

TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL AUTHORITY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2025 - 2030

Report to Inform Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

Prepared for:
Tipperary County Council



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Report to Inform SEA Screening for the Tipperary County Council Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 - 2030

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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this Report to inform SEA Screening to Tipperary County Council for their Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tipperary County Council (TCC) is in the process of preparing a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan (LABAP) for its functional area (the Plan Area) for the years 2025 - 2030. The aim of the LABAP is to promote biodiversity conservation at local authority level.

TCC appointed Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) to complete reports to inform SEA and AA Screening of the LABAP.

This is the report to inform SEA Screening and documents the SEA Screening Assessment undertaken to identify the need for full SEA for the LABAP. This Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the corresponding Report to Inform AA Screening and the LABAP.

1.2 Background to Biodiversity Action Plans

LABAPs must be prepared in accordance with The Heritage Council's Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan Guidelines (2024). These guidelines provide best practice guidance to local authorities on preparing and implementing biodiversity conservation actions within their functional area. These guidelines advise that LABAPs *'should aim to record, conserve, restore and promote biodiversity, and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of it among the people of the area.'*

LABAPs are designed to provide a structured approach to biodiversity conservation at local level. Local authorities are required to develop a compelling vision for their LABAP and a set of clear, measurable and achievable objectives for biodiversity conservation in their functional area. LABAPs are developed by local authority Biodiversity Officers with the support of a dedicated Biodiversity Working Group. Public engagement and consultation must be undertaken at the Pre-draft and Draft Plan stages of the Plan-making process. All submissions from stakeholders and members of the public should be considered during the development of a LABAP.

LABAPs should serve to define targeted and focussed action for promoting biodiversity conservation through the functions of a local authority in alignment with nature legislation and higher order policy such as the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and inter-related plans and programmes. LABAPs should be in harmony with and support the land use planning framework, including City and County Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

LABAPs - as non-statutory land use plans - should be screened for the need for SEA and AA.



2. SEA SCREENING METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overview of SEA

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme.

SEA aims to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

SEA of plans and programmes is required by European Directive 2001/42/EC ('the SEA Directive'). For a specific range of land-use plans, this Directive is transposed into Irish law by Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

For all other relevant plans and programmes in Ireland (including other types of plans in the land-use planning sector), the SEA Directive is transposed into Irish law by S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

2.2 Overview of the SEA Process

The SEA process comprises the following steps:

- Screening – the process whereby a decision is made on whether a particular plan or programme other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would require SEA. This report relates to this stage of the SEA process.

The following steps are necessary if a plan or programme requires SEA:

- Scoping – Scope and level of detail in the environmental assessment is decided upon, in consultation with the identified statutory bodies;
- Environmental Assessment - An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the relevant plan or programme;
- Preparation of an Environmental Report;
- Consultation of the plan or programme and associated Environmental Report;
- Evaluation of the submission and observations made on the plan or programme and environmental report; and
- Provision of an SEA Statement, identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the final plan or programme



SEA is intended to provide the framework for influencing decision-making at an earlier stage when plans or programmes – which give rise to individual projects – are being developed. It is noted that SEA should result in more sustainable development through the systematic appraisal of policy options.

2.3 Legislative Context

LABAPs, as non-statutory land use plans, require to be screened for the need for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- The SEA Directive, particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) and 3(5) in relation to 'screening'; and,
- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No 435 of 2004), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200 of 2011)(termed 'SEA Regulations' from this point onward), particularly Schedule 1, which sets out the '*Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment.*'

2.4 Overview of the SEA Screening Process

The first step of the SEA process is to carry out SEA Screening to determine the need for SEA of a plan or programme

The first stage in determining whether a plan or programme requires SEA is the carrying out of a 'Pre-screening Check' (also known as a 'Stage 1 Applicability'). This allows rapid screening-out of a plan or programme that is clearly not going to have any environmental impact and screening-in of those that do require SEA. The second stage in determining whether a plan or programme requires SEA is known as 'Stage 2 Screening.' The purpose of this stage is to determine whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment and whether SEA must be carried out in conjunction with a plan or programme. The application of environmental significance criteria is important in determining whether an SEA is required. Annex II of Directive 2001/42/EC sets out the statutory criteria that should be addressed when undertaking this stage. This process is typically undertaken following a broad 8-step approach, as depicted in Figure 2-1.

The first environmental significance criterion relates to the characteristics of the plan or programme, having regard to: the degree to which the plan or programme sets out a framework for other projects and activities; the influence of the plan or programme on other projects, plans or activities; the role of the plan for integrating environmental considerations to promote sustainable development; environmental issues of relevance to the plan or programme and the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of EU legislation on the environment.

The second environmental significance criterion refers to the characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected, having regard to; the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects; the cumulative nature of the effects; the transboundary nature of the effects; the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values or intensive use; the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European or international protection status.



Figure 2-1: SEA Screening steps as per the EPA's Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening

2.5 Relevant SEA Guidance

This SEA Screening has been carried out in accordance with and having appropriate regard to the following guidance documents primarily:

- Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening (EPA, 2021).
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022)
- SEA of Local Authority Land-Use Plans - EPA Recommendations and Resources (EPA, 2024)

2.6 Appropriate Assessment and Relationship to SEA Screening

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) be carried out where a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 Site. Nature 2000 Sites in Ireland include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Areas of Protection (SPAs).

The first step is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This is referred to as Screening for AA and the purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in relation to the site's conservation objectives.



Screening for AA is relevant to Screening for SEA where it is found that a plan may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 Site, or where such an impact cannot be ruled out taking a precautionary approach, an appropriate assessment of the Plan must be carried out, and in any case where a SEA is not otherwise required.

Article 3(c) of the SEA Directive requires that an SEA is carried out on a plan or programme wherever such a plan or programme requires an AA under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Therefore, where the LABAP requires an appropriate assessment, it will also require an SEA.

