

CHAPTER 10

Environmental Management



10.1 Introduction

Our health and wellbeing is supported by a clean and well-protected environment. Our basic needs are clean air, safe drinking water and healthy food¹ and these should be treated as valuable assets that need to be protected to benefit our health and also the wider economy². A high quality, clean and safe environment is important for the economic development of the county, in particular, tourism, agriculture, forestry and services.

While the quality of the environment in the county is generally good, there are many challenges surrounding its protection, both now and in the future. The Council is committed to protecting our environment and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. As a local authority the Council has many related responsibilities such as protecting water and air quality and managing noise and light pollution. As a planning authority, the Council's statutory land use plans must include objectives to conserve and protect the environment, promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for surface water bodies and ground water bodies and to control establishments under the Major Accidents Directive.

This chapter sets out, from a spatial planning perspective, the framework to sustainably manage our environment by ensuring that land use and future developments protect and enhance, where possible, environmental quality and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our county. The chapter should be read in conjunction with the remainder of the Plan and the Development Management Manual in Volume 2.

10.2 Climate Action and the Environment

With regard to the environment, climate action in the Plan focuses, inter alia, on the following:

- Developing sustainable transport modes and permeable towns and villages which reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality.

¹ Ireland's Environment-An Assessment 2016, Environmental Protection Agency, 2016, page 123.

² Ibid, page 211

- Promoting renewable energy and green industries to reduce GHGs and improve air quality.
- Managing development in flood risk areas and requiring SuDS to be used in all relevant developments to avoid surface water run-off and pollutants entering watercourses.
- Requiring water conservation in new developments.
- Requiring new agricultural developments to comply with the Nitrates Directives and facilitating development that will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Green, Low Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS).
- Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystems.

10.3 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter had regard to the suite of EU, national legislation and guidelines that relate to the protection and management of the environment including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Habitats, Birds, Water Framework, Groundwater, Bathing Water, the Shellfish Waters, the Marine Strategy Framework, Nitrates, Noise and Air Quality Directives.

In terms of spatial planning, the NPF, through NSO 8, focuses on the sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources. The implementation of NPO 57 will ensure water quality and resource management by managing flood risk in accordance with guidelines, ensuring that the River Basin Management Plans are fully considered in the planning process and integrating sustainable water management solutions such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs). NPO 63 aims to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.

Environmental protection is a core component of the RSES for the Southern Region and the Strategy statement underlines the need 'to safeguard and enhance our

environment through sustainable development, transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient society'. The RSES highlights that planning is critically important to the management of water resources, as well as noise, light and air quality management. There is a suite of supporting objectives in the RSES focused on protecting, conserving and enhancing our natural capital with specific objectives relating to ecosystem services, water resources, water quality and the Water Framework Directive, flood management, green infrastructure and biodiversity, air quality, noise and light.

The current River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 also recognises the need for alignment and integration with the planning system in order to ensure effective water management and compatibility between planned growth and environmental sustainability. It outlines that planning is critically important to the wellbeing of our water bodies, and the planning system therefore makes a significant contribution to water objectives by ensuring that development that could pose a risk is avoided in the first instance, where feasible, and by including appropriate planning conditions in planning permissions for new development.

10.4 Environmental Management Strategy

10.4.1 Goal

It is the goal of the Council to ensure that the natural resources and environmental conditions that are fundamental for the social and economic wellbeing of the current and future generations of our county are sustainably managed and protected.

10.4.2 Strategy

This strategy provides the spatial framework to deliver environmental protection and sustainable development. The strategic aims are:

- To recognise the benefits of a good quality environment for the health and wellbeing of our residents, visitors, habitats and ecosystems.

- To protect and improve water quality and to ensure that everyone has access to safe and clean drinking water supplies and aquatic habitats and ecosystems can thrive.
- To protect environmental quality by ensuring that land use and developments do not negatively affect air quality or give rise to noise or light pollution.
- To adopt a precautionary approach in the assessment of planning applications, preparation of plans and carrying out of projects and ensure that required assessments are carried out at the appropriate levels.

Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective EM01

To ensure that proposed projects/developments comply with the requirements of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and as transposed into Irish law under national legislation, including in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In accordance with Article 3 of Directive 2014/52/EU, where EIA is required the environmental impact assessments presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, the direct, indirect and cumulative significant effects of a project on the following factors: population and human health; biodiversity (with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC); land, soil, water, air and climate, material assets, cultural heritage, and the landscape, and the interaction between the foregoing factors.

