



Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane Local Area Plan 2011
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Screening Report (January 2011)



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1.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.1 Introduction

In accordance with Section 18 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Wexford County Council intends to prepare a new Local Area Plan (LAP) for Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane. The LAP will set out the planning policies for the area and will guide its physical, environmental and social development in a sustainable manner for the next ten years. As required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) EU Directive 2001/42/EC, it is necessary to carry out SEA of all plans which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The Directive provides that SEA is mandatory for Local Area Plans for areas with a population of 10,000 or more. Where the population involved is less than 10,000, the Directive requires screening of the plan to determine if SEA is required. The key to deciding if SEA will apply will be whether the plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The decision should not be determined by the size of an area alone. It will also be influenced by the nature and extent of the development likely to be proposed in the plan, its location (e.g. close to or within an SAC, SPA or NHA), and its broad environmental effects.

The population of Rosslare Harbour (Ballygeary) and Kilrane area was 1,473 persons in 2006 (Census, 2006). SEA is therefore not mandatory and a screening process must be carried out. The following report contains the results of the screening undertaken for the Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane LAP and the consequent determination by Wexford County Council as to whether SEA is required to be carried out in conjunction with the preparation of the LAP.

1.2 Legal Framework

This report has been prepared in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42/EC and Article 14A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (determination of need for environmental assessment of local area plan).

1.3 Statutory Consultation

The Planning Authority is required to consult with the following prescribed Environmental Authorities:

- The Environmental Protection Agency;
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; and
- The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

A copy of this screening report will be forwarded to each of these Authorities. The SEA guidelines (DEHLG, 2004) note that where the Planning Authority considers that there is a prima facie case for SEA, it should proceed to the scoping stage. Therefore, where the screening report concludes that an SEA is required, both the screening report and a draft scoping document will be sent to the Environmental Authorities. The Authorities will have a period of not less than 4 weeks to make submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in the environmental report.

2.0 Rosslare Harbour & Kilrane Local Area Plan 2010

2.1 Description of Lands

Rosslare Harbour is a major port in the south east of Ireland, located on the main N25 route connecting Rosslare with Waterford and Cork. The N25 connects with the N11 Wexford to Dublin road outside Wexford Town approximately 15km northwest of the Harbour. The Europort is operated by Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) and operates regular services to Fishguard, Pembroke, Le Harve, Cherbourg and Roscoff. Two separate railway lines run from the harbour to Dublin and Limerick, via Waterford. Unfortunately the rail service between Rosslare Harbour and Waterford closed in September 2010.

The area around the Harbour has developed into a small town with a number of shops, service industries, community facilities and residential developments. Spin-off developments from the port include a number of logistics and transport related industries. Rosslare Harbour is also a destination for overnight tourists. There is a public bathing area/beach located to the southeast of the port and the nearby Rosslare Strand is a popular tourist resort. Three relatively small hotels are located in the harbour area.

Kilrane is located to the southwest of the Harbour. It provides a range of facilities for the rural hinterland including a Church, a primary school, community centre, public houses and a shop. To the southwest of Kilrane is St. Helen's Bay. Land uses in this area comprise of residential and holiday home developments, as well as a 27-hole golf course and driving range.

Wexford County Council recognises that the continued development of Rosslare Europort is of strategic importance for the development of industry, tourism and commerce in the South East region and the country. It is the policy of the Council, as stated in section 3.6 of the County Development Plan 2007-2013

(policy TP14), to maximise the economic potential of the Rosslare port facilities and promote the development of associated port related employment.

2.2 Purpose of LAP

The aim of this plan is to facilitate the planned, integrated and sustainable development of Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane so that growth can take place in a co-ordinated manner, while protecting and preserving the area's character, heritage and amenity and making a positive contribution and improvement to the population's quality of life.