This SEA Screening Report and the LABAP is accompanied by an AA Screening Report which should be read in conjunction with this document. The AA Screening Report concluded *'beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information, that the plan, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have a significant (negative) effect on European sites.'*



3. LOCAL AUTHORITY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

3.1 Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan

The overarching aim of the LABAP is to protect and restore the rich biodiversity of County Tipperary, creating resilient ecosystems that support wildlife, enhance climate adaption and provide lasting benefits for nature and people.

The following Objectives are defined in the LABAP:

- To maintain comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date records of Tipperary's biodiversity, to support its protection and conservation within the county.
- To protect and restore habitats and species, helping nature to recover and thrive for the benefit of wildlife and people.
- To ensure that TCC policies and decisions support the protection and improvement of local biodiversity by making it a clear priority in planning, land management and other key activities.
- To increase public awareness on biodiversity in Tipperary.
- To strengthen the resilience of local ecosystems and communities to climate change by protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

A series of Actions have been defined in the LABAP under each Objective and Strategic Theme. The higher-level Objectives are broader in scope, while the Actions underpinning the Objectives are more defined and measurable. These are presented in Table 3-1.



Table 3-1: LABAP Strategic Objectives and Actions

Strategic Theme	Objective	Action Code	Action
Strategic Theme 1: Monitoring and Recording.	To maintain comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date records of Tipperary's biodiversity, to support its protection and conservation within the county.	1.1	Carry out an ecological surveys of TCC owned lands to identify sites suitable for restoration or biodiversity enhancement.
		1.2	Continue with the Tipperary Wetlands Survey to maximise no. of sites assessed within the County.
		1.3	Prioritise the survey/monitoring of red-listed species in council led projects.
		1.4	Ensure that findings of surveys (datasets etc.) commissioned by TCC are shared with the relevant organisations.
		1.5	Collate (carry out an audit) of ecological surveys already carried out by TCC.
		1.6	Carry out long-term monitoring of areas where invasive species have been managed to evaluate the potential for re-establishment.
		1.7	Commission ecological surveys and research which inform/support the Upper River Suir Restoration Project.
		1.8	Develop and promote Citizen Science initiatives to enable public participation in data collection for biodiversity.
		1.9	Repeat the County swift survey (last surveyed in 2017).
		1.10	Undertake and otter surveys in urban areas.
Strategic Theme 2: Conservation and Restoration.	To protect and restore habitats and species, helping nature to recover and thrive for the benefit of wildlife and people.	2.1	Ensure that TCC meets all specified requirements and actively contributes to the goals of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
		2.2	Identify wetlands sites which are suitable for restoration and collaborate with the relevant bodies/stakeholders (Tóchar) to facilitate restoration where possible.
		2.3	Enhance and restore biodiversity in parks and public spaces to support native wildlife and healthy ecosystems.



Strategic Theme	Objective	Action Code	Action
		2.4	Collaborate with LAWPRO and IFI to advance the restoration of ecological corridors in freshwater systems.
		2.5	Develop management plans for sites of biodiversity (ecological) importance on TCC owned lands.
		2.6	Support projects that help restore water bodies & protect clean waters under the Water Framework Directive.
		2.7	Promote the use of Nature Based Solutions in TCC projects and ensure that such projects have adequate co-benefits for biodiversity where possible (NBS should be nature led).
		2.8	Produce ecological network maps which identify critical ecological corridors and stepping stone habitats.
		2.9	Identify & map Locally Important Biodiversity Sites (LIBS) within the County, according to Heritage Council Guidance.
		2.10	Collaborate with neighbouring LA's to protect biodiversity across County boundaries.
		2.11	Identify areas on TCC lands which are suitable for pond creation.
		2.12	Ensure no net loss of green cover in urban areas and implement measures to increase green spaces in line with the Nature Restoration Law by 2030. (This can be achieved through the promotion of green roofs/ walls in development, creation of pocket parks, biodiversity gardens and Nature Based Solutions).
		2.13	Enhance and protect urban biodiversity by increasing native planting, supporting species diversity and integrating Nature Based Solutions.
		2.14	Identify suitable locations on TCC owned lands for the creation of pollinator trails.
		2.15	Continue to support the Tipperary Barn Owl Project through the provision of nest boxes.
		2.16	Control & eradicate invasive species on council lands to protect native plants and wildlife.



Strategic Theme	Objective	Action Code	Action
		2.17	Protect and enhance biodiversity along greenways and blueways to ensure these areas continue to function as ecological corridors and habitats.
		2.18	Support IFI and LAWPRO in the implementation of a programme aimed at removing barriers to migratory fish passage.
		2.19	Increase nesting opportunities for swifts by incorporating swift bricks/boxes into new developments and renovation projects.
Strategic Theme 3: Policy and Decision Making.	To ensure that TCC policies and decisions support the protection and improvement of local biodiversity by making it a clear priority in planning, land management and other key activities.	3.1	Develop and implement policy on the reduction of pesticide use and adoption of sustainable alternatives within Tipperary County Council.
		3.2	Planning applications to include consideration of locally important biodiversity sites (LIBS) as part of the decision making process (in accordance with Heritage Council guidelines).
		3.3	Embed a no net loss of biodiversity requirement within all within all planning policies.
		3.4	Establish Best Practice Guidance on biodiversity sensitive lighting for adoption by TCC.
		3.5	Develop ecological network maps to inform planning decisions.
		3.6	Develop best practice guidance and training for LA staff on the management of hedgerows.
		3.7	Commission a comprehensive tree management strategy for the County.
		3.8	Develop and implement an invasive species strategy to guide the prevention, management and control of invasive species across all relevant functions of Tipperary County council.
Strategic Theme 4: Engagement and awareness.	To increase public awareness on biodiversity in Tipperary.	4.1	Facilitate public training and awareness activities centred on biodiversity.
		4.2	Identify the biodiversity training gaps for TTC staff and facilitate training to address such gaps.