Objective EM02

To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an

appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

Objective EM03

To ensure that proposed plans and programmes comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as transposed into Irish law under national legislation.

Objective EM04

To ensure that plans, including land use plans, will only be adopted, if they either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European Site, or where such a plan is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), Wexford County Council will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will Wexford County Council adopt the plan, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures. A plan which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

Objective EM05

To implement the provisions of EU and National legislation and other relevant legislative requirements on protecting and improving surface and ground water quality, air quality and climate, and on reducing adverse noise and light nuisance, as appropriate and in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders in the interests of the protection of the environment, public health and the sustainable development of the county.

10.5 Water Quality

The Council has statutory responsibilities to protect and manage water quality. It is responsible for maintaining, improving and enhancing the environmental and ecological quality of the county's waters by implementing a series of measures including pollution control and licensing of effluent discharges. The varying demands on water resources in the county must be balanced with the need to protect these resources to ensure an adequate supply of clean water for all and to protect the habitats and ecosystems that depend on it.

Water supplies in the county come from surface water and groundwater sources. The protection of these valuable resources is of vital importance to protect both human health and provide for a healthy environment.

Surface waters include lakes, reservoirs, streams, rivers and coastal waters, and the main threats to the quality of surface water comes from agricultural, forestry, , outfalls from municipal wastewater treatment works, on-site wastewater treatment systems, and licensed and unlicensed discharges and storm water run-off.

Groundwater is important as a source of drinking water in the county, in particular, in our rural areas. Groundwater also supports river flows, lake levels and ecosystems. Groundwater is contained in aquifers which are underground layers of rock that contain water. Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) categorises aquifers according to their vulnerability to pollution, that is, the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. In this regard, development must be controlled and managed appropriately, particularly in areas of high groundwater vulnerability to avoid the transmission of pollutants into important aquifers.

Groundwater protection schemes aim to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater by applying a risk based assessment approach to ground water protection and sustainable development. These schemes provide guidance to the Council when carrying out its functions, in particular planning and licensing, and assist in decision making relating to controlling the location and nature of developments and potentially polluting activities.

10.5.1 Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the legal framework to protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems, prevent their deterioration and ensure long term, sustainable use of water resources. The WFD sets out the strategic response to the threat of pollution and the demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches. Its four objectives are:

- Prevent further deterioration of water quality;
- Restore 'good' status of water quality;
- Reduce chemical pollution of water sources;
- Achieve protected area objectives³.

Article 4 of the WFD sets out specific environmental objectives for surface water, groundwater and protected areas:

For Surface Waters:

- To prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters
- To protect, enhance and restore surface waters, with the aim of achieving good status for all water bodies
- To protect and enhance heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies in order to achieve good ecological potential and good chemical status for those water bodies
- To progressively reduce pollution from priority substances and cease or phase out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters.

³ Protected area are those requiring special protection under existing national or European legislation, either to protect their surface waters or groundwater, or to conserve habitats or species that directly depend on these sites.

For Groundwater:

- To prevent deterioration of the status of groundwater
- To protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater and ensure a balance of abstraction and recharge, with the aim of achieving good groundwater status.
- To reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in the concentration of pollutants in groundwater

For Protected Areas:

- To achieve compliance with objectives and standards under which the individual protected areas have been established.

10.5.2 River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

The provisions of the WFD are implemented through River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). The first cycle of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ran from 2009-2015. Ireland was divided into eight River Basin Districts (RBDs) or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The eight RBDs devised separate plans with the objective of achieving at least 'good' status for all waters by 2015.

The second cycle of the RBMP 2018-2021 is currently underway and all eight RBDs have merged to form one national RBD. The RBMP sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan is due to be published in December 2021 and will run for six years from 2022 to 2027.

10.5.3 Overview of Water Quality in County Wexford

Surface Waters-Rivers

The latest 'Water Quality in Ireland Report 2013-2018' was published by the EPA in December 2019. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's rivers, lakes, canals, groundwaters,

transitional waters and coastal waters collected over a six-year period between 2013-2018.

