



South Dublin County Council

Development Plan 2016 – 2022

Appendix 1:

Proposed Variation No.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

This report has been prepared by Minogue & Associates with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information report herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is prepared for South Dublin County Council and we accept no responsibility to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Dublin County Council intends to initiate the procedures for making a Variation to the County Development Plan under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The purpose of the Variation is to amend the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016 – 2022 (Development Plan) in relation to the following:

1. Amend Zoning Tables and Zoning Objective Matrix to move Advertising and Advertising Structures to ‘open for consideration’ in various zones; and
2. Amend Section 11.2.8 Signage – Advertising, Corporate and Public Information Section
3. Add ‘South Dublin County Council Outdoor Advertising Strategy (2019)’ as Schedule 6.

1.2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Under Directive 2001/42/EC - Assessment of Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, certain plans and programmes require an environmental assessment. This is known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. Article 1 of this Directive states that its objective is:

‘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 and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.’

The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 (as amended) state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. Article 13K of S.I. 436 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations (as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) sets out the process by which a determination of the need for strategic environmental assessment of a variation to a Development Plan is made. In particular, Article 13K of the Regulations states that:

‘Where a planning authority proposes to make a variation of a development plan under section 13 of the Act, it shall, before giving notice under section 13(2) of the Act, consider whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A’

Therefore, as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not a mandatory requirement for a variation to a Development Plan, this report comprises a screening of the requirement for SEA for the proposed variation associated with the Outdoor Advertising related amends to the Development Plan as outlined above in Section 1.1.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT TO PROPOSED VARIATION NO.5

The Proposed Variation seeks to integrate the SDCC Outdoor Advertising Strategy (2019) into the Development Plan and amend the existing Land Use Tables and signage policy to facilitate its implementation.

The SDCC Outdoor Advertising Strategy (2019) outlines the Council's policy on advertising structures and the strategy that has been developed for commercial advertising in the public domain. This strategy forms the basis of a practical policy to be applied to all proposals for outdoor advertising and should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies and objectives in the Development Plan. The strategy is based on an analysis of how sensitive different parts of the County are to advertisement structures and identifies constraints and opportunities for the location of these structures. It also sets out what types of structures are acceptable as outdoor advertising elements.

Proposed Variation No.5 to the Development Plan facilitates the implementation of the SDCC Outdoor Advertising Strategy (2019) by amending the prohibitive approach adopted in the Land Use Zoning Tables and Signage policies towards outdoor advertising structures in Chapter 11 of the Development Plan. The following section provides an extract from the SDCC Outdoor Advertising Strategy (2019):

1.0 Introduction

With advances in technology, increasing demand for customer communication, as well as enhanced service delivery, South Dublin County Council (SDCC) are seeking to respond to these challenges by developing an updated and modern policy position on outdoor advertising. SDCC will seek to provide, manage and guide outdoor advertising in SDCC's administrative area, with an overall aim of benefiting the County by establishing a new communication network to engage with SDCC's customers and to promote SDCC's services.

South Dublin is a unique County with a mixture of established suburban settlements, historical villages, emerging town centres and significant new development and regeneration areas. The urban centres in the County provide a diverse urban environment and a sense of place. To build on the existing and emerging physical assets and to generate an urban realm of the highest possible quality, the sense of place needs to be nurtured and enhanced through creative, intelligent and co-ordinated interventions. Significant, under utilised value exists in the public domain of the County which, if carefully harnessed, can provide the means to generate public realm improvements without compromise to the character of the individual urban centres. This opportunity can be facilitated through a managed programme of outdoor advertisement.

This document outlines the Council policy on advertising structures and the strategy that has been developed for commercial advertising in the public domain. This strategy forms the basis of a practical policy to be applied to all proposals for outdoor advertising and should be read in conjunction with the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016- 2022 and any superseding Development Plan. The strategy is based on an analysis of how sensitive different parts of the County are to advertisement structures and identifies constraints and opportunities for the location of these structures. It also sets out what types of structures are acceptable as outdoor advertising elements. While commercial viability is a key consideration, it has been balanced with the need to create a high quality public domain and to safeguard and enhance sensitive areas and sites. The strategy also provides for a co-ordinated bartering system, to rationalise the location and concentration of existing advertising structures.