The plan will be based on a number of key objectives which are designed to achieve the above. These objectives are broadly outlined as follows:

- To ensure that sufficient serviced lands are provided to facilitate international investment and enterprises in the vicinity of Rosslare Europort;
- To improve transport infrastructure and services in the area;
- To create a vibrant and compact town centre;
- To accommodate infill development in the undeveloped areas and pockets created in the existing development pattern;
- To sustain and enhance the role of the town as a service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland;
- To ensure that sufficient lands are provided to meet the identified housing needs in the area over the lifetime of the plan;
- To facilitate the provision of employment opportunities;
- To ensure a sufficient water supply, wastewater treatment and disposal infrastructure to serve existing and future development in the area;
- To provide opportunities for appropriate landmark buildings in the Rosslare Harbour area;
- To provide opportunities for improved urban design and form;
- To successfully integrate Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane through the provision of road, pedestrian and cycle linkages;

- To facilitate the provision of high quality public open spaces within the plan area;
- To promote the sustainable development of tourism and recreational facilities in the plan area;
- To conserve and protect the environment including the archaeological and natural heritage and EU designated sites;
- To have regard to coastal zone areas designated under the County Development Plan 2007-2013;
- To facilitate coastal development works provided that such works do not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

2.3 Local Considerations

There are some local considerations which require particular attention. These include the following:

- Coastal erosion;
- Carnsore Point SAC (Site Code 002269) which lies adjacent to the plan boundary;
- Long Bank SAC (Site Code 002161) which lies approximately 2km offshore to the northeast of the plan boundary;
- St. Helen's pNHA (Site Code 000782) which lies less than 1km to the southeast of the plan boundary;
- Recorded monuments throughout the plan boundary;
- The N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme.

3.0 Assessment of the environmental effects of the Plan

In deciding whether the proposed Local Area Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed against a set of criteria listed in Annex II of the SEA Directive/Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004. The assessment has been carried out and is summarised below.

3.1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN HAVING REGARD IN PARTICULAR TO:

3.1.1 The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources;

The purpose of this plan is to provide a development framework for Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane. This framework will include the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes. These uses include residential, commercial, industrial, retail, recreation (as open space or otherwise), education, childcare and community. It will give a general indication on the preferred urban structure and layout for the area with reference to public open space, urban design, access roads and infrastructural requirements.

The plan, which is influenced by the higher tier County Development Plan, will aim to maximise the economic potential of Rosslare Europort facilities and promote the development of associated port related activities. The plan will encourage the expansion of rail services and will make provision for the proposed N11/25 upgrade on lands located within the plan area. Both the N11 and N25 form part of the developing Euroroutes E01 (Larne-Belfast-Dublin-Rosslare Harbour) and E30 (Rosslare Harbour-Wexford-New Ross-Waterford-Cork) respectively. The plan will also make provision for coastal development works and will seek to ensure a sufficient supply

of water and wastewater treatment infrastructure to serve existing and future development in the area.

3.1.2 The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy.

The hierarchy of plans on which this LAP is based is the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 and the County Wexford Development Plan 2007-2013. The County Development Plan is the 'parent' plan and the LAP must be consistent with its policies and objectives. There are no plans beneath the LAP. Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane are within the administrative boundary of Wexford County Council and do not border any other Council's administrative boundary. As such the LAP will not influence other plans.

3.1.3 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The LAP is being prepared under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 and must therefore be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Accordingly, all policies and objectives in the LAP will be informed by the principles of sustainable development.

The development strategy aims to ensure that this area develops as a sustainable balanced settlement with appropriate amounts of residential, employment, retail, commercial, tourism and recreational development.

This will be achieved through:

- Consolidation of the town centre;
- Direction of future development to indicated use zones with an emphasis on the in-filling of existing built up areas and limited phased expansion in accordance with the availability of necessary

infrastructure;

- Enhancement of public transport services and improved pedestrian and cycling linkages within the plan area;
- Preservation of the natural landscape and designated coastal areas to the east and southeast of the plan area.

3.1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the plan.

Wastewater

The lands are capable of being serviced by existing public water supply and foul and surface water drainage services. The existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) has a capacity of 9,383 P.E. with a spare capacity of 4,131 P.E.¹ The treated effluent is discharged into the sea through an outfall located to the west of the Harbour. Effluent from the port is also being discharged to the sea through a separate outfall, which may be having a negative impact on water quality.