Strategic Theme	Objective	Action Code	Action
		4.3	Facilitate the establishment of a Tipperary Bat Group.
		4.4	Collaborate with other TCC departments to deliver informative biodiversity based workshops for Tidy Towns.
		4.5	Promote biodiversity awareness through the creative arts.
		4.6	Raise awareness on the climate related threats to biodiversity.
		4.7	Collaborate with LAWPRO and IFI to raise awareness of pressures on freshwater dependent habitats and species.
		4.8	Promote the Heritage in Schools programme throughout the County to engage local schools in natural heritage education.
		4.9	Support Tidy Towns and community groups with information for creating biodiversity action plans.
		4.10	Use Tipperary libraries as a platform to promote biodiversity.
		4.11	Collaborate with the Tipperary Green Business Network (TGBN) to encourage TGBN business to develop pollinator-friendly sites.
		4.12	Raise awareness on wildlife crime within the County.
		4.13	Promote Farming for Nature initiatives (Farming for Nature EIP, Farming for Water EIP, Breeding Waders EIP) and biodiversity friendly farming practices.
		4.14	Raise awareness on the decline of farmland bird species (e.g. yellowhammer, skylark, curlew, lapwing, snipe).
		4.15	Host a bi-annual TCC biodiversity conference.
		4.16	Promote the Heritage in Schools programme throughout the County to engage local schools in natural heritage education.
		4.17	Promote the use of locally sourced, native trees and hedging in biodiversity projects.
		4.18	Promote responsible dog ownership to protect wildlife.



Strategic Theme	Objective	Action Code	Action
Strategic Theme 5: Increasing Climate Resilience.	To strengthen the resilience of local ecosystems & communities to climate change by protecting and enhancing biodiversity.	5.1	Identify areas on TCC lands which are suitable for planting of Native Woodlands.
		5.2	Support and implement the actions for biodiversity within the LACAP 2024-2029.
		5.3	Support third level institutions involved in research into climate-resilient species and habitats.
		5.4	Support the use of Nature Based solutions in TCC developments/projects.



3.2 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

The LABAP sits within a hierarchy of plans and has been informed by and is consistent with the aims and objectives of other plans, programmes and strategies developed at national, regional and local levels. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

National Level

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework First Revision (2025).
- Heritage Ireland 2030: A Framework for Heritage (2022).
- Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028 (2023).
- The 4th National Biodiversity Plan 2023 - 2030 (2024) (discussed further in Section 3.1.1 below).
- Climate Action Plan (2025).

Regional and Local Level

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.
- Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 - 2028.
- Tipperary County Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029.
- Tipperary Heritage Plan 2017 - 2021.

Given the transboundary linkages between biodiversity in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the LABAPs in Ireland also generally have the potential to support biodiversity protection and enhancement-related plans for Northern Ireland, including:

- Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland.
- Biodiversity Strategy (Draft Nature Recovery Strategy).
- Climate Change Adaptation Programme and Action Plan for Northern Ireland.

3.2.1 The 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to protect and value nature. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to 'act for nature.' This plan provides the overarching arching framework for delivering biodiversity conservation through LABAPs.

This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. The five overarching objectives to address new and emerging issues include the following:

- Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity.
- Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs.
- Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People.
- Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity.
- Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.



The NBAP contains actions pertaining to the preparation to LABAPs under *Objective One: Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity* and *Objective Three: Secure Nature's Contribution to People*, including the following:

Table 3-2: NBAP Actions pertaining to the preparation to Local Biodiversity Plans

Action Number	Action
1C5	The Heritage Council will publish updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans and their integration with City and County Development Plans
1C6	All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan adopted by the end of 2026 which is subject to regular review and revision processes in line with relevant guideline standards
3A3	Local Authorities will work to identify and respond to opportunities for enhancing the biocultural value of GBUE through appropriate design strategies, the use of visual and performing arts, and enhancing equity of access and promoting use of GBUE by community groups, and integrating cultural services in local biodiversity action plans

Local Authorities are expected to align their LABAPs with national commitments defined in the NBAP to ensure a cohesive approach to biodiversity conservation across the country.



4. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING

This section of the report documents the SEA Screening undertaken.

Stage 1 Applicability Analysis was undertaken initially. This analysis is detailed in Section 4.1 of this report (Table 4-1 and Table 4-2).

Stage 2 Screening Analysis was then undertaken. This analysis is detailed in Section 4.2 of this report (Table 4-3, Table 4-4 and Table 4-5).

4.1 Stage 1 - SEA Applicability Analysis

Table 4-1: SEA Applicability Analysis

SEA Applicability Analysis	
Status of Plan/Programme (P/P) Maker	
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	The LABAP has been prepared by a local authority.
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	The LABAP is required by administrative provisions. The local authority is required to prepare the LABAP by the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2030. The NBAP has been prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The NPWS is an executive agency within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) of the Government of Ireland.
Nature of the Plan/Programme	
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	LABAPs are non-statutory land use plans.
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	No.
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	No.
Exemptions	



SEA Applicability Analysis	
Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?	No.

Table 4-2: Summary of SEA Applicability Analysis

Summary of SEA Applicability Analysis	
Applicability Analysis Criterion	Outcome (Yes or No)
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	Yes
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	Yes
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	Yes
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	No
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	No
Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?	No
Conclusion	
Having regard to the SEA Screening Process defined in Section 2.4, it has been concluded that Stage 2 SEA Screening Analysis is required to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and whether a full SEA of the plan is needed.	



