourism, economic development and habitat creation along the Liffey Valley. The Vision for the future is to maintain, and enhance the unique river valley as a natural asset whilst meeting the development and open space needs of the catchment population therein. The Strategy reinforces this Vision and as such the Strategy will guide the administration, management, allocation of resources and development control functions of the Office of Public Works and the four Local Authorities in whom the future of the Liffey Valley is entrusted.

Whilst the overarching objective is to maintain the integrity of the Liffey Valley and provide essential recreational space for the wider region, sensitively designed and appropriate development in certain areas will provide a means to bring further areas into public ownership and financial resources to the ongoing running of the Park.

### 3.3 STRATEGY

This Strategy is based on a clear understanding of the characteristics and valuable resources available in the Liffey Valley. Specifically these are presented in terms of assets or *strengths* that have a key role to play in the future enhancement of the Liffey Valley as a valued amenity and a natural resource. The limitations or *weaknesses* that currently present as constraints to the enhancement of this natural resource as an amenity are identified and addressed in the context of the *strengths*.





**Table 3.1 Liffey Valley - Strengths and Weaknesses**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Resources</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse Natural Environment.</li> <li>Extensive lands in public ownership for recreational use.</li> <li>Good Water Quality.</li> <li>Historic and Cultural Heritage assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of comprehensive environmental management plan.</li> <li>Limited resources available for maintenance of built heritage.</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liffey Valley actively used for recreation.</li> <li>Some public recognition of the value of the river environment.</li> <li>Community group interest in safeguarding the river valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited public involvement in maintenance and management of sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heuston Station and Luas Stop as key public transport hub to enter park from the east.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic management especially along the Strawberry Beds.</li> <li>Weak and limited access to the Liffey Valley.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing statutory designations (SAAO).</li> <li>Zoning for recreation and open space.</li> <li>Policy support in all County Development Plans for Liffey Valley Park Creation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of a recognised flagship attraction.</li> <li>Absence of strong identity at regional or national level.</li> <li>Absence of long term Strategy to balance management of natural resources with development control.</li> </ul>

The Strategy recognises the need to create new *opportunities* for the enhancement of the river valley. Clear strategic guidance, which is robust in terms of addressing the current and potential *threats* that may be encountered in the application of the Strategy, is required.



**Table 3.2 Liffey Valley – Opportunities and Threats**

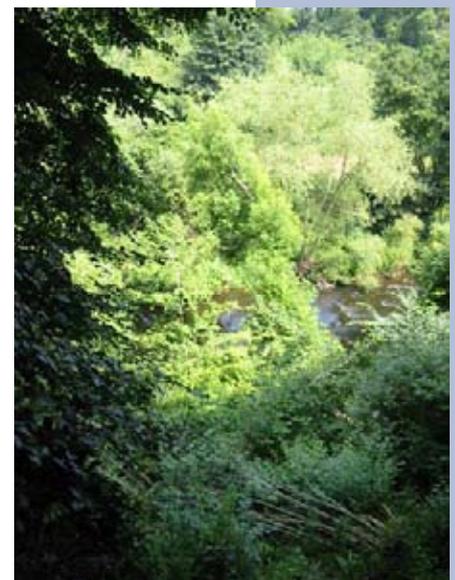
Opportunities	Threats
<b>Heritage Resources</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range of ‘sites’ and open space facilities offer potential for recreation and as visitor attractions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing physical conditions of the aforementioned ‘sites’.</li> <li>Incomplete knowledge of baseline data.</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for community involvement is promising due to the increased awareness of the value of the Liffey environment both locally / and regionally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time demands on the part of community.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to explore navigational linkages with related canal waterways.</li> <li>Explore ways of enhancing recreational access on foot/cycleway or horseback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased traffic pressures.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for integrated policy for the Liffey Valley to be controlled by the Local Authorities and OPW collectively.</li> <li>Possible role in the application of EU rural development policy in the river valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limitations on traffic management and the integration of public transport.</li> <li>Increasing costs of land could limit Local Authority opportunities in terms of future land acquisitions as part of the Liffey Valley Park.</li> </ul>

The above analysis serves a purpose in terms of establishing the area wide strategic objectives and actions as follows.

### 3.4 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The Vision has been developed from an extensive consultation process with statutory bodies, stakeholders and interested members of the many communities along the Liffey Valley. The Vision is thus founded on the following six core objectives.

1. Establish a launch programme-*Implementing the Strategy*, for the Strategy centred on the delivery of flagship projects. Further details are provided in *Chapter Four, Implementing the Strategy*.



2. Bring planning and related policy together for the purpose of directing the development and management of the Liffey Valley.
3. Engage the local and wider community and promote the river valley as a site for recreation, education and the enjoyment of the environment for all.
4. Support sustainable economic activity and development that is sympathetic to the character of the Liffey Valley, maintains viable communities and encourages the use of the river Valley assets for tourism and recreation.
5. Ensure the River is accessible through the public parks and spaces along the maximum extent of the Liffey Valley Park.
6. Protect, conserve and enhance the natural resources of the Liffey Valley in the interests of maintaining biodiversity and for the benefit of future generations.
7. Ensure the preservation, enhancement and continued use of the Liffey Valley cultural heritage assets.

### 3.5 OBJECTIVE 1 – IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

**Establish a launch programme for the delivery of the Strategy centered on the delivery of Flagship Projects.**

This is the first of the seven key objectives which aim to realise the vision of the Strategy and underpin a commitment to establish the Liffey Valley Park as a recognised entity. These projects are capital projects, intended to be undertaken in the early stages of the Strategy's implementation. These flagship projects are identified, in the first instance, for the Liffey Valley as it extends from Islandbridge to Celbridge. Flagship projects and indeed further detailed Strategy actions are outlined for this area which will form the basis of an overall Strategy to be applied across the entire Liffey Valley.

It is important to recognise that the implementation of the flagship projects will deliver key recreational and tourism projects early on in the process and hopefully provide tangible benefits to the wider population. In tandem with this, the implementation of such projects will have the added benefit of increasing wider awareness of the Liffey Valley and enticing more users to the area. Given the importance of this objective further



details on this objective are provided in Chapter Four, Implementing the Strategy.