The report indicates that for Wexford County Council 1% of its rivers had 'high' status, 32% had 'good' status, 39% had 'moderate' status, 13% had 'poor' status while 1% had 'bad' status.

There are two major rivers in County Wexford; the River Slaney and River Barrow. The water quality status of the River Barrow ranges from 'moderate' to 'good' as it flows in a southerly direction through Wexford. The River Slaney water quality status is generally 'good' as it flows through Wexford.

There were nine river water bodies in Ireland with a 'bad' water quality status, one of which is in County Wexford, Aughboy_010 (Wexford). Figure 10-1 shows the water quality status of the rivers in County Wexford during this monitoring period.

Surface Water-Transitional and Coastal Waters

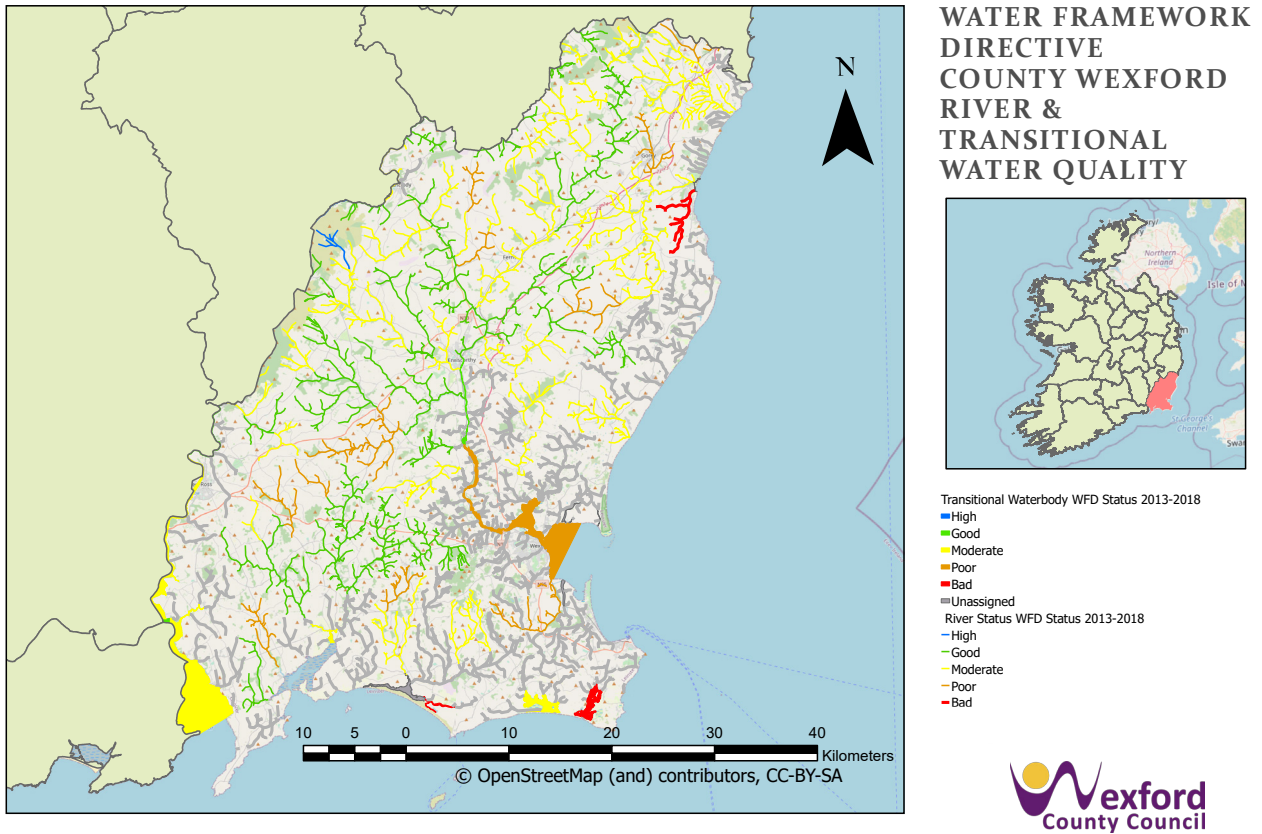
There are 14 transitional water bodies in the county. During the 2013-2018 monitoring period, 'bad' status was recorded for Lady's Island Lake and Ballyteige Channels with the Lower Slaney Estuary recording 'poor' status. Three water bodies had 'good' status, four had 'moderate' status with the remaining four unassigned a status.