4.2 Stage 2 - SEA Screening Analysis

To inform the Stage 2 SEA Screening Analysis, an evaluation of the potential environmental effects of LABAP Actions has been undertaken. This evaluation is presented in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3: Evaluation of Potential Environmental Effects of LABAP Actions

Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
To maintain comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date records of Tipperary's biodiversity, to support its protection and conservation within the county.	1.1	Carry out an ecological surveys of TCC owned lands to identify sites suitable for restoration or biodiversity enhancement.	This action proposes the carrying out of ecological surveys of Local Authority-owned lands in the Plan area. The itemisation of TCC owned lands will support informed understanding of such sited and their potential for biodiversity enhancement in County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	1.2	Continue with the Tipperary Wetlands Survey to maximise no. of sites assessed within the County.	This action proposes the continued undertaking of wetlands surveys within the Plan area, in support of the Tipperary Wetlands Survey. This action will support the effective implementation of the BAP, furthermore assessment of wetlands will potentially lead to focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action has the potential to generate positive effects on biodiversity components, including sensitive habitats and priority species. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	1.3	Prioritise the survey/monitoring of red-listed species in council led projects.	This action will support the conservation of red-listed species present in the Plan area and connected areas. The action has the potential to generate positive effects for vulnerable species and for biodiversity generally. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	1.4	Ensure that findings of surveys (datasets etc.) commissioned by TCC are shared with the relevant organisations.	This action pertains to data gathering and management within TCC, and sharing of said data with relevant organisations. The action has the potential to improve collaboration between TCC and external organisations, and to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity in the Plan area. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	1.5	Collate (carry out an audit) of ecological surveys already carried out by TCC.	This itemisation and collation of ecological surveys undertaken by TCC will improve understanding of biodiversity within the Plan area and will enable informed decision-making at local authority level for potential enhancement or restoration measures. Thus, this action will support the effective implementation of the BAP. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	1.6	Carry out long-term monitoring of areas where invasive species have been managed to evaluate the potential for re-establishment.	This action will prevent and minimise the spread of invasive species in the Plan area. This action has the potential to have positive effects on biodiversity, such as native species and habitats, that are at risk due to invasive species spread, and will support re-establishment of native species. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	1.7	Commission ecological surveys and research which inform/support the Upper River Suir Restoration Project.	This action supports the restoration and enhancement of the River Suir within the Plan area and connected areas. The River Suir is an integral biodiversity feature in the Plan area and acts as an important habitat and ecological corridor. This action has the potential to have positive effects for biodiversity, as well as co-benefits for other environmental components. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	1.8	Develop and promote Citizen Science initiatives to enable public participation in data collection for biodiversity.	This action has the potential to foster biodiversity protection and enhancement through increased public participation, leading to positive effects for both biodiversity and population and human health. Citizen science initiatives enable data collection by members of the public to contribute to research and add to the national dataset on Ireland's biodiversity and biological data. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	1.9	Repeat the County swift survey (last surveyed in 2017).	This action proposes the undertaking of a County Tipperary Swift Survey. Common Swifts (<i>Apus apus</i>) are vulnerable to human interference, i.e. habitat destruction and pollution. This action has the potential to contribute to informed understanding of <i>A. apus</i> within the Plan area and will lead to positive effects on Biodiversity. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	1.10	Undertake and otter surveys in urban areas.	This action proposes the carrying out of otter surveys in urban areas in the Plan area. The otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) is a protected species in Ireland under the Wildlife Act, 1976 (as amended). <i>L. lutra</i> are subjected to a variety of pressures, including habitat destruction and pollution. This action has the potential to contribute to informed understanding of <i>L. lutra</i> within the Plan area and will lead to positive effects on Biodiversity. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
To protect and restore habitats and species, helping nature to recover and thrive for the benefit of wildlife and people.	2.1	Ensure that TCC meets all specified requirements and actively contributes to the goals of the All -Ireland Pollinator Plan.	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a cross-sectoral framework to create landscapes and environmental conditions where pollinator species can survive and thrive. The action is centred around supporting the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which will then inform and support focused and target pollinator-friendly biodiversity initiatives in County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.2	Identify wetlands sites which are suitable for restoration and collaborate with the relevant bodies/stakeholders (Tóchar) to facilitate restoration where possible.	This action proposes the identification and itemisation of important wetland habitats in the Plan area. This action will support the effective implementation of the BAP, furthermore protection and restoration of wetlands will potentially lead to focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. The action will also enable informed decision-making at local authority level for potential enhancement or restoration measures. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	2.3	Enhance and restore biodiversity in parks and public spaces to support native wildlife and healthy ecosystems.	The action pertains to the enhancement and restoration of biodiversity potential in the parks and green spaces in County Tipperary. This has the potential to generate positive effects on biodiversity components, such as habitats and key species, and additional co-benefits for other environmental receptors. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment. The restoration/development of any park or public spaces will be undertaken under the land use planning framework and be subject to planning consent requirements, including EIA and AA processes.
	2.4	Collaborate with LAWPRO and IFI to advance the restoration of ecological corridors in freshwater systems	This action is aimed at protecting and enhancing ecological corridors in freshwater systems in Tipperary. It has the potential to generate positive effects on biodiversity components, such as habitats and key species, as well as co-benefits for other environmental components. This action will enable fish migration, enhance habitat connectivity and will be supportive of water quality and associated biodiversity improvements. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	2.5	Develop management plans for sites of biodiversity (ecological) importance on TCC owned lands	This action proposes the deveopment and implementation of Management Plans for sites of ecological importance in Tipperary. It will underpin and support effective implementation of the plan and potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. Such a lower-order management plan will be subject to its own environmental processes, including Appropriate Assessment, where appropriate. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.6	Support projects that help restore water bodies & protect clean waters under the Water Framework Directive	The Water Framework Directive is a framework for ensuring the good qualitative and quantitative health of all water bodies. This action will support the framework to maintain, and where required, restore water bodies to 'Good Status' (both chemically and ecologically). The action, therefore, has the potential to generate direct positive effects on biodiversity, the water environment, and population and human health, and by way of interaction, indirect positive effects on the soils environment. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.7	Promote the use of Nature Based Solutions in TCC projects and ensure that such projects have adequate co-benefits for biodiversity where possible (NBS should be nature led)	Nature Based Solutions (NBS) involve assimilating nature into addressing societal issues to support human and biodiversity wellbeing. The integration of NBS into local authority projects will underpin and support biodiversity improvements within the Plan area. This action supports NBS and in of itself will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment. The development of any NBS infrastructure will be undertaken under the land use planning framework and will require appropriate planning consent.