Traffic

Rosslare harbour is located on the main N25 route connecting Rosslare with Waterford and Cork. The N25 connects with the N11 Wexford to Dublin road outside Wexford Town approximately 15km northwest of the Harbour. Both the N11 and N25 form part of the developing Euroroutes E01 (Larne-Belfast-Dublin-Rosslare Harbour) and E30 (Rosslare Harbour–Wexford–New Ross–Waterford-Cork) respectively. The N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme entails a major improvement to both the N11 and N25 with improved access to Rosslare Europort a priority. The Scheme is currently at Route Selection Stage with eight potential routes identified. Lands will be reserved under the LAP for the provision of road improvements within the plan area. New link roads and

¹ Spare Capacity is estimated taking into account the current loading and the likelihood of planning permissions being implemented based on the age of the permission

widening/upgrading of existing roads will also be required which will, in the short and long term, give rise to increased traffic in the plan area.

Designated Sites

Protection of designated sites is high priority. The lands adjacent to Carnsore Point SAC and St. Helen's pNHA are currently designated as Coastal Policy Areas under the County Development Plan 2007-2013. These areas are designated for their intrinsic natural and special amenity value and have limited capacity to absorb development. The County Development Plan 2007-2013 contains policies to protect these areas from inappropriate development. Nevertheless, impacts on the Carnsore Point and Long Bank SACs and St. Helen's pNHA could arise as a result of development within the plan boundary and surrounding area.

Coastal erosion

Coastal erosion is another environmental problem relevant to the plan area. Coastal Development works may be required to the west and possibly to the southeast of the Harbour. These works are likely to be subject to an Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, which will determine the impacts on the integrity of the SACs. Wexford County Council has commenced a tendering process for a Study of the Wexford and Rosslare areas in relation to coastal erosion and necessary development works. It is anticipated that the study will take 12-15 months to complete. An Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS) is also being undertaken by the OPW and is expected to be completed shortly. Phase II of this Study relates to the South East Coast from Dalkey Island to Carnsore Point and comprises of a strategic assessment of coastal flooding and erosion extents.

Having regard to the above, potential environmental problems include:

- Impacts on human beings as a result of increased traffic & road works in and adjacent to the plan area;
- Potential impacts on Carnsore Point and Long Bank SACs and St. Helen's pNHA;
- Coastal erosion and coastal defence works; and
- Water Quality.

3.1.5 The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection).

Issues in relation to EU legislation on the environment are addressed in the Wexford County Development Plan 2007-2013. The policies and objectives in the proposed LAP are guided by the County Development Plan and will therefore have regard to such legislation.

Waste management is guided by the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South-East region 2006-2011, which is compliant with EU Directives and legislation. Water protection is guided by the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015) which includes a programme of measures designed to achieve good water quality status in all waters in the South Eastern River Basin District by 2015, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive. The policies and objectives of the LAP will have regard to both of these plans.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFECTS AND OF THE AREA LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED, HAVING REGARD, IN PARTICULAR, TO:

3.2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.

Water quality

The area around Rosslare Harbour is identified as Coastal Water Body Catchment (South Western Irish Sea HAs 11;12). According to the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015), the ecological status of the coastal waters has not yet been determined but it is strongly expected to achieve good water status by 2015. The LAP will contain policies and objectives to implement the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan and to increase public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect, reduce demand and where required, improve the quality of all waters. This will have positive long term effects on water quality in the area.

Water supply

Water supply to Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane is fed from the Mayglass Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The Council will seek to ensure the maintenance of a sufficient water supply that will meet the development needs of the plan area. The Council will also seek to minimise wastage in the water supply network by implementing water conservation measures. This will have positive effects for water supply in the area for the duration of the plan.

Wastewater treatment and disposal

The existing WWTP has a spare capacity of 4,131 P.E. The possibility of future connection of the Europort to the public mains would reduce this capacity. Industrial expansion could also have a higher impact on WWTP capacity than at present. Any future upgrade of the public WWTP will require a longer outfall to sea and will be subject to a foreshore licence.

Storm water and surface water run-off

It is acknowledged that developments, if not properly managed, have the potential to give rise to storm water and surface water run-off issues that may result in flooding or increased overflows from combined sewers. The Council will seek to ensure that all proposed drainage systems are consistent with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The OPW flood database identifies two recurring flood points (code 4) at Ballygerry. This area is also partially located within Flood Zones A and B as identified in an assessment carried out in accordance with the 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG, OPW, 2009). Flood Zone A is defined as having a high risk of flooding from rivers (i.e. more than 1% probability or more than 1 in 100), while Flood Zone B is defined as having a moderate risk of flooding from rivers (i.e. 0.1% to 1% probability or between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000).