### 3.6 **OBJECTIVE 2- INTEGRATING PLANNING POLICY IN THE REGION AND CREATING DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**Establish mechanisms that bring planning and related authorities together for the purpose of applying policy and directing the development and management of the Liffey Valley.**

The Local Authorities are central to the success of the river Valley. Theirs is the task of managing the environment, controlling development and implementing policy. The Local Authorities will therefore be the driving force behind the Vision and the future of the Liffey Valley. They must be seen as leaders to ensure that their collective actions work for the river Valley as a whole.

Objective two is aimed at the creation of a steering group to oversee the implementation of the strategy. The Steering Groups role would be to work through the Local Authorities, to deliver the Strategy. Furthermore the Office of Public Works should be represented on the Steering Group in a leadership and coordinating role.

The Steering Group would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Strategy and its integration with national policy and Local Authority initiatives. They should monitor and where appropriate address the non delivery of the actions set out in the Strategy. Ultimately they should take responsibility for reviewing the Strategy having regard for the actions set out.

It is important to acknowledge that the Local Authorities will have to liaise with property owners along the Liffey Valley and that development can provide a means of acquiring further land in public ownership. The Planning and Development Act 2000 makes provision for financial contributions as part of development activities and there may be opportunities to permit sensitive and appropriate development in certain sections of the Liffey Valley whilst ensuring there is real community gain for the wider population, principally through land transfer.



<b>Action</b>	
<i>Management and Regional Representation</i>	
2.1	<p>A Strategy Steering Group is to be established to oversee implementation of the Strategy. The Office of Public Works will also be represented on this Group.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority, Office of Public Works  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing operation</p>
2.2	<p>The Steering Group to liaise with the Eastern River Basin District Advisory Council in relation to the preparation of the River Liffey Basin Management Plan and programme of measures which will have direct relevance to the overall management of the Valley.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority office, the Office of Public Works and Eastern River Basin District Advisory Council  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
2.4	<p>Each County and City Development Plan to be amended to include the objectives of this Strategy as part of local planning policy. This amendment to policy will remove any conflicting policy objectives that currently exist between the Local authorities in respect of the River Valley</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing</p>
2.5	<p>The Strategy Steering Group will review all submissions made in relation to the Strategy and consider the best and most effective means for community input to the Liffey Valley Strategy.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Strategy Steering Group  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing</p>
2.6	<p>Policy in the form of design guidance to apply to planned development in a manner that fully recognises the strategic objectives of the Liffey Valley Strategy to be prepared.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority on a joint basis  <b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>
2.7	<p>Planning applications for development within the Liffey Valley to meet design standards as adopted by the Local Authorities.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority on a joint basis  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing</p>
2.8	<p>The Dublin and Mid East Regional Planning Guidelines to be amended to provide for the preparation of and establishment of a unified policy framework for the Liffey Valley</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority, and the Regional Authorities of Dublin and the Mid-East.  <b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>



<b>Action</b>	
2.9	<p>A landscape management plan for public properties to be prepared and applied within each open area in accordance with the guidance provided in this Strategy.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>
2.10	<p>It is recommended that for large planning applications that during planning application process, (covered under Planning and Development Act 2000) and where areas fall within the visual catchment of the River, such applications should have a visual impact assessment. Mitigation measures shall apply in respect of any potential adverse visual impacts in a manner that is consistent with Strategy objectives.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing</p>
2.11	<p>It is recommended for large planning applications that during the planning application process, (covered under Planning and Development Act 2000) areas that fall within the immediate catchment of the river as identified in this Strategy should have a full ecological survey as part of the application process. Appropriate consideration of the potential to impact on water quality shall also be taken into account with respect to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Regulations.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing</p>
2.12	<p>The Planning and Development Act 2000 makes provision for the designation of landscapes as a 'Landscape Conservation Area'. Such a designation would facilitate stricter planning control and assist considerably in maintaining the integrity of the Liffey Valley. It is recommended that this designation be investigated and utilised in line with the Planning and Development Act 2000.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing</p>
2.13	<p>The Special Area Amenity Order applying to the Liffey Valley to be reviewed in line with current development plan policy.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Fingal County Council/South Dublin County Council</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>



**Engage with the local and wider community and promote the Liffey Valley as a site for recreation, education and for the enjoyment of the environment for all.**

The people who live, play and work along the Liffey Valley have a vital role to play in the future management of the river valley. Their support of this Strategy and associated local authority initiatives is critical to the success of the Liffey Valley.

It will be essential for the Steering Group to consult with the elected members and other community interests. It is recommended that Elected Representatives become members of the Strategy Steering Group and in line with the democratic mandate make representations to the Strategy Steering Group from local communities. One of the first actions by the Strategy Steering Group will be to consider further the best and most appropriate means for consultation throughout the lifetime of the Strategy. At this point it is not recommended that a separate Valley Forum be established although the Group may wish to keep this under review having regard for the need for structured consultation.

An integrated recreation and amenity policy is required to cover the full extent of the Liffey Valley. Of particular concern is the area from Castletown to Islandbridge owing to the conflicting needs and demands that place increasing pressure on this area. This includes provision for a pro-active process of education for all potential users in regard to the ecological and heritage significance of the Valley. An audit of needs, completed as a part of the Strategy, points to the need to have a balance between public access and the requirement to maintain the attractiveness of the valley in terms of its naturalness and relative tranquility.

Improved access along the River Liffey to connect public open spaces with the river and to one another, is of particular importance as this establishes a framework within which recreational needs can be enhanced and inter community relations can be further developed. Visual access to the water should be considered alongside physical access as this reinforces a sense of place.

In addition, the management of public spaces requires an understanding of the contribution such facilities provide to the broader strategic concerns of the authorities. Ultimately an amenity and recreation policy can support the political decision-making that will be required to release the resources



needed for the Liffey Valley, its management and the provision of public spaces and park areas.