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	2.8	Produce ecological network maps which identify critical ecological corridors and stepping stone habitats	The development of ecology network maps for County Tipperary will highlight the extents of ecological corridors and stepping stone habitats within the Plan area. The action will improve local authority decision-making through improved knowledge of the baseline in the Plan area, and can underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan. This can then potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity initiatives and improvements. Being review-based, this action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.9	Identify & map Locally Important Biodiversity Sites (LIBS) within the County, according to Heritage Council Guidance	The development of Locally Important Biodiversity Site maps for County Tipperary will improve local authority decision-making through improved knowledge of the baseline in the Plan area, and will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan. This will then potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity initiatives and improvements. Being review-based, this action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.10	Collaborate with neighbouring LA's to protect biodiversity across County boundaries	This action will foster collaboration between local authorities and will promote a coordinated approach to biodiversity protection and enhancement across county boundaries. This action will support the delivery of national plans such the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	2.11	Identify areas on TCC lands which are suitable for pond creation	This action will contribute to biodiversity enhancement via the development of ponds on local authority-owned land, and will generate positive effects for population and human health, air and climate, and the water and soils environments. Being review-based, this action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.12	Ensure no net loss of green cover in urban areas and implement measures to increase green spaces in line with the Nature Restoration Law by 2030. (This can be achieved through the promotion of green roofs/walls in development, creation of pocket parks, biodiversity gardens and Nature Based Solutions)	This action supports the integration of biodiversity considerations and improvements within urban areas in line with the Nature Restoration Law. It has the potential to contribute to the realisation of positive effects on biodiversity, as well as co-benefits for other environmental components. Pocket parks are compact, multifunctional public green spaces that provide ecological corridors in urban areas. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.13	Enhance and protect urban biodiversity by increasing native planting, supporting species diversity and integrating Nature Based Solutions.	This action pertains to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in urban areas through encouraging native planting. The action will contribute to biodiversity enhancement and protection in the Plan area. This action in of itself will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment. The development of any NBS infrastructure will be undertaken under the land use planning framework and will require appropriate planning consent.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	2.14	Identify suitable locations on TCC owned lands for the creation of pollinator trails	This action supports the itemisation of local authority-owned lands for the development of pollinator trails within the Plan area. The action will support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which will then inform and support focused and target pollinator-friendly biodiversity initiatives in County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.15	Continue to support the Tipperary Barn Owl Project through the provision of nest boxes	This action supports the conservation of the Barn Owl and the activities of the Barn Owl Project. The barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>) is protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. <i>T. alba</i> are important predators of rodents and other small mammals and play a key role in ecosystem function. This action will provide nesting opportunities for barn owls. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.16	Control & eradicate invasive species on council lands to protect native plants and wildlife	This action will prevent and minimise the spread of invasive species in the Plan area. This action has the potential to have positive effects on biodiversity, such as native species and habitats, that are at risk due to invasive species spread, and will support re-establishment of native flora and fauna. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.17	Protect and enhance biodiversity along greenways and blueways to ensure these areas continue to function as ecological corridors and habitats.	Greenways and Blueways are important ecological corridors that deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation. This action will contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements generally. It will have positive effects for biodiversity, as well as co-benefits for other environmental components.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
			This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.18	Support IFI and LAWPRO in the implementation of a programme aimed at removing barriers to migratory fish passage.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing biodiversity initiatives and improving migratory fish passage in County Tipperary. It will contribute to the effective delivery of the plan and biodiversity improvements generally. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	2.19	Increase nesting opportunities for swifts by incorporating swift bricks/boxes into new developments and renovation projects.	This action supports the integration of swift bricks and swift boxes into new developments and renovation projects in the Plan area. Common Swifts (<i>Apus apus</i>) are vulnerable to human interference, i.e. habitat destruction and pollution. By making provisions for nesting <i>A. apus</i> , this action will provide nesting opportunities for swifts. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
To ensure that TCC policies and decisions support the protection and improvement of local biodiversity by making it a clear priority in planning, land management and other key activities.	3.1	Develop and implement policy on the reduction of pesticide use and adoption of sustainable alternatives within Tipperary County Council.	The action has the potential to result in direct positive effects for biodiversity and population and human health, and indirect positive effects for the water and soils environments, without affecting any environmental receptor in a negative fashion. In isolation, this action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	3.2	Planning applications to include consideration of locally important biodiversity sites (LIBS) as part of the decision making process (in accordance with Heritage Council guidelines).	This action supports the integration of LIBS into planning applications within the Plan area, in accordance with Heritage Council Guidelines. LIBS are areas of local interest or significance which form an integral part of the ecological network and provide a range of ecosystem services.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
			The action will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and will potentially lead to more focused biodiversity improvements. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	3.3	Embed a no net loss of biodiversity requirement within all within all planning policies.	This action supports the integration of biodiversity considerations and improvements within planning policies in line with the Nature Restoration Law. It has the potential to contribute to the realisation of positive effects on biodiversity, as well as co-benefits for other environmental components. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	3.4	Establish Best Practice Guidance on biodiversity sensitive lighting for adoption by TCC.	Reducing artificial light in ecologically sensitive areas is an effective way of protecting light-sensitive species such as bats and small mammals. This action supports the development and implementation of best practice guidance which will guide the inclusion of environmentally sustainable lighting throughout County Tipperary, as well as the reduction of light pollution and its associated impacts on biodiversity. The action has the potential to protect light-sensitive species and enhance ecological connectivity. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	3.5	Develop ecological network maps to inform planning decisions.	The development of ecological network maps for County Tipperary will highlight the extents of ecological corridors within the Plan area. The action will improve local authority planning decision-making through improved knowledge of the baseline in the Plan area, and can underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan. This can then potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity initiatives and improvements. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	3.6	Develop best practice guidance and training for LA staff on the management of hedgerows.	