The area around the port is also identified as Flood Zone A and B with risk of flooding from tides. Flood Zone A is defined as having a high risk of flooding from the coast (i.e. more than 0.5% probability or more than 1 in 200) while Flood Zone B defines areas with a moderate risk of flooding from the coast (i.e. 0.1% to 0.5% probability or between 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000).

Applications for development in these areas, where relevant, will be required to be accompanied by an appropriate site specific flood risk assessment carried out in accordance with the aforementioned guidelines. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be carried out as part of the LAP process. It will be the policy of the Council to ensure that development should not itself be the subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. Mitigation of flood risk will have positive long term effects.

Traffic generation

The proposed N11/25 Scheme will improve linkages to the Europort.

Development of greenfield sites together with population growth and future expansion of the Europort could generate increased traffic in the area. The plan will incorporate policies and objectives to improve link roads and to provide for safe pedestrian and cycling conditions throughout the plan area. This will have potential long term negative effects on air quality in the plan area as a result of increased traffic but will also have positive impacts on human health in terms of improved and safe linkages in the area.

Waste generation/collection

The Council aims to address the issue of waste through the continued promotion of waste education, re-use and recycling and the regulation of private contractors. It is envisaged that this will have positive long term effects on the environment.

Loss of hedgerows and trees.

The loss of hedgerows and trees is likely to occur where new development takes place. While it is acknowledged that a certain proportion of existing habitats and species will be lost as a direct result of development, the Council aims to reduce the overall impact through appropriate policies and objectives.

It will be a policy of the Council to:

- Preserve trees and groups of trees which make a significant contribution to the ecology, character or appearance of the area;
- Encourage nature wildlife corridors between the open countryside and the built area;
- Connect open spaces and vegetation elements of existing and new developments;
- Seek the retention of existing hedgerows and/or planting of new hedgerows using sea-tolerant species, or where this is not possible to provide replacement ecological corridors.

3.2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects.

In terms of strategic plans and programmes the LAP will have positive cumulative effects as it will seek to implement regional objectives in relation to waste management and water protection at the local level.

Flood control policy will seek to ensure that all proposed drainage systems are consistent with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). This will have positive cumulative effects in terms of reducing surface water run-off and flood risk in the plan area. Policies to provide community facilities and high quality open spaces as well as the promotion of public transport and improved linkages in the area will also have positive cumulative impacts on human health. Positive cumulative impacts on cultural heritage will also be provided through the protection of monuments and structures of intrinsic interest. These are just some of the examples of positive cumulative impacts on the environment which are envisaged through the implementation of the LAP.

The potential for negative cumulative impacts on the designated sites as a result of coastal defence works, port expansion and wastewater is uncertain. Appropriate Assessment screening will be carried out in accordance with the Habitats Directive as part of the LAP process and this will consider cumulative or in-combination impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

3.2.3 The transboundary nature of the effects.

It is considered that there will not be any significant transboundary effects on the environment from implementing the plan. The LAP will facilitate the future expansion of the Europort should such proposals arise during the lifetime of the plan. This could result in increased traffic through Rosslare Europort and at connecting ports. However, it is considered that any potential impacts would be localised. Public modes of transport to the port will be encouraged over the private car and the re-opening of the

Rosslare-Waterford-Limerick line will be a key objective in the plan. Any significant development proposals to expand the Europort would be of strategic importance and would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

3.2.4 The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).

No risks to human health or the environment due to accidents have been identified. There are no designated SEVESO sites within the plan area.

3.2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected).

The population of Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane in 2006 was 1,473 persons, an increase of 9.3% since 2002. The population has been estimated at 1,639 persons in 2011 and is projected to increase by a further 154 persons by 2021. This will bring the total population to 1,793 persons by the end of the plan period. The population projections are consistent with population targets for County Wexford contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East region 2010-2022.