In terms of coastal waters there are six waterbodies for County Wexford. Three of these recorded 'moderate' status, one recorded 'good' status while the remaining two were unassigned a status.

Groundwater Quality

The EPA 2010-2015 Catchment Assessment Report indicates that of the 12 groundwater bodies in County Wexford 9 were 'Good' status and three were 'Poor' status.

Figure 10-1 WFD Water Quality Status of the River and Transitional Waterbodies in County Wexford



10.5.4 Protecting and Improving Water Quality

The aim is to protect water bodies with ‘high’ and ‘good’ status and to work towards achieving ‘good’ status for the remaining water bodies by the 2027. The Council will implement measures in the RBMP 2018-2021. All measures undertaken by the Council or in partnership with various stakeholders including Irish Water, the EPA, Inland Fisheries, Forestry Services, Teagasc, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) and others, will assist with achieving on-going improvements in the environmental status of water bodies from source to the sea.

The key actions under the RBMP include:

- Improved wastewater treatment through planned investment by Irish Water. This will help improve water quality and prevent deterioration of quality in targeted water bodies including protected areas.



- Improve conservation and leakage reduction.
- Scientific assessments of water bodies and implementation of local measures by 43 new, specialist, local authority investigative assessment personnel.
- A new sustainability and advisory support programme for the Dairy industry and the continued implementation of the Green, Low Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS).
- The development of water and planning guidance for local authorities to help these authorities to consider the risks to water quality during planning and development decision-making.
- Extension of the Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems grant scheme to assist with the costs of septic tank remediation in High Status water areas.
- The establishment of the Local Authority Waters Programme.
- The development of a Blue Dot Catchment Programme to create a network of excellent river and lake areas. Agencies will work together to protect or restore excellent water quality in these water bodies.
- A new Community Water Development Fund to enable and support community water initiatives and a bottom up approach.

10.5.5 Priority Areas for Action

The RBMP identifies 189 Priority Areas for Action in the country. The Local Authorities Waters Programme will lead in these areas, working with local communities and collaborating with other public bodies to improve water quality during the four year period of the RBMP.

The identified 'Priority Areas for Action' in County Wexford are listed in Table 10-1. The Council will ensure that future planning applications in these areas contribute to the achievement of the objectives for these areas, where possible.

