










Chapter Seven – Assessment of the Draft County Development Plan







Introduction

This chapter of the SEA is a summary of the larger assessment of the policies and objectives of the Draft County Development contained in Appendix 1. Each of the policies and objectives have been assessed against the environmental objectives detailed in Chapter 5. The environmental topics listed below are represented in the matrix by the accompanying symbols. It should be noted that the category of Human Beings addresses how the objectives and policies of the County Development Plan will impact on the population of the county, both positively and negatively. Where an aspect of the environment relates to and overlaps with the broad issue of human health such as air quality or water quality, this aspect of the ‘human health’ is addressed under that topic.

The symbols used in the assessment is as follows:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. |  | Flora and Fauna – Biodiversity |
| 2. |  | Population - Demographics |
| 3. |  | Soil |
| 4. |  | Water |
| 5. |  | Air Quality and Climatic Factors |
| 6. |  | Material Assets – Transport/waste Management |
| 7. |  | Material Assets – Water Supplies/Wastewater |
| 8. |  | Cultural Heritage |
| 9. |  | Landscape |

The results of the assessment are tabulated and the following rating system is used to indicate environmental impacts.

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|----------------|
|  | Positive impact |  | Negative impact |  | Neutral impact |
|  | Indirect positive impact |  | Indirect negative impact |  | Uncertain |

Positive Impact – A change which improves the quality of the environment.

Neutral Impact - A change which does not affect the quality of the environment.

Negative impact – A change which reduces or lessens the quality of the environment.

Uncertain – The scale and nature of the impact, either positive or negative cannot be determined at this stage.

Environmental Assessment

It is worth reiterating that the development of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is an iterative process, carried out in conjunction with the development of the Draft County Development Plan. The principal reason for doing so is to ensure that negative environmental impacts are highlighted at an early stage enabling them to be effectively 'designed out' as soon as possible. The result is a Draft County Development Plan which has had due regard to the environmental issues pertaining within the County and any negatively should be shown to minimal.

Chapter 2 - Current Trends

The policy of the Council in regard to population, education and employment within the South Tipperary functional area is in general positive and therefore no specific mitigation measures are therefore regarded as necessary in relation to this policy.

Chapter 3 – Location and pattern of development

It is clearly demonstrated that a neutral to positive impact will result through implementation of the local authority's policies in relation to housing. The local authority have proposed a significant new approach to the development of settlements within the county and this is reflected in the positive assessment.

The settlement strategy for the County provides for the creation of a settlement hierarchy reflecting the development role of each settlement type. The purpose of the hierarchy is to ensure that future development is guided into existing settlement and contributes in a positive way to the built form and character of each settlement, with good service base, excellent communication network and interconnectivity between settlements. The policies put forward recognise that there is a need to develop existing settlements in order to create a critical mass enabling better delivery of services for inhabitants. A sustainable level of growth is possible through the supply of developments based on the assimilative capacity of the existing environment.

Furthermore it is recognised that there is also a need to protect the countryside, ensuring that it remains viable for future generations. The policies in this regard will afford protection to the environment while also providing for rural dwellers and relatives to live in the countryside provided a number of specific criteria are met. This is a sensible approach and is supported by the environmental assessment. The appropriate mitigation measures which are required to ensure that protection is provided include design guidance which are detailed in chapter 9 of the Plan. Subsequently no other mitigation measures are therefore deemed necessary.

In conclusion the proposed Settlement Strategy will have significant benefits to the population of the County particularly in the areas of transport and infrastructure provisions and correspondingly human health. Also there is a high level of environmental protection particularly in the areas of landscape quality, habitat protection and water quality protection. In environmental terms the proposed strategy is to be supported.

Chapter 4 – Housing

It was demonstrated that the overall the policies and objectives of the local authority in relation to the provision of housing within the county will result in a neutral to positive (both directly and

indirectly) on the various aspects of the environment. Subsequently no particular or specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Chapter 5 - Economy

It has been demonstrated, in general terms, through the assessment matrix, that the policies and objectives of the local authority in relation to the promotion of economic development are generally positive. However, there are some issues which warrant further discussion. ECON 7 and ECON 8 deal with enterprises in the country and farm diversification. The development of such schemes must accord with the Design Management Standards contained in chapter 9. Adherence to the guidelines will ensure that the impacts identified in the matrix are as shown. ECON 9 deals with non-conforming uses which should not be confused with unauthorised development. It is shown that there is an uncertain level of impact on the environmental themes because the associated impacts are site and location specific as well as being specific to the type of development being carried out. The assessment will support the continued monitoring of such activities and indeed supports the policy in relation to future uses and conformity to the zoning as outlined in this plan. For obvious reasons the development of quarrying activities will have a localised negative impact on the soil and geology environment.

Chapter 6 – Amenity, Environment, Heritage

The policies and objectives in relation to the Amenity, Environment and Heritage within the county are neutral to positive which has been demonstrated by the assessment matrix. All proposals for development within the county will be required to have due regard to these policies and objectives, detailed in Chapter 6 of the Plan. The result will be a sustainable balance between the planned development of the county and the protection of the environment.

Chapter 7 - Infrastructure

In general terms all of the policies and objectives have been shown to be either positive or neutral on the environmental themes. Uncertainty is shown in relation to INF10 which is purely precautionary as impacts associated with wind farm developments can be both localised and far reaching. Adherence to the policies outlined in Appendix 3 should negate much of the negative issues associated with their development however.

Chapter 8 – Community and Social

The policies as proposed by the local authority in relation to Community and Social issues are shown to have a neutral to positive impact on the environmental objectives. No further mitigation measures are required.

Chapter 9 - Development Management

The standards outlined and presented in Chapter 9 of the Draft County Development Plan represent a comprehensive guide to the quality and location of new build within the county. Their full implementation and adherence to the standards will result minimal environmental impacts.

Conclusion

The long term future development of South Tipperary is framed within the Draft Development Plan for the County. The Council have adopted a 'Planned' approach, as discussed in Chapter 6 of this Environmental Report and correspondingly the policies and objectives contained within the Plan have been devised in accordance with the guiding principles of this strategy. The assessment matrix, provided as Appendix 1 to this Report, has assessed each policy and objective against the Environmental Objectives and has demonstrated that the Plan has a significant sustainable dimension - the Plan will ensure the orderly development of the County without adversely affecting the quality of the natural and built environment.