Significantly more land was zoned under the 2002 LAP than is now required for the projected population during the plan period. It is therefore likely that the plan area will be reduced significantly from that shown in the 2002 LAP in line with the 'Guidance Note on Core Strategies' issued by DEHLG in November 2010. This guidance notes recommends that the zoning objectives for 'excess' residential zoned lands should be addressed through:

- a. phasing of development
- b. alternative zoning objectives
- c. deletion of the zoning objective

3.2.6 The value, and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

Archaeology

There are four recorded monuments in the plan area. The County Development Plan 2007-2013 contains policies and objectives to protect and preserve monuments and similar policies shall be included in the LAP. As such, there will be no likely significant impact on the archaeological heritage of the area as a result of implementing the plan. Any planning applications within the vicinity of national monuments will be subject to individual assessment. Monitoring of subsurface works shall be required in certain instances.

Architectural Heritage

There are two structures within the plan area which are listed in the Record of Protected Structures. These are a thatched farmhouse located in the Ballygilliane Little area (RPS Ref. WCC0895) and St. Ruane's Church at Kilrane (RPS Ref. WCC0513).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) includes approximately 16 structures in the plan area which are considered by the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to be of intrinsic interest. The inclusion of these structures on the Record of Protected Structures will be considered as part of the County Development Plan review.

The County Development Plan 2007-2013 contains policies and objectives to protect buildings included on the Record of Protected Structures and similar policies shall be included in the LAP. As such, there will be no likely significant impact on the architectural heritage of the area as a result of

implementing the plan. Any planning applications to extend or alter protected structures, or applications for development within the vicinity of the structures, shall be individually assessed for their impacts on the structure and its setting.

Natural Heritage

Carnsore Point SAC is located adjacent to the plan boundary area. The site is of considerable conservation significance for the presence of intertidal mud/sand flats and of reefs. Long Bank SAC is located approximately 2.1km offshore to the northeast of Rosslare Harbour. Long Bank SAC is of conservation importance for its submerged sandbanks. St. Helen's pNHA is located less than 1km to the southeast of the plan area. Site Synopses are not currently available for pNHAs. The policies and objectives of the LAP will seek to ensure that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the designated sites from development within the plan boundary.

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;

Although the designated sites are located offshore, particular care is required in sensitive areas such as the southeast of the Harbour. The environmental policies and objectives to be contained in the LAP will seek to reduce the overall impact of future developments on existing habitats and species and environmentally sensitive locations.

(c) intensive land use

There is potential to increase density and building heights around the Harbour area. The LAP will contain a development strategy based around land use and density objectives as well as design guidelines appropriate to the existing character of the area, with particular regard to the Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (DEHLG, December 2008). This development strategy will seek to reduce

the potentially negative impacts of intensive land use. It is not expected that the intensification of land uses in the plan will be such that vulnerable areas will be significantly affected.

3.2.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

Due to the proximity of zoning, potential changes in land-use, coastal development works and other works around the Harbour area, there is potential for impacts on biodiversity, flora and fauna within the designated sites. Water quality may also be impacted upon by an increase in capacity in the WWTP which may arise from development during the lifetime of the plan. This in turn may affect biodiversity, flora and fauna in the designated sites. Protection of Natura 2000 sites is a key requirement of the Habitats Directive. Natura 2000 sites are sites of biodiversity importance for rare and threatened habitats and species across the EU. They include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Appropriate Assessment Screening will also be undertaken for the LAP, which will assess the possible significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan².