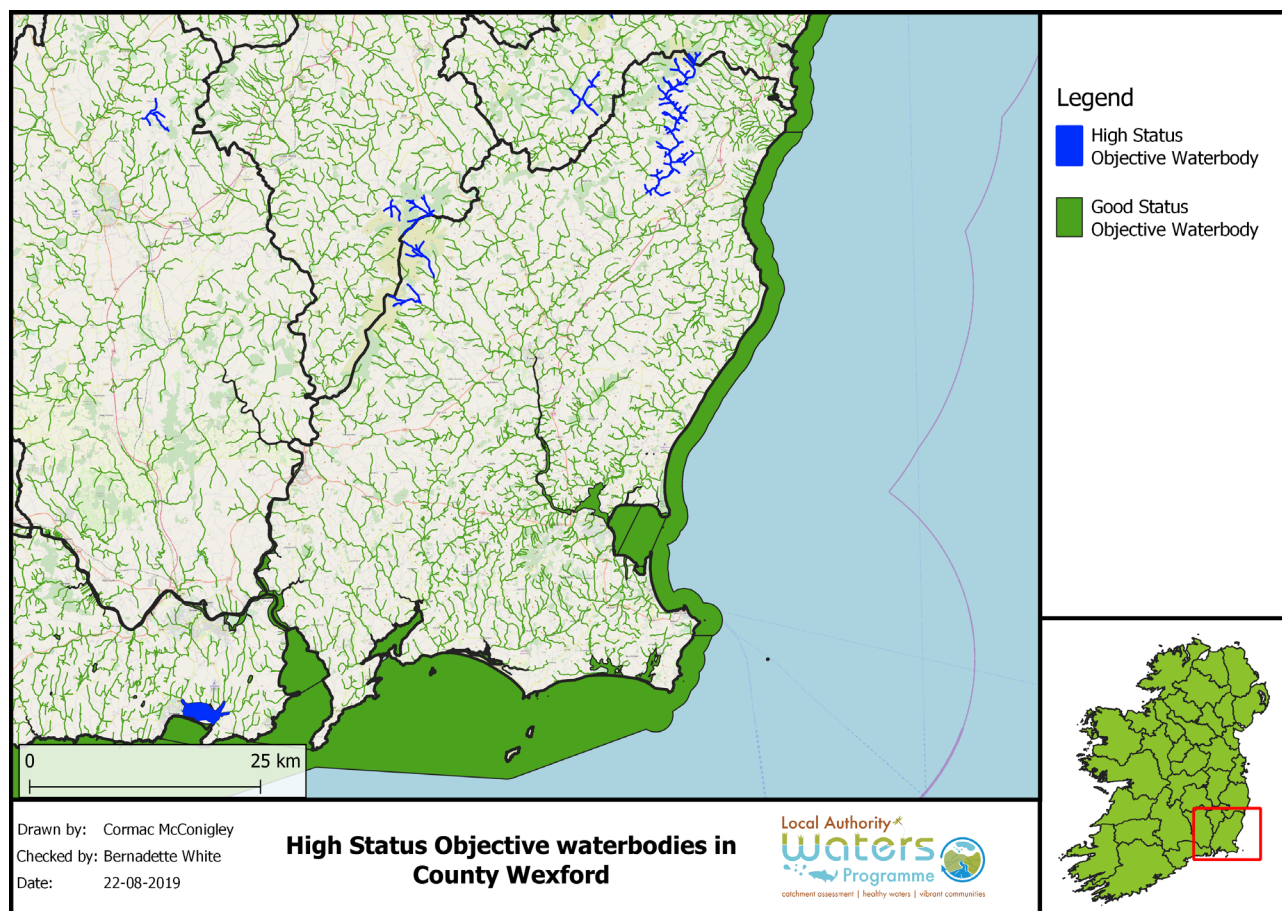
Table 10-1 Priority Areas for Action in County Wexford

1. Sow
2. Wexford Coastal Lagoons
3. Owenavorrhagh
4. Urrin
5. Wexford Harbour
6. Blackwater
7. Bannow
8. Waterford Harbour

10.5.6 Blue Dot Catchment Programme

This is a new programme under the RBMP to create a network known as the Blue Dot Catchment Programme of excellent river and lake areas. Agencies will work together to protect or restore excellent water quality in these water bodies. High status objective sites are water bodies that are at pristine and near pristine condition, or have been at this status in recent years, and support important species such as Atlantic salmon, or support economic and recreational activities associated with unspoilt areas. They require additional care, and developments in these areas need to reflect their sensitive nature. A targeted programme including supports for septic tank owners to address inadequately functioning treatment systems in these areas will be put in place. Figure 10-2 shows the waterbodies identified for this programme in County Wexford.

Figure 10-2 Waterbodies Identified under the Blue Dot Catchment Programme



10.5.7 Bathing Waters

Bathing waters in the county are subject to the Bathing Waters Directive and the associated Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008. In 2018 there were eight designated bathing waters in the county: Ballinesker, Ballymoney North Beach, Carne, Courtown North Beach, Curraclloe, Duncannon, Morriscastle and Rosslare Strand. Seven of these bathing waters recorded 'Excellent' status in 2018, while Duncannon recorded 'Good' status. The highest quality standard was also recorded for the other bathing areas in the county that are monitored: Ballyhealy, Booley Bay, Cahore, Cullenstown, Culleton's Gap, Grange, Kilmore Quay, Old Bawn and St Helen's Bay.

With regard to Duncannon the Council is leading a local water quality project called the 'Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme' which received funding

of €713,000 from the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) initiative. The project is designed to improve the bacterial quality of the two coastal streams that flow onto Duncannon beach by reducing pollution from agricultural and domestic sources. This should contribute to the recovery and long term retention of the Blue Flag status at Duncannon beach. The proposed wastewater treatment plant for Duncannon and Ballyhack will also significantly improve water quality in Duncannon.

Water Quality Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective WQ01

To protect existing and potential water resources for the county, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/ EC), the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any updated version, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters, the provisions of a Groundwater Protection Scheme for the county and any other protection plans for water supply sources, with an aim to improving all water quality.

Objective WQ02

To promote compliance with the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 and any other relevant legislations.