Please note that this policy position predominantly relates to outdoor advertising and proposals that relate to signs erected on the exterior of buildings, within windows, as stand alone structures or attached to public utilities that advertise goods or services associated with that premises are generally addressed under Section 11 of the Development Plan.

2.0 Outdoor Advertising Structures

This section includes an assessment as to those locations where outdoor advertising may or may not be acceptable in principle. It is the policy of the planning authority to strictly control all advertising signs in relation to their location, design, materials, function and operation. In order to manage an effective programme of outdoor advertising, SDCC has developed a policy based on geographical zones.

These zones cover all parts of the County, including areas of architectural sensitivity, residential/commercial areas and areas of high amenity. Based on these zones, a range of controls and policies have been developed for each zone ranging from the prohibition of outdoor advertising in the most sensitive areas to more general controls in less sensitive areas where certain types of advertising will be considered. Consideration will be also be given to the need for sensitive treatment and an appropriate transition at the interface between zones. These zones have been organised into categories, which can be classified as follows:

Zone 1: *This zone consists of the areas that are the most sensitive and primarily relates to Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) which contain places, areas and groups of structures that exhibit unique, distinct character and qualities within the county. There is a strong presumption against large outdoor advertisements within these areas. Smaller advertisements may be consideration, subject to sensitive design and siting.*

Zone 2: *This zone consists of urban centres that comprise retail, amenity and commercial uses. Outdoor advertisements may be permitted here subject to special development management measures. Within this zone, there are also large-scale tracts of commercial land-use which have a separate robust character and may have the potential to accommodate outdoor advertising.*

Zone 3: *This zone consists of the main transport corridors into, out of and within the county including the primary road network and Luas lines. There is an opportunity for the managed provision of outdoor advertising along these corridors in the public domain. Subject to compliance with the development management standards, as set out in Section 7, the development of outdoor advertising in this zone will be open for consideration.*

Zone 4: *This zone consists of existing and potential high amenity areas including the Grand Canal corridor, the Liffey Valley, the Dodder Valley, the Dublin Mountains and upland rural areas. There is a strong presumption against outdoor advertising in this zone.*

Zone 5: *This zone consists of significant developing areas where advertising could form an integral part of newly created streetscapes. This zone relates to certain strategic developments, regeneration areas or new residential communities where advertising may form part of new streetscapes, having regard to the need to protect residential amenities. Subject to compliance with development management standards, the development of outdoor advertising in this zone will be open for consideration.*

Zone 6: *This zone consists of predominantly residential areas where outdoor advertisements would generally be visually inappropriate.*