² A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

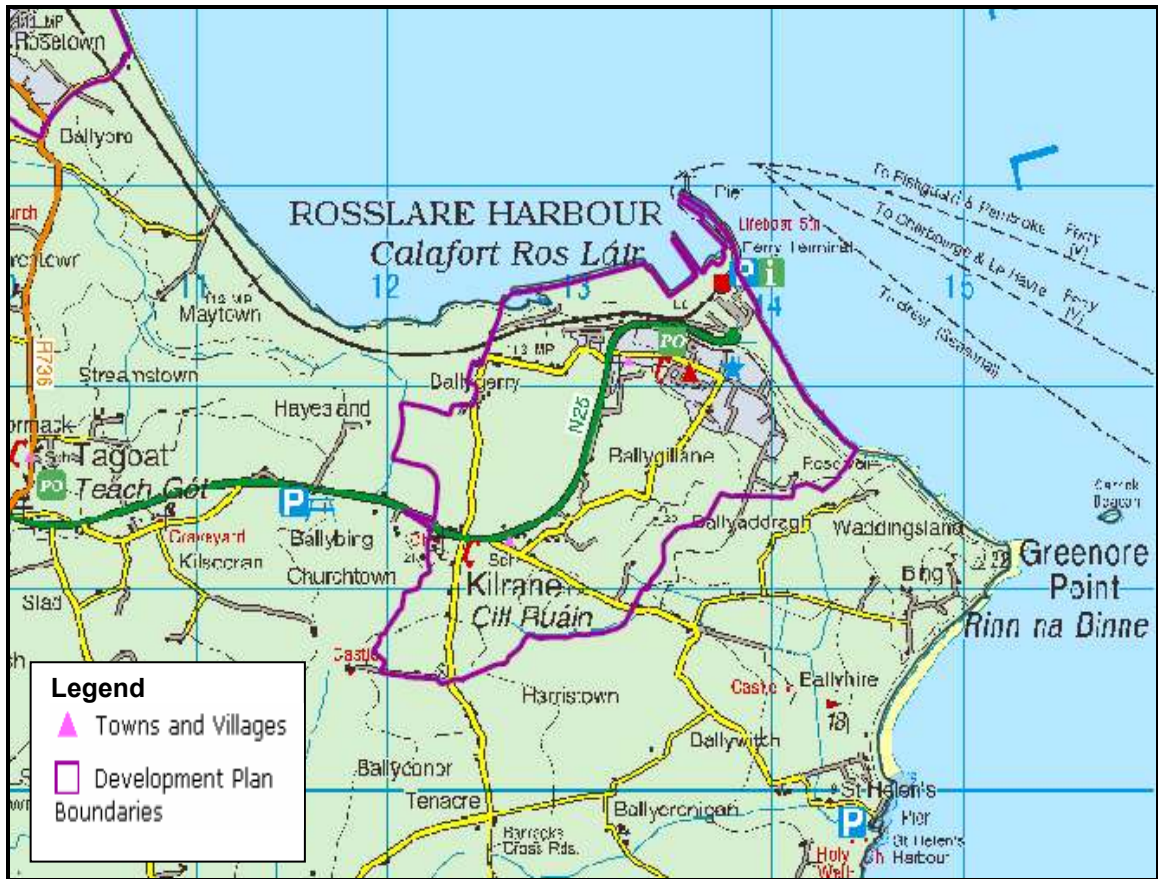
Having assessed the key objectives of the plan against the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 it is considered that the proposed Rosslare and Kilrane Local Area Plan has the potential to have significant effects on the following elements of the receiving environment:

- Human Beings
- Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna
- Water Quality