Objective WQ03

To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and cleaner environment.

Objective WQ04

To work with the Local Authority Waters Programme and other relevant State agencies to develop and implement the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any future river basin management plan subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Objective WQ05

To strive to achieve and maintain at least 'Good' status except where more stringent obligations are required, and no deterioration of status for all water bodies including protected areas, under the Marine Strategy Framework and its programme of measures, the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan.

Objective WQ06

To apply a catchment based approach to the assessment of planning applications which may impact on water quality, and to ensure that the development would not result in a reduction in the water quality status of a waterbody in that catchment.

Objective WQ07

To screen planning applications according to their Water Framework Directive status and have regard to their status and objectives to achieve 'good' status or protect and improve 'high or good status'.

Objective WQ08

To achieve compliance with the objectives and standards under which the individual protected areas have been established.

Objective WQ09

To have regard to Groundwater Protection Schemes and aquifer vulnerability applying a risk based assessment approach when preparing local area plans, carrying out local authority works and assessing planning applications.

Objective WQ10

To protect, enhance and restore all groundwaters and ensure a balance of abstraction and recharge, with the aim of achieving good groundwater status and to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in the concentration of pollutants in groundwater.

Objective WQ11

To take actions to reduce chemical and biological pollution of water sources and to also consider this when assessing planning applications.

Objective WQ12

To protect and enhance heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies in order to achieve good ecological potential and good chemical status for those water bodies and to progressively reduce pollution from priority substances and cease or phase out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters.

Objective WQ13

To work with the Local Authority Waters Programme and other relevant State agencies and local communities to achieve the objectives for the Areas for Action identified in the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and to ensure that new developments do not result in a deterioration of water quality in these areas.

Objective WQ14

To have regard to any future guidance issued for planning authorities on the relationship between land use planning and river basin management planning to ensure future development plans and local area plans and planning decisions are consistent with River Basin Management Plans and with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

Objective WQ15

To ensure that development permitted would not negatively impact on water quality and quantity, including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.

Objective WQ16

To develop the associated Blue Dot Catchment Network Programme under the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 to protect and maintain the excellent quality of 'High' status water bodies.

Objective WQ17

To promote and support locally led community initiatives aimed at driving local water-quality improvements subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Objective WQ18

To participate and support the farming community in the application of schemes such as the Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme and the LIFE programmes to achieve the objectives of the respective Directives in a collaborative manner.

10.6 Air Quality

The NPF, through NPO 64, aims to improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design.

The Plan has incorporated all of the foregoing across the various chapters and strategies. The Council will also continue to improve air quality by having regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) which implement Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. While much of this regulation is outside of the remit of land use planning, the policy approach of the Council is to integrate land use planning and transportation and to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency which will reduce greenhouse gases and emissions from vehicles. The Council will also encourage the use of the Best Available Technology (BAT) in specific industrial facilities likely to give rise to emissions concerns, including air and odour.

Air Quality Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective AQ01

To have regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulation 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) when assessing planning applications for development which may have effects on air quality.

Objective AQ02

To encourage sustainable industrial developments by promoting the use of cleaner technologies and production techniques, reducing waste production, conservation and recycling of materials.

Objective AQ03

To manage development to provide the efficient use of land and infrastructure, thereby controlling and limiting air emissions.

Objective AQ04

To require the submission of measures to prevent and reduce dust and airborne particulate emissions for activities that may have a negative effect on air quality.

Objective AQ05

To promote a modal change from private car use to other types of travel and to promote the use of public transport as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

Objective AQ06

To implement Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) standards and beyond to reduce the particulate matter generated by the combustion of fossil fuels⁴.

10.7 Noise

The role of the Council, as a planning authority is to guide the location of development and ensure compatibility between land uses and protect noise sensitive receptors by setting appropriate standards. In line with NPO 65, the Council will promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans.

In the delivery of more compact growth and efficient forms of development within our settlements, it is important to proactively manage noise. In addressing this, the NPF supports:

1. Noise Management and Action Planning which includes measures to avoid, mitigate, and minimise or promote the pro-active management of noise, where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life, through strategic noise mapping, noise action plans and suitable planning conditions.
2. Noise, amenity and privacy considerations which includes but is not limited to good acoustic design in new developments, in particular residential development. This is to be achieved through a variety of measures such as setbacks and separation between noise sources and receptors, good acoustic design of buildings, building orientation, layout, building materials and noise barriers and buffers zones between various uses.