Action	
3.1	<p>A recreational and amenity Policy to be adopted by each Authority aimed at providing recreational facilities for a diverse range of interests whilst recognising the ecological and built heritage of the Valley and existing uses of the river. This Policy to contribute to the further development of signage for the wider Liffey Valley area by identifying particular sites for specialist activities. Full and meaningful liaison with recreational users to be required throughout the development of this Policy.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority  <b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>
3.2	<p>A Training Initiative targeting local communities to provide local guidance to visitors to be developed in association with Fás and local community partnerships/Pobal.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority  <b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>
3.3	<p>A fully staffed service to be provided in all the public open spaces.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going.</p>
3.4	<p>Historical built heritage as identified in this Strategy to be, where appropriate, secured and if possible made accessible to the wider community.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Office of Public Works and each Local Authority  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
3.5	<p>A unified landscape and facilities management plan to be prepared and implemented within the requirements of this Strategy</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority  <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>





**Support sustainable economic growth and development which is sympathetic to the character of the Liffey Valley, maintains viable communities and encourages the use of the Liffey Valley's assets for tourism.**

The Valley is currently one of the prime development zones in the State, taking much of the overflow of development from the City itself. In order to maintain and enhance the natural and recreational resources of the Liffey Valley, a pro-active approach to forward planning, a coherent application of development control and an active management framework across the relevant planning authorities is required to ensure that development contributes positively to the Liffey Valley and combats the unnecessary pressures of urbanisation on wildlife, access and the quality of the environment. Such development in addition to underpinning a dynamic environment and community, can be critical in providing the resources necessary to support the on-going development of the park.

Tourism provides an obvious focus and opportunity to the area to develop a sustainable economic environment. The putting in place of the network of facilities as envisaged in the launch programme will be critical to having a robust tourism product in the area.

General economic activity along the full extent of the Valley will continue to grow towards a service sector or high order/tertiary manufacturing capacity that is hugely influenced by quality of life conditions and the institutional capacity to protect such conditions. These forms of development bring the positive benefits of economic activity along with a real understanding of the importance of having a high quality environment.

In addition within certain defined areas social conditions remain problematic and require a continuing focus through, among others, Community Partnerships, Rapid and other social inclusion initiatives. A failure to address such needs, including the relationship between the Communities most affected by poor socio-economic and environmental influences, would very quickly undermine the potential of the Liffey Valley.

It will be self evident that the challenges of managing economic growth and maintaining a quality environment surrounding the Valley arise through the extent of private sector investment which is driven by the market opportunities in housing, service provision and the need for other forms of



infrastructure including water, waste water, solid waste management and transportation. Fortunately much of what forms the economic environment of the area is of a tertiary nature and increasingly is service based.

There is, in some incidences, a 'legacy' of inappropriate development, including unofficial landfilling. Notwithstanding the above it is now increasingly apparent that the private investment sector is seeking clearer direction from the Authorities, principally but not exclusively the Planning Authorities in developing their own investment strategies. Again fortunately there has been a dramatic shift in the pro-active role Planning Authorities in the area now play in providing the clarity necessary to having a vibrant economic environment and a sustainable planning framework.

It is critical therefore that there is a clear understanding of the need for on-going sustainable economic development and that this is a necessary condition for creating a sustainable environment where communities recognise the economic worth of having a significant cultural, environmental and economic asset close to hand. A clear recognition in line with Government policy, of the importance of social inclusion must also be a key feature of this Strategy.

Action	
4.1	A combined tourism package for the Valley to be developed to include input from local tourisms interests. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Dublin Tourism/Kildare Failte in association with each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
4.2	Information facilities as provided to include provision for foreign language interpretation as well as in English and Irish. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
4.3	A series of focused visitor facilities to be developed along the Liffey Valley as set out in Objective One. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Office of Public Works and each Local Authority. <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
4.4	The Local Authorities in line with current policy to work with Community and area based Partnerships to address security needs and provision of appropriate estate management training in residential areas contiguous to the Valley <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority in association with the appropriate Rural Development Agencies through County/City Development Boards <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going



Action	
4.5	<p>A strong and visible presence on the part of Park Wardens needs to be maintained and the creation of a neighbour hood watch scheme in association with An Garda Siochana for publicly accessible areas to be developed in partnership with Community Development Projects and Community / Area Partnerships</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
4.6	<p>An economic appraisal of the development of the Liffey Valley to be completed to include a clear statement on the positive economic worth of the Liffey Valley to wider economic development needs</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
4.7	<p>A brand mark for the Liffey Valley to be developed and applied to all actions associated with its development</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Office of Public Works</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
4.8	<p>Public/Private investment opportunities to include facilities set out in actions contained in Objective 1 to be considered within the framework of a feasibility study for each project or package of projects.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority and the Office of Public Works</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>

### 3.9 OBJECTIVE 5-OPENING UP ACCESS TO THE RIVER LIFFEY

**Ensure the River is accessible through the public parks and spaces along the maximum extent of the Liffey Valley**

Much of the wealth of the Liffey Valley is not accessible to the general public, either due to its private ownership or the physical difficulties of getting into the public properties. Enhancing and facilitating access to the existing public sites and improving linkages between these sites is a critical part of the Strategy and a key element in its success. Several submissions received voiced concern over limited access to the Liffey Valley and the erosion of existing access points. It is important to stress that the aim of the Strategy is not to provide unlimited access along the whole Liffey Valley, rather the provision of strategic access points to publicly owned sites and the linkages between these sites. Hence the emphasis on developing or restoring existing river crossings.



Many visitors from outside the immediate area will access the Liffey Valley Park by a variety of means and this must be catered for. In addition, a strong emphasis on accessing the Liffey Valley Park via public transport must also be provided. Access to the Park will be enhanced by the provision of signage and interpretation that will identify access points for a variety of recreational users. Therefore several of the actions below interact with actions identified under Signage and Branding (Actions 1.1 to 1.3), and the Recreational and Amenity Policy (Action 3.1).