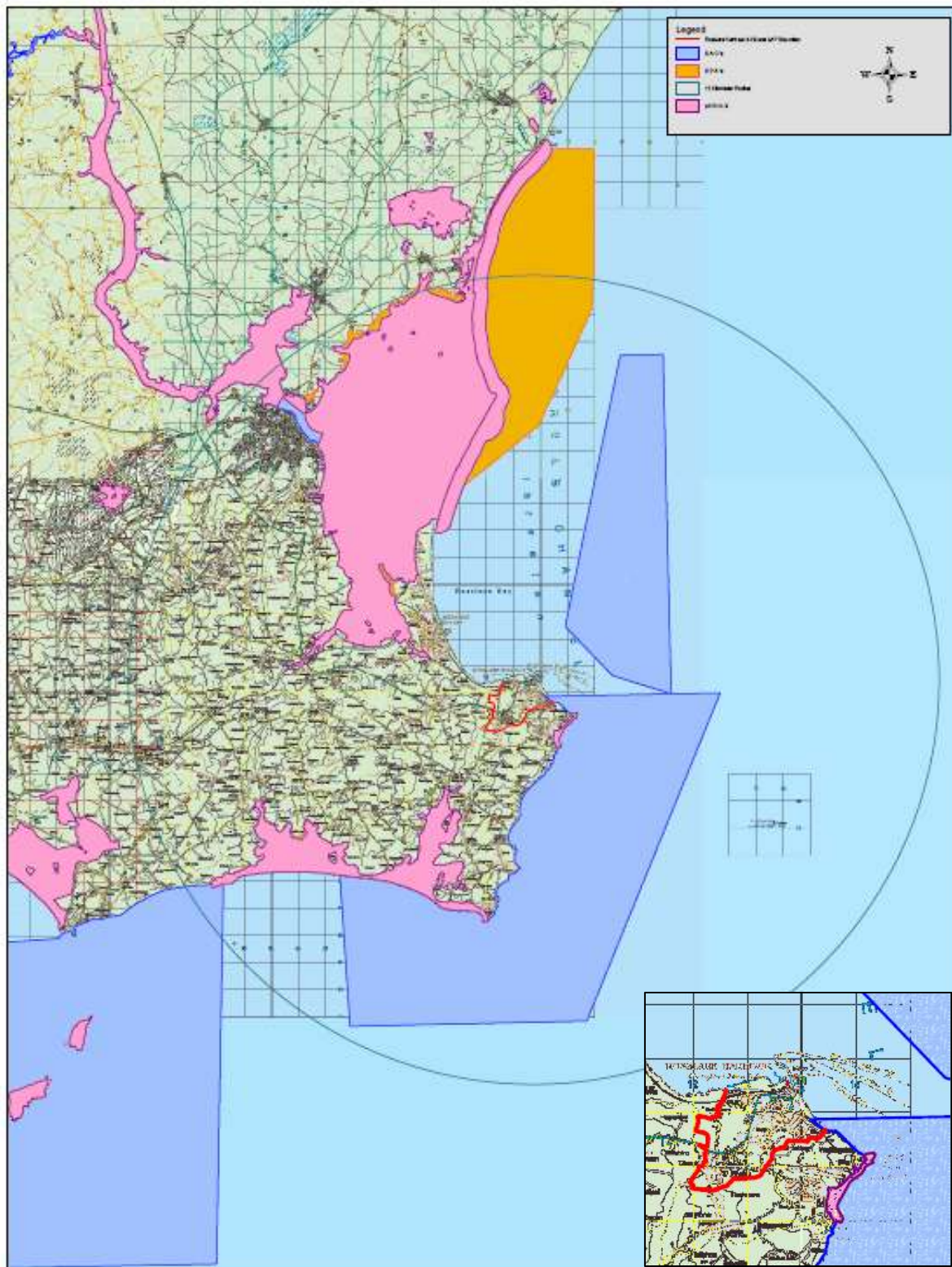
Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be undertaken in conjunction with the preparation of the LAP.

APPENDIX 1

Map of 2002 LAP boundary



APPENDIX 2
Location of Designated Sites



**Strategic Environmental Assessment
 Screening for the Rosslare Harbour
 and Kilrane LAP**

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Title: Designated Sites

Drawn by: NK Checked by: FF

Date: 10.01.2011 Map No: 2

APPENDIX 3
SITE SYNOPSES FOR CARNSORE POINT AND LONG BANK SACs

SITE NAME: CARNSORE POINT

SITE CODE: 002269

This site is situated in the south-east of Co. Wexford and comprises the area of sea and underlying bedrock and sediments off Carnsore Point. The coastal boundary follows the High Water Mark from just north of Greenore Point to Tacumshin Lake; the seaward boundary follows a line just to the west of Black Rock, south of the Barrels Rocks, east of the Bailies and as far north as South Long light. The bedrock of the site is of granite, felsite and other intrusive rocks rich in silica. Most of the site comprises rocky reefs that are typically strewn with boulders, cobbles and patches of sand, both on the shore and underwater, and areas of intertidal mud/sand flats. The site is exposed to the prevailing wind and swells from the west. Tidal streams tend to be moderate but are strong in some areas. Offshore, Barrels Rocks are extremely exposed to the full force of Atlantic swells.

Carnsore Point has good examples of intertidal and subtidal reef communities typical of areas that are very exposed to moderately exposed to wave action. Both on the shore and underwater, the reefs are typically strewn with boulders, cobbles and patches of sand.

The intertidal reef to the east of Carnsore Point is moderately exposed to wave action. It has an extensive area of granite with the limpet, *Patella vulgata*, the topshell, *Osilinu (=Monodonta) lineatus*, and abundant juvenile barnacles in the upper shore. The midshore has a poorly defined band of *Fucus vesiculosus* followed by luxuriant knotted wrack *Ascophyllum nodosum* with the epiphyte *Polysiphonia lanosa*. The low shore is characterised by *Fucus serratus* with occasional *Laminaria digitata* and the green algae *Cladophora rupestris*. The communities at each are typical for this type of shore.