Hedgerows hold features of archaeological, geological, social and natural heritage, and are important wildlife corridors and habitats, serving as refuges for biodiversity. The development of best practice guidance on the management of hedgerows and the implementation of training among TCC staff will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and will potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	3.7	Commission a comprehensive tree management strategy for the County.	This action supports the completion and implementation of a comprehensive tree management strategy for County Tipperary. The implementation of a tree management strategy will underpin and support the effective implementation of the Plan and will potentially lead to more focussed and targeted biodiversity improvements. Such a lower-order strategy will be subject to its own environmental processes, including Appropriate Assessment, where appropriate. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	3.8	Develop and implement an invasive species strategy to guide the prevention, management and control of invasive species across all relevant functions of Tipperary County council.	This action pertains to the development of an invasive species strategy for County Tipperary. This action will prevent and minimise the spread of invasive species in the Plan area. This action has the potential to have positive effects on biodiversity, such as native species and habitats, that are at risk due to invasive species spread, and will support re-establishment of native species. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
To increase public awareness on biodiversity in Tipperary.	4.1	Facilitate public training and awareness activities centred on biodiversity.	This action will increase biodiversity awareness and ownership at a local level within the Plan area, and will aid integrated biodiversity improvements within County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.2	Identify the biodiversity training gaps for TTC staff and facilitate training to address such gaps.	This action will increase biodiversity awareness and expertise within TCC, and will aid integrated biodiversity improvements across all facets of the local authority. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.3	Facilitate the establishment of a Tipperary Bat Group.	Citizen science enables data collection by members of the public to contribute to research and add to the national dataset on Ireland's biodiversity and biological data. Such research can help identify trends in biodiversity and improve understanding of ecological systems, therefore fostering interest within members of the public. Public engagement will also be boosted and lead to an improvement in general awareness and knowledge of local biodiversity. The action has positive effects on biodiversity and additionally population and human health. The action will not result in the occurrence of any significant, adverse environmental effects, in and of itself.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	4.4	Collaborate with other TCC departments to deliver informative biodiversity based workshops for Tidy Towns.	This action will increase inter-departmental collaboration, biodiversity awareness and ownership at a local level within the Plan area, and will aid integrated biodiversity improvements within County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.5	Promote biodiversity awareness through the creative arts.	This action will promote awareness of biodiversity and biodiversity-related initiatives at local-level through the creative arts. It has the potential to foster further interest in biodiversity protection and enhancement throughout the wider community in County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.6	Raise awareness on the climate related threats to biodiversity.	This action will promote awareness of biodiversity and climate-related threats to biodiversity throughout County Tipperary. This action has the potential to foster further interest in biodiversity protection and climate initiatives throughout the wider community in County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.7	Collaborate with LAWPRO and IFI to raise awareness of pressures on freshwater dependent habitats and species.	This action will foster collaboration between TCC, LAWPRO and IFI and will be supportive of water quality and associated biodiversity improvements. This action has the potential to lead to positive effects on freshwater dependent habitats and species, water quality and the climate environment. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	4.8	Promote the Heritage in Schools programme throughout the County to engage local schools in natural heritage education.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Tipperary, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will foster interest in younger members of the community and increase biodiversity awareness. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.9	Support Tidy Towns and community groups with information for creating biodiversity action plans.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing biodiversity initiatives and improving biodiversity in local communities. It will contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements generally. It has the potential to foster further interest in biodiversity protection and enhancement throughout the community. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.10	Use Tipperary libraries as a platform to promote biodiversity.	This action will foster improved biodiversity awareness and ownership at a local level within the Plan area, and will aid integrated biodiversity improvements within County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.11	Collaborate with the Tipperary Green Business Network (TGBN) to encourage TGBN business to develop pollinator-friendly sites.	The action is centred around supporting the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which will then inform and support focused and target pollinator-friendly biodiversity initiatives in County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	4.12	Raise awareness on wildlife crime within the County.	Wildlife crime (i.e. illegal trespass and illegal hunting) is a prevalent issue in County Tipperary. This action will contribute to increased awareness and stewardship of wildlife crime throughout County Tipperary and will contribute to biodiversity improvements. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.13	Promote Farming for Nature initiatives (Farming for Nature EIP, Farming for Water EIP, Breeding Waders EIP) and biodiversity friendly farming practices.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing biodiversity initiatives and improving biodiversity in the Tipperary farming sector. Natural areas within the farming landscape (e.g. hedgerows) are an integral biodiversity feature in agricultural lands and act as important habitat and ecological corridors. It will contribute to the effective delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements generally. It will have positive effects for biodiversity, as well as co-benefits for other environmental components. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.14	Raise awareness on the decline of farmland bird species (e.g. yellowhammer, skylark, curlew, lapwing, snipe).	This action will support the conservation of farmland bird species present in County Tipperary and connected areas through increased public awareness and stewardship. This has the potential to generate positive effects for these key species and for biodiversity generally. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.15	Host a bi-annual TCC biodiversity conference.	This action will contribute to informed biodiversity understanding and ownership within the Plan area, and will aid integrated biodiversity improvements within County Tipperary. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	4.16	Promote the Heritage in Schools programme throughout the County to engage local schools in natural heritage education.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan in County Tipperary, which in turn contributes to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. The action will foster interest in younger members of the community and will increase community awareness of biodiversity and natural heritage. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.17	Promote the use of locally sourced, native trees and hedging in biodiversity projects.	This action supports the planting of native trees and hedging in biodiversity projects within County Tipperary. The action will contribute to biodiversity enhancement and protection in the Plan area. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	4.18	Promote responsible dog ownership to protect wildlife.	This action will contribute to increased awareness and possible behavioural change among dog owners in the Plan area. By promoting responsible dog ownership within County Tipperary, this action will contribute to biodiversity protection and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
To strengthen the resilience of local ecosystems & communities to climate change by protecting and enhancing biodiversity.	5.1	Identify areas on TCC lands which are suitable for planting of Native Woodlands.	This action supports the identification of local authority-owned lands that are suitable for planting of native woodlands within County Tipperary. The action will contribute to biodiversity enhancement and protection in the Plan area. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.