Action	
5.1	To establish a River Valley Park along the extent of the Liffey including, in the first instance, the lands within public ownership <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority and relevant Public Authorities <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
5.2	An integrated traffic management plan for the Liffey Valley to be prepared to address provision of parking, restriction of commercial traffic, restriction of casual trading and short stay caravanning and camping, preparation of cycling routes and walking routes. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority on a joint basis <b>Timescale:</b> 2007
5.3	Opportunities are to be taken, throughout the length of the Liffey Valley to secure water front lands for recreational purposes and in the interest of preserving and enhancing the river environment. This amenity resource is seen as critical to the integrity of the Liffey Valley and in terms of meeting the environmental and recreational needs of adjacent developing land uses where these arise. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> each Planning Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and ongoing
5.4	Investigate the feasibility of providing a Liffey Valley Bus Tour that concentrates on the cultural and ecological heritage of the river valley. This will require liaison with private bus operators, Bus Eireann, Tourism authorities, Local Authorities and the OPW. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Local Authorities on a joint basis. <b>Timescale:</b> 2007
5.5	Information on the River Liffey to be available by means of a series of mapped interpretative panels, strategically located along the Liffey Valley. A common signage system will locate the user and direct to adjacent related points or sites of interest. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2007
5.6	A series of local centres to include toilets, refreshment facilities and interactive interpretation to be provided at principal locations. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going



<b>Action</b>	
5.7	<p>A single flagship visitor attraction that will tell the full story of the Valley to be provided, subject to the completion of a full feasibility study, in Shackleton Mills.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Fingal County Council and the Office of Public Works</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>
5.8	<p>The flagship facility will also tell the full story of the Valley by way of demonstrating the life cycle of the River from source to sea with reference to the wider Valley context and will include river ecology education awareness.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Fingal County Council and the Office of Public Works</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2007</p>
5.9	<p>The provision of a series of design options for future river crossings at the following locations: Guinness Bridge, Lutyens Bridge, Phoenix Park/Chapelizod Bridge, to be subject to full engineering appraisal. Consideration to be given to separated walking/cycling along a soft/hard trackway/towpath.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
5.10	<p>The Royal and Grand Canals provide opportunities to create circular/looped walks and enhanced access between the canals and the Liffey Valley Park in a number of locations. It is essential that the opportunity be taken to investigate the potential linkages between these sites and further enhance access between the principal water corridors of the Dublin and Mid East Region.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
5.11	<p>A number of rights of way and land swaps from private to public ownership are being implemented as part of planning conditions. These should be utilised as a means of increasing public ownership and access to the river in strategic locations where development opportunities exist.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Planning Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>



Protect, conserve and enhance the natural resources of the Liffey Valley in the interests of maintaining biodiversity and for the benefit of future generations.

One of the key features of the Valley is that it brings wildlife, into the heart of the City of Dublin and in turn connects Dublin to the wider countryside. The River is an important feature of Dublin's environment and should be recognised as an asset of national significance.

The conservation of the Liffey Valley carries with it the opportunity to engage both resident and visitor in a high quality environment once access can be improved. There is the necessity not only to protect the River itself but also its wider catchment.

The river valley's natural assets should not only be protected but every effort should be taken to enhance the biodiversity of the Liffey Valley. The development of a series of wildlife corridors, which 'fan out' from the immediate riverbanks into the wider environs and/or targeted planting of riparian woodland along the river are two mechanisms which should be considered. The creation of such corridors would reinforce the sense of connectivity that is essential to the development of the Liffey Valley; they would buffer the river from development and provide the authorities with the option of restricting certain activities in areas of particular sensitivity.

The Strategy Steering Group should engage with existing voluntary interests and groups in order to collect and catalogue environmental data which may then be used as a resource to provide an ecological watch dog for the river. This is particularly important in the event of a pollution incident in order to facilitate the appropriate response by the authorities.

Action	
6.1	<p>The development of the Liffey Valley to be enhanced by the application of appropriate designations that recognise natural amenities and ecologically valuable areas.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> National Parks and Wildlife Service in association with each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>



6.2	<p>The enhancement and enlargement of publicly owned open space for amenity purposes with the river as a focal point is to be conducted as part of the long term realisation of the Strategy in general.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Local Authority Parks Departments</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
6.3	<p>A detailed database in arcview GIS will be held in respect of all environmental, built heritage and open space data. This inventory will inform the Strategy and guide future management plans.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>
6.4	<p>Management of the Liffey Valley is to be addressed under the existing management regime and in line with the specific recommendations of this Strategy.</p> <p><b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going</p>



### OBJECTIVE 7-PROTECTING THE LARGE NUMBER OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS ALONG THE RIVER CORIDOR

Ensure the preservation, enhancement and continued use of the Liffey Valley's cultural heritage assets.

The cultural heritage resources of the River Liffey are unique and provide an excellent opportunity to educate and raise awareness of the more recent elements of Irish history, particularly from the eighteenth century onwards. The density of industrial heritage features including weirs, millraces and mills are unsurpassed nationally. It is essential that action is taken to preserve and maintain these sites in order for the tourism potential and the educational potential of the Park to be realised.

In addition to the industrial heritage features, the towns and villages of the Liffey Valley are distinctive and highly attractive centres that should be enhanced through appropriate design and the enhancement of areas of open space adjacent to the river and around the beautiful arched cut stone bridges that are so common crossing the Liffey.

Finally, there are the nationally significant cultural resources of the River Liffey associated with the numerous personalities and families that lived or worked close to the River Liffey in the past three hundred years. The contribution of the Guinness family to the river landscape must be recognised through the Farmleigh Estate and the extant Guinness Bridge. In addition, the associations with 'Finnegans Wake', the Sarsfields and Wolfe Tone provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the cultural significance of the Liffey Valley to the Greater Dublin area and beyond.

On a more local level, events such as the Liffey Descent and the Strawberry Beds festival present a chance to involve local communities in the ongoing celebration and marketing of the Liffey Valley Park. Investment and resources are required to deliver this but there are also potential tourism benefits associated with these events and the wider region again can benefit from such activities.