There is a good example of a subtidal reef community very exposed to wave action in shallow water at Barrels Rocks characterized by abundant *Mytilus edulis* with the brown alga, *Alaria esculenta*, an understory of pink coralline algal crusts and *Corallina officinalis* with the hydroid, *Tubularia* sp on steep surfaces. Also in shallow water but in areas with a little less exposure to wave action species rich (81 - 110 species) kelp park of *Laminaria hyperborea* is found with an understory of hydroids, sponges, and bryozoans but at two sites this community is unusual. At south-east of Splagh rock the understory is very similar to the sea squirt community of *Stolonica socialis* and *Polyclinum aurantium* whereas north east of Terchen the bivalve *Musculus discors* carpets much of the area with a variety of sponges, hydroids, sea squirts and bryozoans.

In deeper water at depths of 11-30 m there are excellent examples of the sea squirt community dominated by the sea squirts *Polyclinum aurantium* with the bryozoan *Flustra foliacea*. *Stolonica socialis* may also be present in this community. There is an unusual variation of this community where the dominant sea squirt is *Polycarpa scuba* (= *rustica*) and the bryozoan *Flustra foliacea* is absent and at another site *Distomus variolosus* is the most abundant sea squirt. At 23 m low lying rock surrounded by coarse sand is covered by the bivalve *Musculus discors* which considered to be an uncommon community.

A number of species with a limited distribution in Ireland occur at two or more sites within the area. These are the sponge *Tethyspira spinosa*, the anemone *Cataphellia brodricii* and the sea squirts *Distomus variolosus*, *Stolonica socialis* and *Archdistoma aggregatum*, and *Polycarpa scuba*. The sea squirt *Sidnyum elegans* and the recently described bryozoan *Schizomavella sarniensis* each occur at a single site. *Tethyspira spinosa* is only known from the Saltees, Hook Head and Roaringwater Bay in Ireland. *Cataphellia brodricii* occurs in this community and in shallow water both around the Saltee Islands and other areas in the south-east. *Stolonica socialis* in Ireland is only known from the south-east and north-west coasts and in Britain in the south, south-west, and English

Channel. *Sidnyum elegans* has not previously been recorded in Ireland and to date all records are from the south-east and it has a limited distribution in Britain. *Archdistoma aggregatum* is known from a few sites in south-west Britain, Northern Ireland, the Saltee Islands, Carnsore Point area and south of the River Shannon Estuary. *Polycarpa scuba* (=rustica) is only known from the Irish Sea, English Channel and Brittany.

The littoral sediment communities of Carnsore Point are represented by a moderately exposed shore at Carne Beach. There are talitrid amphipods living under drift algae on the strand line. The midshore is populated by polychaete worms (*Arenicola marina*, *Scolelepis foliosa* and *Nephtys cirrosa*), and the burrowing amphipod, *Bathyporeia pelagica*. The low shore is characterized by *Nephtys cirrosa*, crustacea (*Crangon crangon* and *Portumnus latipes*) and the bivalve mollusc (*Angulus tenuis*).

The site is of considerable conservation significance for the presence of intertidal mud/sand flats and of reefs, both habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

3.9.2001

SITE NAME : LONG BANK

SITE CODE : 002161

Long Bank and Holdens Bed are situated several kilometres to the east of Rosslare and Wexford Harbour on the East coast. They are at the southern end of a series of offshore sand banks that run from Arklow to the south of Rosslare. Long Bank is approximately 12 km in length and, at its widest, is approximately 1.4 km in width, while Holdens Bed is approximately 3.7 km in length and 1.4 km wide. The two banks are separated by a channel and are separated from the Lucifer Bank to the east by an area of deeper water.

Offshore sand banks are generally constructed of sediment that ranges from cobbles to coarse sand and the sand is duned in large waves at least a meter in height and several meters in width. Where the current is strong the surface fauna is typically very sparsely scattered, with, e.g. an occasional starfish, crabs or hermit crabs. These banks, however, frequently have a distinctive meiofauna living within them and can be important feeding grounds for birds.

The site is of conservation importance for its submerged sandbanks, a habitat that is listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

04.09.2001