Outdoor Advertising Strategy 2019 - Zones for Advertising Control

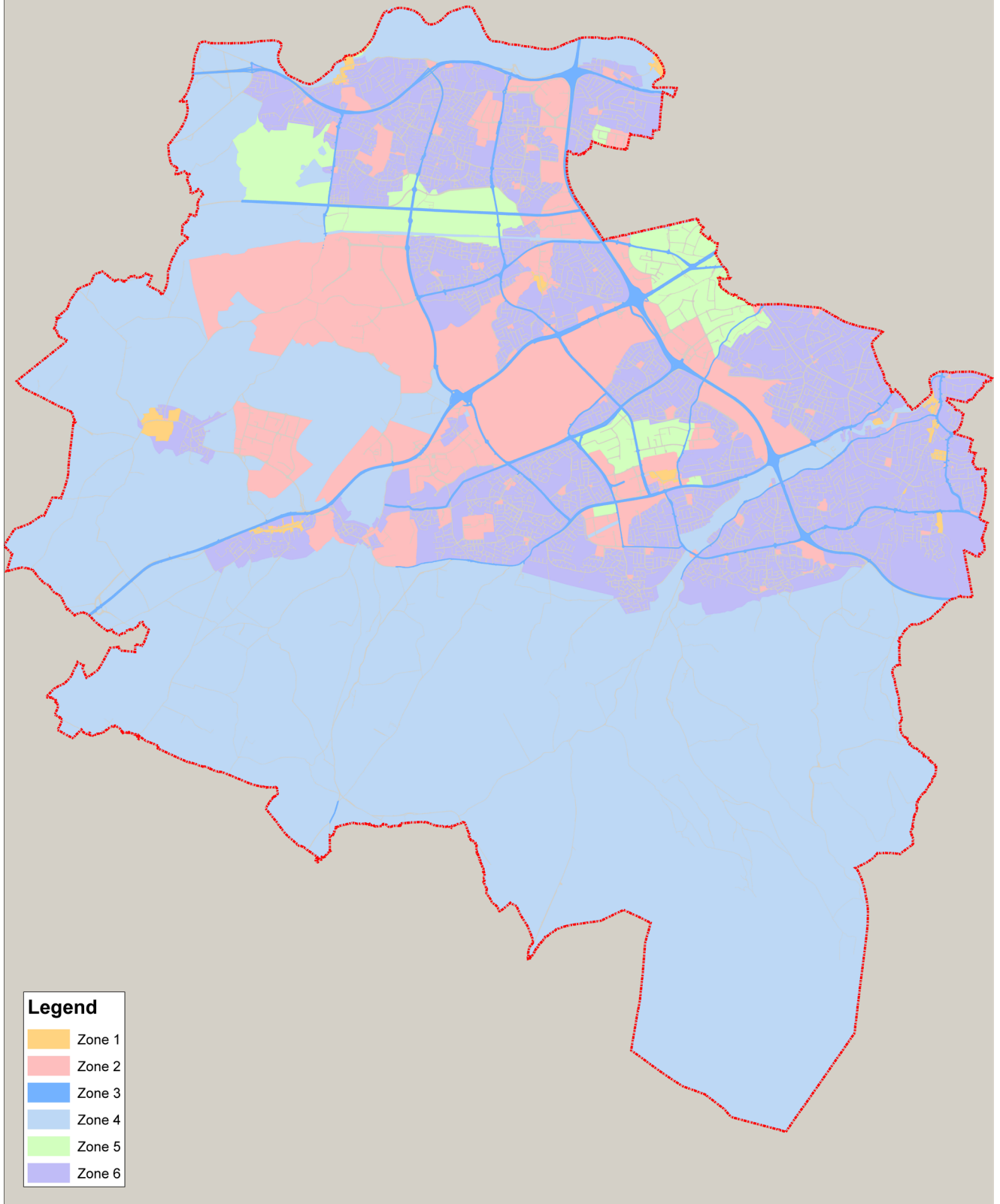


Figure 1 - Zones of Advertisement Control

Please note that the above graphic is indicative only and the written text supersedes the graphic. In relation to public roads and areas indicated as white, the zone of advertising control adjacent to these roads and areas is applicable.

3.0 Public Realm: A Co-ordinated Approach

The preferred location for outdoor advertising panels within South Dublin County is on the public realm contained within Zones 2, 3 and 5 as indicated in Figure 1 Zones of Advertisement Control. The provision of outdoor advertisements in the public realm will enable the Council to adopt a co-ordinated approach to the management of the advertising activity in the County and to encourage better quality signage in more appropriate locations.

1.3.1 Changes to the South Dublin Development Plan

These changes will form a variation to the existing South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022 (Development Plan). This plan came into effect in June 2016 and established the framework for the development over a six year period for the County. The Development Plan was subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment during the plan making process. Within the hierarchy of landuse plans, the proposed variation should be compliant with the policies, objectives of the Development Plan, as well as national and regional plans and guidelines.

1.4 SEA SCREENING

The screening process is the first stage of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and the purpose of this screening report is to determine whether the proposed variation will or will not, lead to significant environmental effects for the Plan area and if it will require a full Strategic Environment Assessment. The following Regulations transpose this Directive into Irish law:

- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004),
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004) and further amended by
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

In deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and listed in Schedule 2A of S.I 436/2004. The approach to this screening assessment is to assess the proposed variation against these criteria and determine if the proposed variation requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

This Screening report is structured as follows:

Section Two provides an overview of the areas known environmental baseline in and around South Dublin County. Section Three of this report assesses these against the criteria contained in Schedule 2A of the Regulations.