*Waterstown Park*





<b>Action</b>	
7.1	The Planning Authorities to provide planning advice to potential developers on built heritage in line with the objectives of this Strategy <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.2	Published guidelines in regard to form and extent of development to be prepared and applied cross each Authority <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2007
7.3	Liaison with the State Development Agencies to be put in place through the City/County Development Boards to ensure that the Agencies are fully aware of the Strategy and the Planning conditions that would be applied to investment for which they have a mandate <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority through County/City Development Boards <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.4	Active briefing of Chambers of Commerce, IBEC and other representative bodies to be put in place in regard to the implementation of the Strategy <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.5	Amendment if appropriate of current Section 48 Contributions Scheme to provide for contributions to capital costs in regard to Park developments. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.6	Research and provide interpretation in each of the Liffey Valley Historical Towns and Villages on cultural history of the town and provide signage to local cultural heritage attractions. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority and OPW <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.7	Support the establishment of festivals along the Liffey Valley. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> Each Local Authority <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.8	Examine the existing cultural links between the Liffey Valley and adjacent sites. A clear example is a military trail encompassing Collins' Barracks (National Museum), Kilmainham Gaol (OPW), the Magazine Fort in the Phoenix Park and the War Memorial Gardens. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> OPW <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and on-going
7.9	Examine the feasibility of the 'Friends of the Liffey Valley Park' as a means to educate on the cultural heritage of the Liffey Valley. This can be modelled on similar initiatives carried out by the National Gallery and the National Concert Hall. <b>Responsible Organisation:</b> OPW <b>Timescale:</b> 2006 and onwards.



## INTRODUCTION

The *Strategy* for the Liffey Valley is founded on seven key *objectives* in order to realise the *Vision* for the future of the Liffey Valley to become a *high quality vibrant and attractive environment*.

The objectives, described in detail in Chapter Three of this Strategy are the basis upon which a series of Flagship Projects are identified. These flagship projects are capital projects, intended to be undertaken in the early stages of the Strategy implementation and will form the basis for creating the River Liffey Valley Park in accordance with the Vision. The flagship projects are identified, in the first instance, for the Liffey Valley as it extends from Islandbridge to Celbridge. In addition, the flagship projects identified concentrate in the main, on lands already under public ownership, and provide the necklace of publicly owned properties that collectively will create the Liffey Valley Park.

A further advantage of an initial concentration on publicly owned lands ensures that once capital is secured, work can commence on these projects in a timely manner and the community around the River Liffey can begin to enjoy the benefits of such capital expenditure in a relatively short space of time.

Flagship projects and indeed the further detailed Strategy actions that are outlined for this area will form the basis of an overall Strategy to be applied across the entire river Valley.

The following section identifies the principal properties under public ownership that in the first instance will provide the basis for the creation of the Liffey Valley Park. In particular the state purchase of St Catherine's Park in 1996 and its subsequent transfer to shared local authority management serves as a nucleus of a 'Liffey Valley Park' and is a catalyst for further progress. Details of lands intended for public amenity are set out in *Figure 7*



Public Property	Description
Phoenix Park	<p>This property is managed by the Office of Public Works. It encompasses approximately 713 hectares and contains a number of attractions including cycle ways (north side of the park), Dublin Zoo, Aras an Uachtarain, the Magazine Fort, playing fields, cricket grounds and a variety of habitats including deciduous woodland, open parkland and a population of red deer which have a long association with the Park. A management plan for the Phoenix Park was developed in 1986, and there are proposals to provide cycling routes in the southern side of the park nearest the River Liffey.</p> <p>A second site is Farmleigh, the former Guinness Estate located adjacent to the Phoenix Park. This property is also managed by the OPW and whilst its purpose is to provide accommodation for heads of state and to serve as a meeting place for government, Farmleigh is open to the public at specific times of the year, notably weekends over the Summer and at Christmas.</p>
War Memorial Gardens	<p>These gardens are one of the most famous memorial gardens in Europe. They are dedicated to the memory of 49,400 Irish soldiers who died in the First World War (1914 to 1918). The names of all the soldiers are contained in the granite constructed bookrooms in the gardens. These gardens are not only a place of remembrance but are also of architectural interest and of great beauty. Designed by the famous architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), they are one of four Gardens in this Country designed by him. As part of his original design, Lutyens proposed a footbridge over the River Liffey to link the Phoenix park with the Memorial Gardens. Whilst much of the land on the northside of is leased to the rowing clubs, the OPW have retained a strip of land on the northern bank that would facilitate the construction of the Lutyens Bridge.</p> <p>In addition, there have recently been announced plans for a new pedestrian bridge across the N4 to provide for access from the adjacent urban area into the Memorial Park.</p>
Liffey Valley Park	<p>This site is located between the Anna Livia Bridge in Chapelizod and the War Memorial Gardens. The site contains land on both sides of the River Liffey, with 4.02 hectares on the north bank, and 12.09 hectare on the south bank. Draft Masterplan proposals for this site have recently been developed by the Dublin City Council Parks Division. Combined with the Phoenix Park and War Memorial Gardens, this site comprises a long stretch of river side open space already in public ownership. Funding has been made available to construct a pedestrian footbridge across the Liffey at this site, facilitating access from the Chapelizod Gates of the Phoenix Park into this park.</p>