⁴ The European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Recast required that all new buildings be Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) by 31st December 2020. NZEB homes are 70% more energy efficient than the performance requirements in 2005.

3. Quiet Areas which allow for the further enjoyment of natural resources, such as our green spaces and sea frontage, through the preservation of low sound levels or a reduction in undesirably high sound levels. This is particularly important for providing respite from high levels of urban noise. As part of noise action plans, an extra value placed on these areas, in terms of environmental quality and the consequential positive impact on quality of life and health due to low sound levels and the absence of noise, can assist in achieving this.

10.7.1 EU Noise Directive

The EU Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) relates to the assessment and management of environmental noise. The Directive applies to noise, to which humans are exposed, particularly in built-up areas, in public parks or other quiet areas in an agglomeration, in quiet areas in open country, near schools, hospitals and other noise-sensitive buildings and areas. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140).

10.7.2 County Wexford Noise Action Plan 2019-2023

The Council has prepared a Noise Action Plan (NAP) in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2018 (S.I No. 549) which give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of noise.

The objective of the NAP is to avoid, prevent and reduce where necessary, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to long term exposure to environmental noise. It was determined that the only noise source requiring assessment is generated by major roads in the county carrying traffic in excess of the current threshold levels. These include roads identified as major roads in the county are the N11, M11, N25, N30, N80, R730, R733, R741 and R769. The NAP is based on strategic noise mapping prepared by the TII on behalf of the Council.

The aim of the NAP is to manage existing road noise within the plan area and to protect the future environmental noise within the plan area. It outlines that the potential noise impacts of future development will be adequately managed

through the planning and licencing processes including the existing provisions of Environmental Impact Assessments.

The Council will utilise the planning process:

- (a) To incorporate the aims of the present and future noise action plans into the Plan and into relevant local area plans protecting larger areas from road noise.
- (b) To encourage developers (or require at the discretion of the planning authority) to provide a sound impact assessment and implement mitigation measures as for developments proposed near major roads (i.e. traffic volumes in excess of 3 million vehicles per annum or otherwise on a case by case basis).
- (c) Ensure that future developments are designed and constructed in accordance with best Irish practice to minimise noise disruptions through good acoustic design.

The Noise Action Plan also identifies the locations for further investigation as potential quiet areas (Table 10-2). It indicates that the Council will carry out, following consultation with the EPA, a review of the landscape assessment and characterisation process in order to identify a process to delimit Quiet areas in the country that will be complementary to the County Landscape Characterisation Assessment Study. This will identify areas for delimiting which will be submitted to the EPA and the Minister for approval.

Table 10-2 Potential Quiet Areas in County Wexford

<p>Quiet Areas in Settlements</p>	<p>Vinegar Hill, Enniscorthy Town Gorey Town and District Park Mount Carmel/New Ross Youth Centre, New Ross Town</p>
<p>Quiet Areas in the Open Country</p>	<p>Mount Leinster/Black Rock, Blackstairs Mountain Blackstairs Commons, Blackstairs Mountain Bantry Commons, Blackstairs Mountain Tacumshin Lake, Ballyhealy The North Slobs (River Slaney Estuary) Drinagh Intake, West of Rosslare Kilbride Wood, Kilbride Coolatrindle/Ruanmore, Court Annagh Hill, Annagh Croghan Mountain, Croghan</p>

Noise Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective N01

To promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Actions Plans.

Objective N02

To have regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act (Noise) Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications.

Objective N03

To have regard to the Wexford County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023, in particular Appendix B Roadways Qualified for Noise Mapping, Appendix C Strategic Noise Maps and Appendix D Potential Noise Hotspots, in the preparation of future local area plans and to ensure that planning applications comply with the provisions and requirements of that plan, and any future revisions/update to it.

Objective N04

To incorporate the aims of the present and future noise action plans into local area plans and in the assessment of planning applications to protect larger areas from road noise.

Objective N05

To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Objective N06

To ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to be accompanied by a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.

Objective N07

To ensure that future developments are designed and constructed so as to minimise noise disturbance taking into account the multi-functional uses of streets including residential, movement and recreation as provided for in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2013).

Objective N08

To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.