This SEA screening report has been prepared in conjunction with a screening under Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive prepared by Doherty Environmental and has informed the preparation of this Screening report. This report has been prepared by Ruth Minogue, MCIEEM.

1.5 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that proposed plans and programmes (including amendments or variations) undergo screening for likely or potential effects on European Sites (Natura 2000 sites) arising from their implementation. A Screening of the Proposed Variation for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and determined that a full Stage 2 AA of the Variation will not be required for the proposed variation.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report accompanies this document.

2 SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

2.1 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1.1 POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

The total population of South Dublin County in 2016 census was 278,749 and Tallaght is the county town. Population is most dense around the urban areas, closer to Dublin City, for example at urban centres including Tallaght and Clondalkin, whilst the more rural areas including the foothills of the Dublin Mountains to the south supports a more dispersed population. The figures below present total population and population density for South Dublin County.

FIGURE 2 TOTAL POPULATION SOUTH DUBLIN

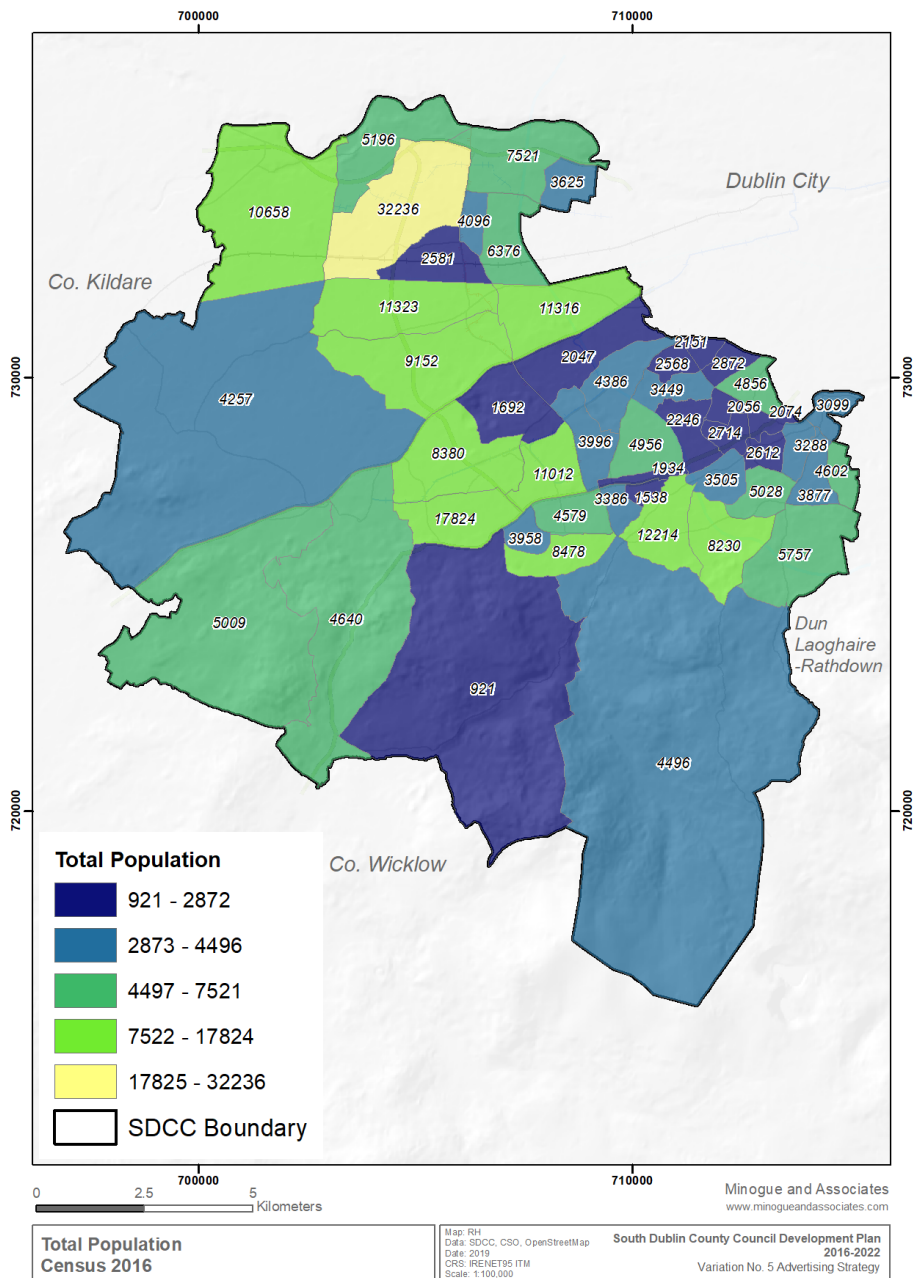
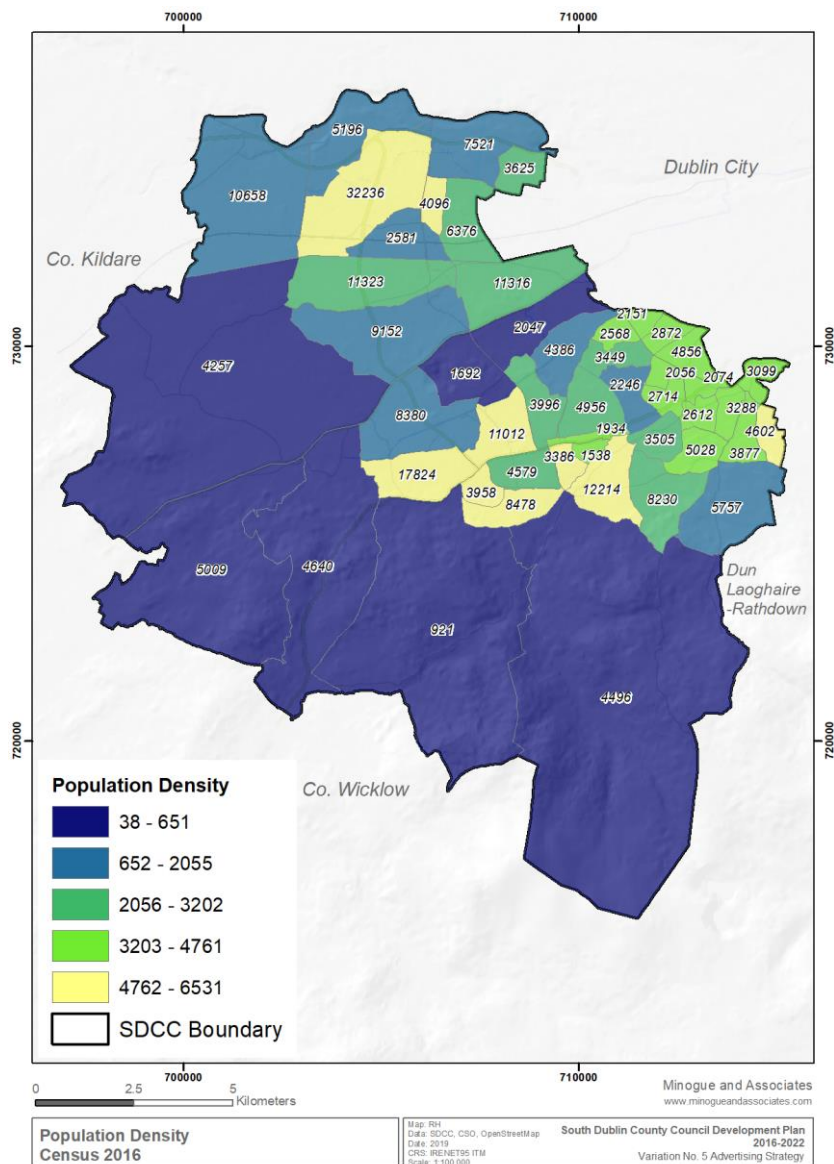


FIGURE 3 POPULATION DENSITY FOR SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY



2.1.2 BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA

A number of sites are present within the plan area, designated for natural heritage. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under the EU Habitats Directive; and Special Protection Areas designated under the EU Birds Directive. These are concentrated to the south of the plan area with Glensamole SAC, and the Wicklow Mountains SAC and SPA. Figures 4 and 5 show these designations within a 15km buffer of the county boundary. Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas form another layer of natural heritage designations and are more numerous within the plan area.