<b>Public Property</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Waterstown Park</b>	Waterstown Park is managed by South Dublin County Council and is located around Stewarts Hospital in Palmerstown. It has been created from a mosaic of "brownfield" habitats with old woodland, mature hedgerows, a grass-covered city dump and a soggy river margin. It has not yet been formally opened as the construction of the network of pathways is not fully complete. As a consequence, it does not enjoy heavy usage but there is significant potential for recreational activity at this site.
<b>Guinness Bridge/Silver Bridge</b>	The Guinness bridge is located over the River Liffey at Waterstown Park and is under public ownership (Fingal County Council). This bridge represents a potential key linkage across the Liffey and urgently requires, at a minimum, maintenance work to prevent its further deterioration. Fingal County Council are currently appointing a restoration company to carry out works on the bridge with the ultimate aim of bringing this facility back into use.
<b>Anna Livia Mills</b>	This site was bought by Fingal County Council in 2000 and consists of nineteenth and twentieth century industrial buildings, a weir, three islands on the Liffey and .67 hectares of land. It is located within the Liffey Valley SAAO. The site has recently been subject to a Conservation and Reuse Proposal that is subject to public consultation. This site is currently constrained in terms of access due to the Regional Road (Lower Lucan Road) but has great potential to act as a key flagship site within the Liffey Valley Park.
<b>St Catherine's Park</b>	<p>This site was purchased by the state (OPW) on behalf of the local authorities in 1996, and encompasses 60 hectares approximately. This site offers a potential guide for purchase of future key sites along the Liffey, as it is managed co-operatively by the three relevant authorities with Fingal County Council taking the lead role.</p> <p>It is an extremely popular site with extensive usage from the surrounding Lucan area.</p> <p>More recently, Fingal County Council has purchased the former UCD farm on lands that adjoin St Catherines, and are currently developing a number of playing pitches on much of this land. This purchase further enhances the recreational potential of this area.</p>
<b>Castletown House</b>	Castletown House, managed by the OPW, was given to the state by Desmond Guinness in 1994. It is the first grand Palladian House in Ireland and a hugely important architectural and landscape resource. The lands of the estate lie between Leixlip and Celbridge. It lies on the eastern edge of Celbridge Town and is a key visitor attraction. The grounds are used extensively by the local population as a walking resource.



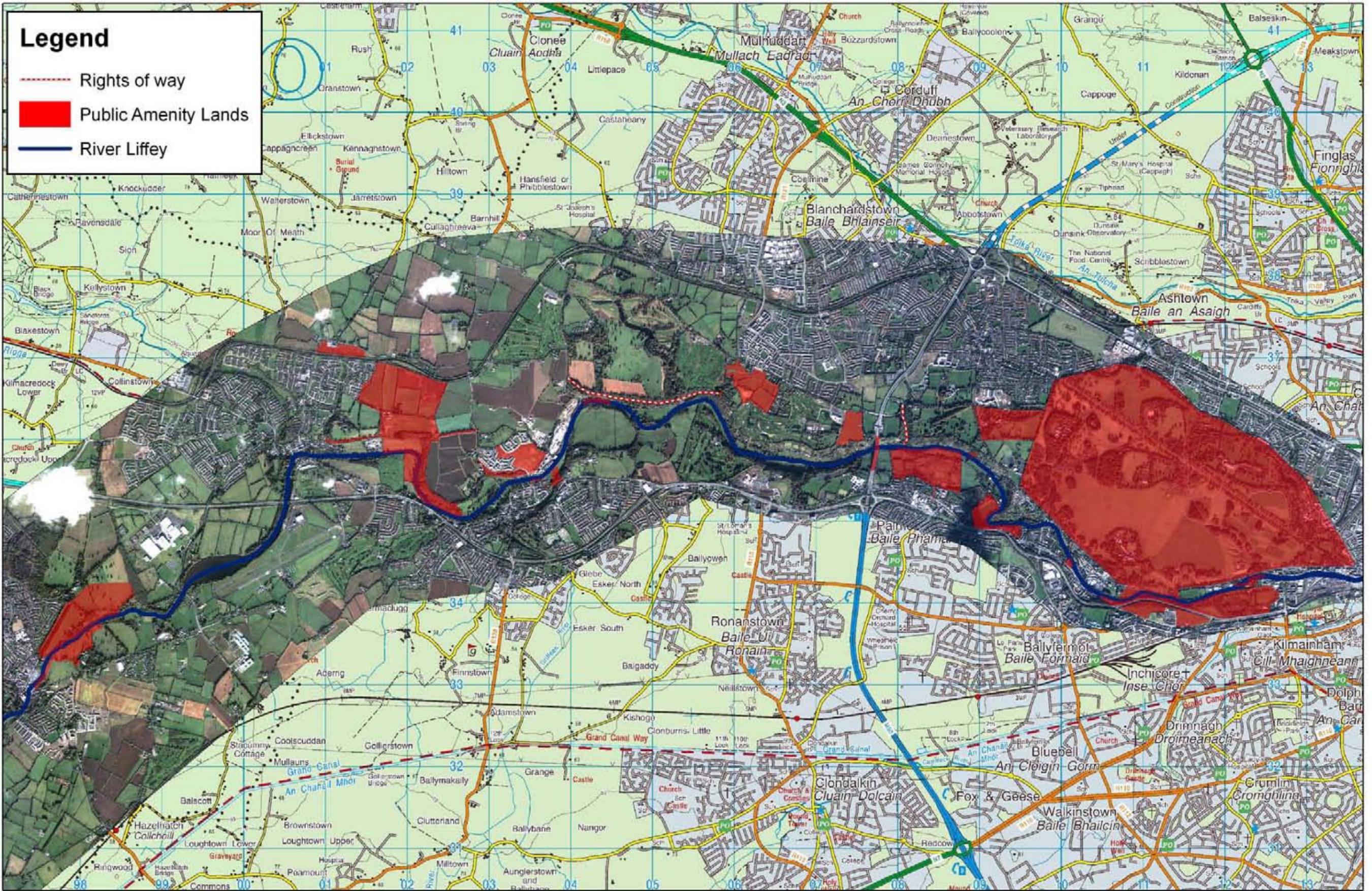


Figure 7 - Liffey Valley Study - Public lands intended for Public Amenity



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Public Property	Description
Royal and Grand Canals	These canals and towpaths in parts encircle the Liffey and in certain locations intersect with the Liffey Valley Area. These canals are managed by Waterways Ireland who have carried out extensive maintenance and enhancement works in recent times. There is great potential to investigate linkages between the Liffey Valley and the canals from a recreational perspective to create a series of looped walks or providing connectivity between certain public sites along the River Liffey.

### 4.3 FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

The flagship projects are now described for the priority area – Islandbridge to Celbridge. As part of the baseline study, a landscape character assessment was carried out for this priority area, and the flagship projects are described within each character area.

### 4.4 HEUSTON AND ISLANDBRIDGE

#### *Boardwalks in the city*

In the context of the more urban and developed (residential) character of this part of the River Liffey, opportunities are to be explored to provide riverside walkways, to include an extension of the boardwalk in the City Centre to Heuston Station and onwards to Islandbridge. Possible walks are set out in *Figure 8*.