Objective N09

To minimise noise from traffic by promoting development patterns that combine walking, cycling and public transport.

Objective N10

To carryout traffic management measure such as reduction of speed limits, traffic flow control, mitigation of environmental noise hotspots, traffic congestion management, road surface improvements and road maintenance and the promotion of the use of electric vehicles.

Objective N11

To encourage, or require at the discretion of the Planning Authority, developers to produce a sound impact assessment and implement mitigation measures for developments proposed near major roads (i.e. traffic volumes in excess of 3 million vehicles per annum or otherwise on a case by case basis).

Objective N12

To ensure that future developments are designed and constructed in accordance with best practice to minimise noise disturbances through good acoustic design.

10.8 External Lighting

The provision of adequate external lighting is required to contribute to the creation of a safe and secure environment. However, as inadequately designed lighting can give rise to nuisance and impacts on biodiversity, the Council will carefully consider

this type of development. Lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary and should shield the light given out so as to avoid a glare, potentially resulting in a traffic hazard, nuisance to nearby properties and a threat to wildlife and their habitats. The Council will require all proposed external lighting proposals to be carefully and sensitively designed, in particular flood lighting for sports and recreational facilities. The relevant development management standards are set out in Volume 2 Development Management Manual.

External Lighting Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective EL01

To require developments providing external lighting to clearly demonstrate that the lighting scheme is the minimum needed for security and working purposes.

Objective EL02

To ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised thereby protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species.

Objective EL03

To ensure all new public lighting complies with the Council's standard for taking in charge and provides for low energy use lighting in accordance with these standards.

Objective EL04

To explore opportunities and support the establishment of 'Dark Sky' parks and reserves at suitable locations in the County, where appropriate.

10.9 Major Accidents Directive

SEVESO III Directive (2012/18/EU) was adopted taking into account, amongst other factors, the changes in EU legislation on the classification of chemicals and the increased rights for the public to access information and justice and is the main EU legislation dealing with the control of onshore major accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and chemicals and the limitation of their consequences for people and the environment.

The Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (the “COMAH Regulations”), implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU). The intention of the COMAH Regulations is to achieve controls on the operators of the establishments subject to the Regulations: the larger the quantities of dangerous substances present at an establishment, the more onerous the duties on the operator. There are two categories of major accident establishments: Upper Tier and Lower Tier; which are defined based on the volume of the dangerous substances present. The existing SEVESO sites in the county are listed in Table 10-3⁵:

Table 10-3 SEVESO Sites in County Wexford

Upper Tier	European Refreshments, Sinnottstown, Drinagh, Wexford
	Nitrofert Ltd, Raheen Port, New Ross
	Rochefreight Warehousing Ltd, Wexford Road, Rosslare Harbour.
Lower Tier	Goulding Chemicals Ltd, Stokestown, New Ross
	SSE Generation Ireland Ltd, Great Island Generation Station, Campile, New Ross.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires development plans to include objectives for the control of major accident sites and development for the purpose of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident.

⁵ As of February 2019. The list of establishments is subject to change. The up-to-date list of Major Accident/Seveso establishments in County Wexford can be obtained from Wexford County Council or the Health and Safety Authority.

This is achieved by controls on the siting of new establishments and modifications to existing establishments, as well as developments in the vicinity of such establishments.

Land use policy must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, major transport routes as far as possible, recreational areas and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest. Seveso III gives the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), as a prescribed body, a greater role in providing technical advice to planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála. The application of the COMAH Regulations has resulted in increased distances for which the HSA are required to be consulted, in relation to existing SEVESO sites or on the receipt of appropriate planning applications.

The HSA's Guidance on Technical Land-use Planning Advice for Planning Authorities and operators of COMAH establishments (Consultation Draft) (2020) outlines the risk-based approach which will be used by the HSA to advise on planning applications as well as the development of generic land use planning zones around establishments.

Major Accidents Directive Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective COMAH01

To control the following for the purposes of reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident (regard will be had to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive):

- The siting of Major Accident Hazard sites.
- The modification of an existing Major Accident Hazard site.
- Development in the vicinity of a Major Accident Hazard site as specified in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

Objective COMAH02

To consult with and have regard to the technical advice of the Health and Safety Authority when preparing development plans and local area plans and assessing planning applications where the Major Accidents Directive and any associated regulations are relevant.