Objective	Action Code	Action	Potential Environmental Effects
	5.2	Support and implement the actions for biodiversity within the LACAP 2024-2029.	This supports the implementation of the Tipperary Local Authority Climate Action Plan, which in turn will contribute to the effective and targeted delivery of the Plan and biodiversity improvements in general. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	5.3	Support third level institutions involved in research into climate-resilient species and habitats.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing biodiversity initiatives and improving biodiversity in Tipperary. By supporting research into climate-resilient species and habitats, this action will contribute to the effective delivery of the plan and biodiversity improvements generally. It also has the potential to improve biodiversity related expertise and enhance biodiversity knowledge. This action will not introduce any source of negative impact that can lead to adverse effects on the receiving environment.
	5.4	Support the use of Nature Based solutions in TCC developments/projects.	Nature Based Solutions (NBS) involve assimilating nature into addressing societal issues to support human and biodiversity wellbeing. The integration of NBS into local authority developments and/or projects will underpin and support biodiversity improvements within the Plan area. The action is support based and in of itself will not generate any negative environmental effects. The development of any NBS infrastructure will be undertaken under the land use planning framework and will be subject to planning consent requirements, including EIA and AA processes.



Table 4-4: Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Environmental Effects - Characteristics of the Plan

Potential Significant Effects	
Characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular to:	
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The LABAP provides a general framework for biodiversity protection and enhancement on lands in the plan area, including local authority controlled lands. The LABAP defines a vision for biodiversity in the plan area, and strategic objectives, aims and targets for achieving this vision. The LABAP proposes a number of biodiversity management related projects and activities, including projects and activities at specific areas. These projects and activities all relate to biodiversity protection and enhancement, however. The LABAP does not propose or support any intensive land use or development projects outside the land use planning framework and will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent. Considering the Precautionary Principle enshrined in European Union (EU) environmental law, the Objectives and Actions in the LABAP should be assessed having regard to criteria defined in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The LABAP is defined as a Tier 2 Local Action Plan under The Heritage Council's Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan Guidelines (2024). The LABAP is therefore a lower order plan in the context of the European, national, regional and local plan hierarchy. Local Action Plans set out specific objectives and actions for managing and protecting heritage in a particular area, such as biodiversity, archives, archaeology, heritage engagement, education etc., within the context of a higher order heritage related plan, for example. Each Local Action Plan is developed by a Working Group that includes representatives from relevant stakeholders and is led by heritage professionals within the local authority. The LABAP fits into this tier of plans. The LABAP supports the development of lower order area specific biodiversity management plans and supports the implementation of biodiversity related measures defined in inter-related plans, including the County Development Plan.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The LABAP supports and promotes the integration of biodiversity protection and enhancement measures into development and activities occurring in the plan area and supports ecological sustainability. The LABAP does not, however, stipulate specific development planning requirements and will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent.



Potential Significant Effects

Characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular to:

Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	Biodiversity in the plan area faces a number of known threats and pressures, including: • Development (residential, commercial, infrastructural and agricultural), • Agricultural activity and expansion, • The spread of invasive species, • Pollution (e.g., air, noise, water, light pollution), • Climate change, • Recreational activity, • Land abandonment, • Urban wastewater, • Changes in the hydrological environment. These threats and pressures may cause a range of negative impacts on biodiversity, including habitat loss, reduction and fragmentation; disturbance to key species; reduction in species density, impacts on designated sites and locally important non-designated sites present or connected to the plan area, or changes to indicators of conservation value (i.e. water quality, air quality, habitat quality). The LABAP defines a variety of actions to address these threats and pressures.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g., plans linked to waste-management or water protection)	The LABAP is a non-statutory land use plan. It does, however, support the achievement aims of EU nature-related legislation at a local level, including the following: • EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, • Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (the 'Nature Restoration Law'), • Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ('the Birds Directive'), • Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ('the Habitats Directive'),



Potential Significant Effects

Characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular to:

- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended,
- Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy ('the Water Framework Directive'),
- European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722/2003), as amended ,
- Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy ('the Marine Strategy Framework Directive'),
- European Communities (Marine Strategy Framework) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 249/2011), as amended,
- Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks ('the Floods Directive'),
- European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 122/2010), as amended,
- Directive 2006/113/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the quality required of shellfish waters ('the Shellfish Waters Directive'),
- European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 268/2006), as amended.