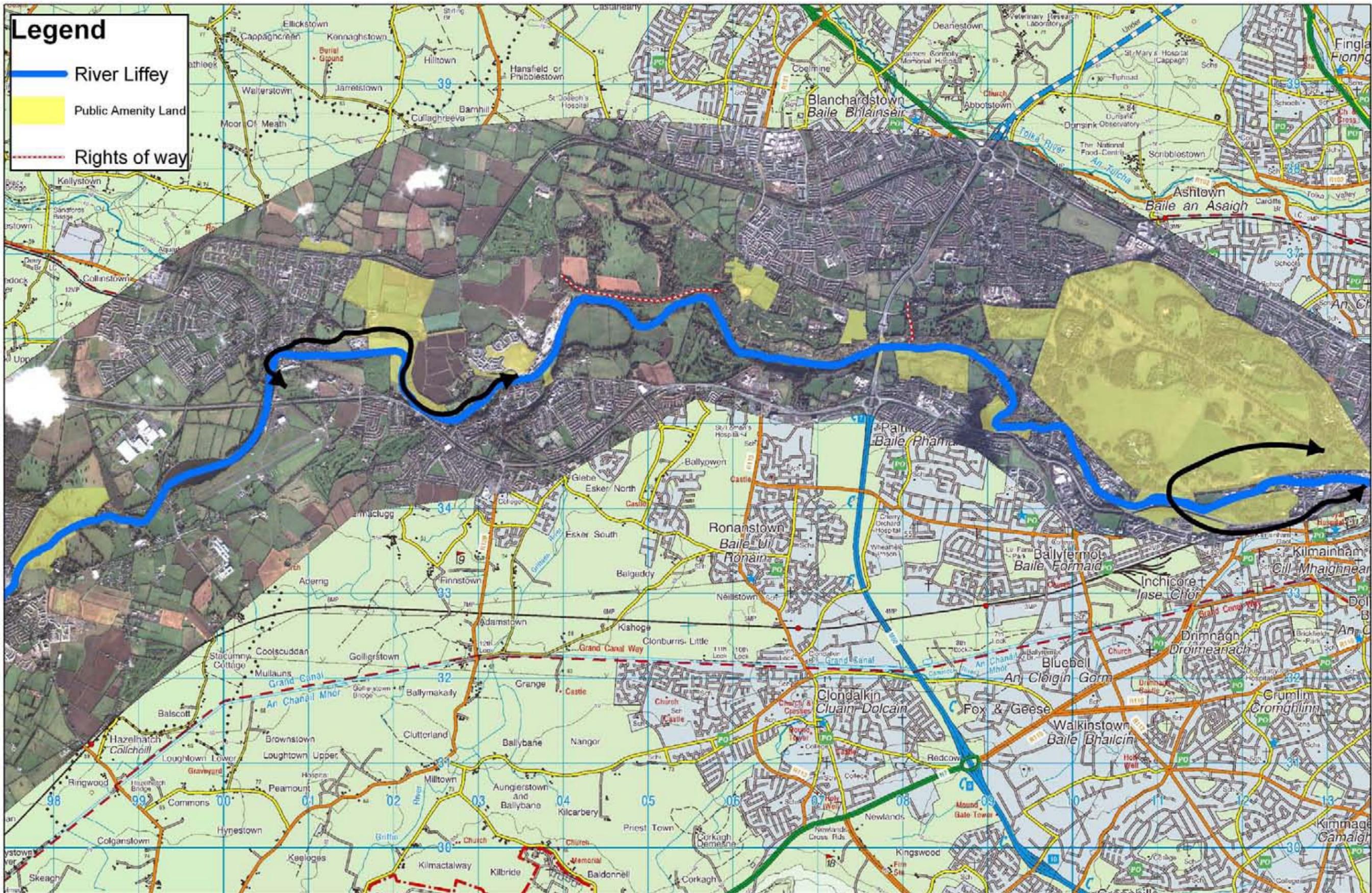
#### *Lutyens Bridge*

The Strategy recognises the original proposals for the War Memorial Park to include a river crossing. The opportunity needs to be taken to develop a river crossing at this site, in order to secure valuable linked access between this public open space and the Phoenix Park together with a recognition of the original plans proposed by Edwin Lutyens. Whilst the location of the bridge may differ to that historically proposed, it is recommended that it be named ‘Lutyens Bridge’ after the architect of this famous park.

#### *Liffey Park*

Design proposals have been developed by Dublin City Council for a ‘Liffey Valley Park’ located between the War Memorial park and Anna Livia Bridge to the west of Chapelizod. The proposals provide for a pedestrian bridge crossing of the river, recreational open space, and strengthened access and linkage to adjacent public open spaces along the river, in particular the Phoenix Park, the War Memorial Gardens and Waterstown





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**Figure 8 - Possible Walks**

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5  
 Kilometers

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Park. The implementation of these proposals is endorsed as a flagship project by this Strategy.

#### 4.5 CHAPELIZOD

##### *Anna Livia Bridge*

The centre of Chapelizod is and continues to be very much focused on the River Liffey, specifically at the Anna Livia Bridge which is a recognisable and important focal point for this settlement. The Strategy recognises its somewhat rundown condition and proposes refurbishment and urban renewal works for this area.



*The Guinness Bridge*

Central to this urban renewal will be the enhancement of the waterfront as an amenity and the heightening of awareness of the river amenity in this localised setting, centered around the existing bridge crossing. These objectives are to take priority over any further residential or commercial development in this area.

#### 4.6 WATERSTOWN PARK AND ENVIRONS

##### *Waterstown Park*

Proposals for this public open space are currently being implemented by South Dublin County Council. In this regard, the Strategy recommends prompt completion of these works in order that the facility is quickly brought into use. Access and linkage with related river front open spaces is seen as critical to the success of the wider Liffey Valley.