Table 4-5: Criteria for Determining Potential for Significant Effects - Characteristics of the Effects

Potential for Significant Effects	
Characteristics of the Effects and the Area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The LABAP provides a general framework for biodiversity protection and enhancement on lands in the plan area. It defines the biodiversity actions that support and promote: • Best practice biodiversity management and improvement, • Local authority biodiversity protection and enhancement initiatives, • The improvement of biodiversity on local authority controlled lands, • Biodiversity training and awareness events, • Biodiversity education and training, • Planting of native species (i.e. trees, shrubs, plants etc.) • Ecological surveying and mapping to identify areas of risk from threats and pressure and areas for targeted biodiversity protection/enhancement action, • Collaborating with key stakeholders and the public to achieve biodiversity aims. The range of actions defined in the LABAP have the potential to have a range of likely, slight to very significant, temporary to long-term, positive environmental effects, including: • Positive effects on biodiversity, including habitats, key species, designated sites and locally important non-designated sites. • Indirect positive effects on water quality and hydrology - e.g., through the promotion of the use Nature Based Solutions in drainage management and the protection of the aquatic environment. • Positive effects on population and human health - e.g., - through the protection and enhancement of areas of biodiversity that provide amenity value, and support public health and well-being. • Positive effects on the soils environment - e.g., biodiversity has the potential to improve soil quality, structure and function. • Positive effects on Climate - e.g., through the promotion of areas of enhanced biodiversity that can contribute to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) sequestration levels, and protect against the effects of climate change related events (i.e. floods, erosion etc.).



Potential for Significant Effects

Characteristics of the Effects and the Area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:

	Positive effects on landscape and visual amenity - e.g., through the promotion of natural heritage that contributes to scenic value and visual amenity. All actions in the LABAP are aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. They have been carefully reviewed, and it has been concluded that these actions do not have the potential to have unintended negative effects on the receiving environment. The actions in the LABAP do not support intensive land use or development projects sitting outside the land use planning framework that can cause significant negative environmental effects. The LABAP will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent. There is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as result of the implementation of the LABAP.
The cumulative nature of the effects	The LABAP is in harmony and consistent with inter-related plans, including land use plans relevant to the plan area, higher order heritage related plans, the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, the national Climate Action Plan and the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. The range of positive effects that may be realised by the implementation of the LABAP have the potential to interact and combine with positive effects associated with biodiversity measures defined in these inter-related plans to create larger, more significant positive effects. All actions in the LABAP are aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The implementation of the LABAP will not give rise to likely significant negative effects on the environment that have the potential to interact and combine with negative effects associated with measures defined in these inter-related plans or projects to create larger, more significant negative effects.
The transboundary nature of the effects	The LABAP has the potential to generate positive effects on the receiving environment present in or connected to the plan area. These effects will be relatively localised however given that the LABAP is a local action plan. These effects have the potential to be transmitted to areas surrounding and outside the local authority functional area via environmental pathways. It is unlikely most of these effects will be transmitted to Northern Ireland or any other country outside of Ireland however given the distance from the local authority functional area to these other countries and the lack of direct environmental pathways from the functional area to these countries. Actions in the LABAP that may benefit migratory birds have some degree of potential to create positive effects beyond the national boundary of Ireland, however.



Potential for Significant Effects	
Characteristics of the Effects and the Area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:	
	The implementation of the LABAP will not give rise to likely significant negative effects on the environment that have the ability to be transmitted beyond the national boundary of Ireland.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g., due to accidents)	The implementation of the LABAP will not give rise to likely significant negative effects on the environment that have the potential to create risks to human health or the environment.
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The LABAP has the potential to generate positive effects on the receiving environment present in the plan area or connected to the plan area via environmental pathways, including elements that may up the receiving biodiversity environment such as habitats, key species, designated sites and non-designated locally important sites.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	The LABAP has the potential to generate positive effects that contribute to enhanced biodiversity and natural heritage; enhanced water, soil or air quality in the plan area, and more sustainable, ecologically diverse land use. The implementation of the LABAP will not give rise to likely significant negative effects on the environment that may affect special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (including built or archaeological heritage), or contribute to the exceedance of environmental quality standards, in the plan area. The LABAP does not support or promote intensive land use or development projects that may create negative environmental effects.
• Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	
• Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;	
• Intensive land-use	
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognized national, community or international protection status	There are a variety of sites designated for their ecological value (e.g., Special protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Natural Heritage Areas) present in and connected to the plan area. The actions in the LABAP have been carefully designed to support the protection and enhancement of these designated sites. There are sites in the plan area that are designated for their landscape and visual amenity value. The implementation of the LABAP has the potential to have positive effects on landscape and visual amenity generally and such designated sites - e.g., through the promotion of natural heritage settings that contributes to landscape character, scenic value and visual amenity.

Table 4-6: Summary of SEA Screening Analysis

Summary of SEA Screening Analysis

Having regard to the evaluation undertaken in Table 4-3 and the Stage 2 Screening Analysis undertaken in Table 4-4 and Table 4-5, it is concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as result of the implementation of the LABAP.

5. CONCLUSIONS

An SEA Screening Assessment was undertaken to determine the need for an SEA for the Tipperary County Council LABAP. It has been concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as result of the implementation of the LABAP. The principal reasons for this are as follows:

- The LABAP does not introduce any source of negative environmental effect.
- All actions in the LABAP are aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. There is no requirement to integrate further environmental considerations into the LABAP given its intrinsic nature, its stated aims and objectives, and the potential positive effects associated with its actions.
- The LABAP is in alignment with nature legislation and higher order policy such as the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and inter-related plans and programmes.
- The actions in the LABAP do not support intensive land use or development projects sitting outside the land use planning framework that can cause significant negative environmental effects.
- The LABAP is not a statutory land use plan. The LABAP will not in and of itself set the context for future development consent.

Therefore, a full SEA of the LABAP is not required.

The local authority is now required to consult with the Environmental Authorities on the above conclusion.



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