##### *The Guinness Bridge*

Of historical importance, this existing structure is central to the creation of linkages along the valley. Its refurbishment is seen as highly desirable given the potential as a river crossing link between Waterstown Park and the northern bank of the river with near access to the Phoenix Park. A feasibility study should be commissioned to assess the physical constraints of the site and the restoration costs of the Guinness Bridge.





## 4.7 THE STRAWBERRY BEDS

### *The Strawberry Beds Route*

Traffic calming measures are recommended for the local road that lines the north bank of the River Liffey between Palmerstown and Lucan, otherwise known as the 'Lower Road' leading to the 'Lower Lucan Road'. This route is to be recognised also for the high scenic quality of the views that are currently gained from it. These measures will promote this route as a non vehicular recreational route in the long term.

### *Anna Liffey Mills*

The site of the former Shakleton Flour Mills, recently acquired by Fingal County Council comprises a series of mill buildings, mill race and weir located on the north banks of the River Liffey east of Lucan Village. Much of the milling infrastructure is present.

The scenic quality of this facility is outstanding and is likely to draw great interest if refurbished as a visitor attraction and centre for the Park.

## 4.8 LUCAN

### *The Lucan Bridge*

The town of Lucan, now much developed and extended in terms of residential area expansion, continues to be centered on the River Liffey as probably the most important focal point in the town centre. The industrial heritage (weir and mill buildings) is very much evident in this central location and indeed highly attractive. The Strategy proposes environmental enhancement works focused on maintaining and enhancing this heritage setting. Particular emphasis will be placed on the needed renovation of waterfront open space.

## 4.9 LEIXLIP AND ST CATHERINES

### *The Liffey Falls*

Access to the River Liffey from Leixlip Town centre could be greatly improved. The existing available small pockets of open space that front onto the river would be greatly enhanced with the addition and in some cases renovation of waterside walkways. This particular setting carries a high scenic quality, made particularly attractive by the waterfall associated with the confluence of the Liffey and the Rye which is a focal point.



### *St Catherines and The Lucan Demesne*

These open spaces which are in public ownership lie adjacent to each other on opposite banks of the River Liffey. As highly attractive semi rural settings they will serve the communities of Leixlip and Lucan with a highly valuable and desirable amenity in which the River Liffey is a key focal point. Linked access between these public parks over the river is recommended. Apart from bringing the river amenity more closely to the local people, these links will serve to forge an association between the settlements of Lucan and Leixlip.

### *Backweston*

The widened River Liffey that serves as a reservoir at Backweston and Coneyburrow is a scenic and valued part of the Liffey Valley. Light recreational activities should be introduced as part of a general recreational and land management plan for this area. There is currently no access along the river at this location and liaison with the ESB should be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of providing access at this location.

## **4.10 CELBRIDGE AND CASTLETOWN**

### *Celbridge Mill Buildings and River Crossing*

The mill buildings at the heart of Celbridge Town Centre are actively used for a range of community based activities. With the River Liffey as a focal point, enhancement works to the town centre including the industrial heritage are recommended. These works are to include the refurbishment of the somewhat run down but well used pedestrian bridge over the River Liffey adjacent to the principal mill building.

### *A new riverside park for Celbridge and environs*

The site for a future public park is about to be acquired by Kildare County Council in the former townland of Donaghcumper. The development of this public park, endorsed by this Strategy brings with it the added opportunities to create river based linkages with the historic estate of Castletown.

## **4.11 BRANDING AND IDENTITY**

It is essential that a clear identity for the Liffey Valley is developed. This should help direct visitors and locals to the various points of interest and around the Valley and heighten awareness of this asset amongst the wider population. It is proposed that a distinct high quality brand be developed



for the Liffey Valley and that it is consistently applied at park areas and in the use of promotional material and livery for staff. Initial actions are proposed as follows:

1. The development of a single recognisable and meaningful brand for the River Liffey to be applied throughout the four Local Authority areas;
2. The development and installation of a high quality bespoke signage system directing visitors to the Park areas from main roads and public transport nodes;
3. The development and installation of high quality interpretative boards in each of the towns and villages along the Liffey from Islandbridge to Ballymore Eustace. It is suggested that these boards promote the 'River Liffey Historic Towns/villages'.

Each interpretive board can provide information on the recreational, built and natural heritage features in each settlement and environs, and direct people to access along the river where it is currently available. Information derived from the baseline assessment of resources along the river can be used in these interpretive boards and again, these can be manufactured to bespoke designs by local craftsmen.



## 5 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This final section outlines the recommended implementation and monitoring bodies to deliver the Strategy. It is recommended that the new Steering Group be formed without delay in order to commence the actions contained in the Strategy.



*Towards Stuarts Hospital*

### 5.2 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

#### 5.2.1 *Role and functions of the Local Authorities in Liffey Valley.*

In addition to the planning responsibilities of the City and County Councils each retains a statutory role in regard to open space management, civic amenity and recreation provision, sports development and general civic leadership for the communities along the Valley. Thus the statutory provisions to enable delivery of the actions associated with the Strategy are already largely in place. It is therefore recommended that this remain the most appropriate means of implementing the Strategy.

### 5.3 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Office of Public Works acts as the primary manager of State Property. As such it has direct responsibilities for public spaces along the Valley most notably the Phoenix Park and the War Memorial at Islandbridge. In addition the OPW has taken a limited co-ordination role in the Valley facilitating among other things the completion of this Report. It is recommended that this role be enhanced to ensure that the strategic objectives of the Strategy are placed on the National Agenda.

### 5.4 FUNDING

There are two features to funding the Strategy. In the first instance capital requirements will need to be met to deliver the Flag Ship projects as identified. In the second there will be on-going current expenditures that will arise.



A full costing and associated feasibility study will be required for each capital item and this process should be put in train without delay.

## 5.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Steering Group drawn from the relevant Local Authorities will need to liaise with and advise the Local Authorities and others on a regular basis. In that regard the Group should receive quarterly implementation reports from each Authority. A three year review of the Strategy should be undertaken to ensure that all of the targeted actions are underway. This review should also be used as the means to addressing further issues and concerns with the management of the Valley.

In addition the local Authorities should provide to the Steering Group, an annual report on the implementation of policy change in line with the objectives of the Strategy.







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