As natural habitats become more fragmented as a result of human activity, habitat patches and corridors within a landscape mosaic become increasingly important for species to allow movement between populations. Within the plan area, ecological corridors can include in particular, roadside grassy verges and streams and other waterbodies.

FIGURE 4 SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION WITHIN A 15KM BUFFER OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY

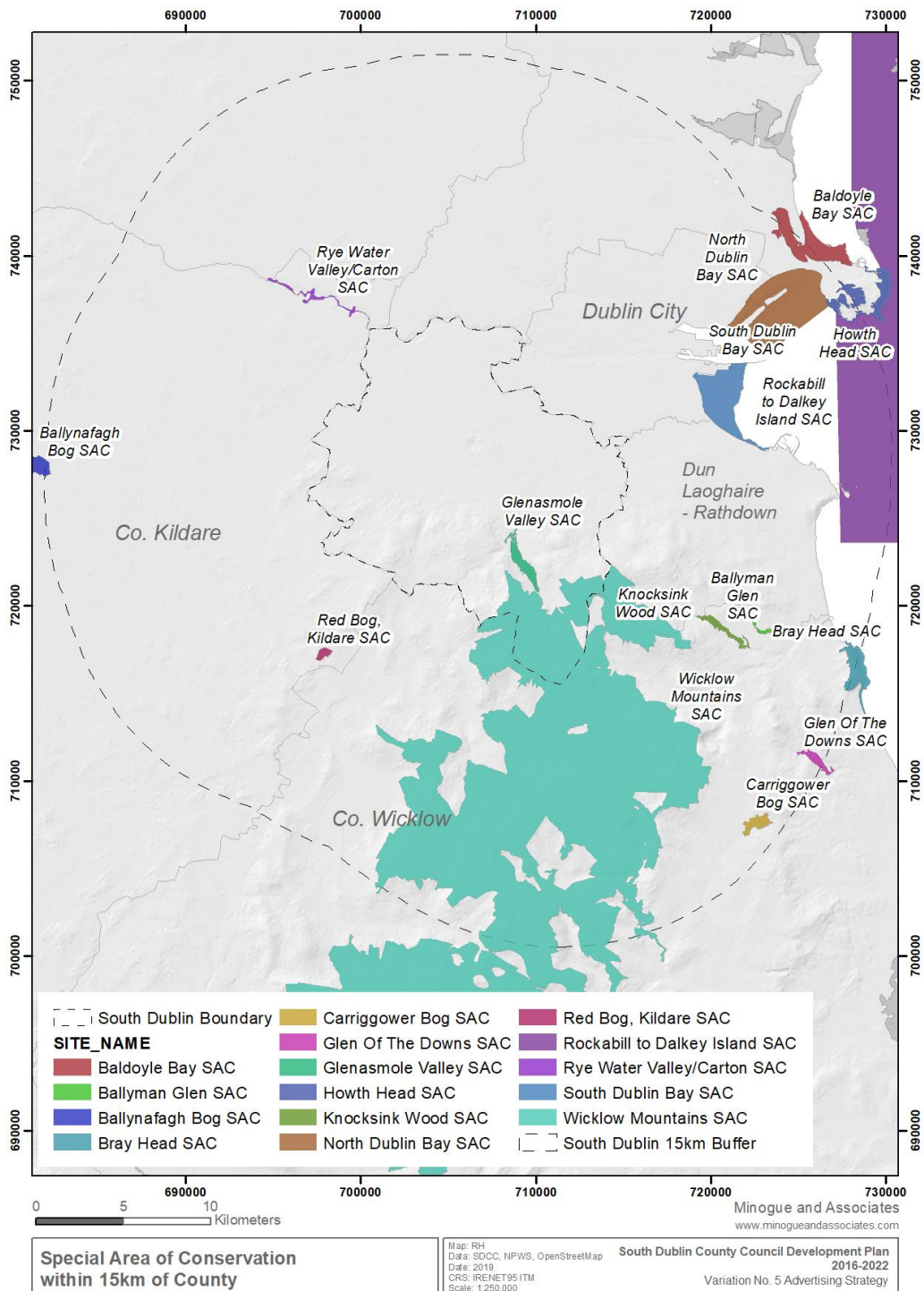
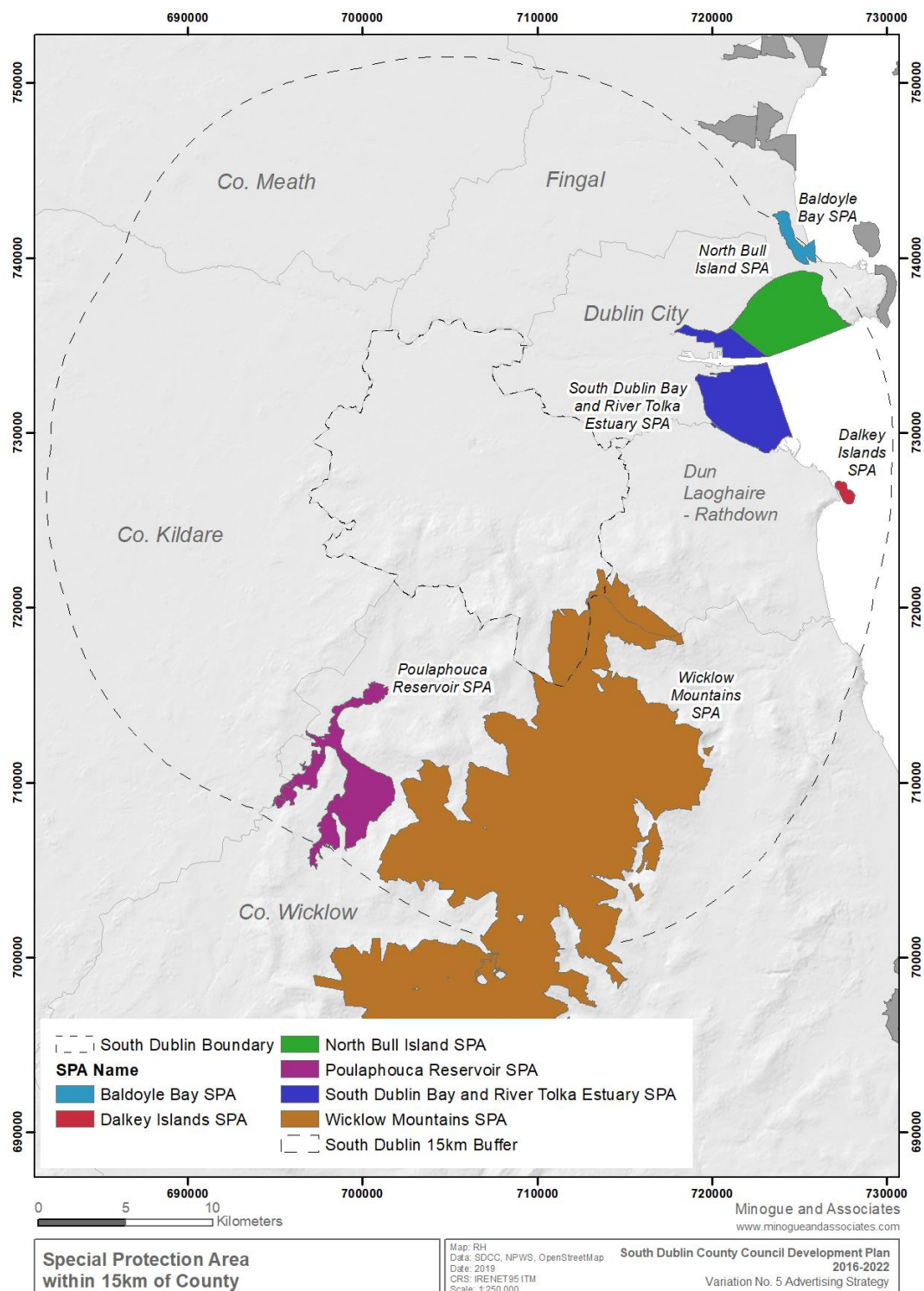


FIGURE 5 SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA WITHIN 15KM OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY



2.1.3 WATER RESOURCES

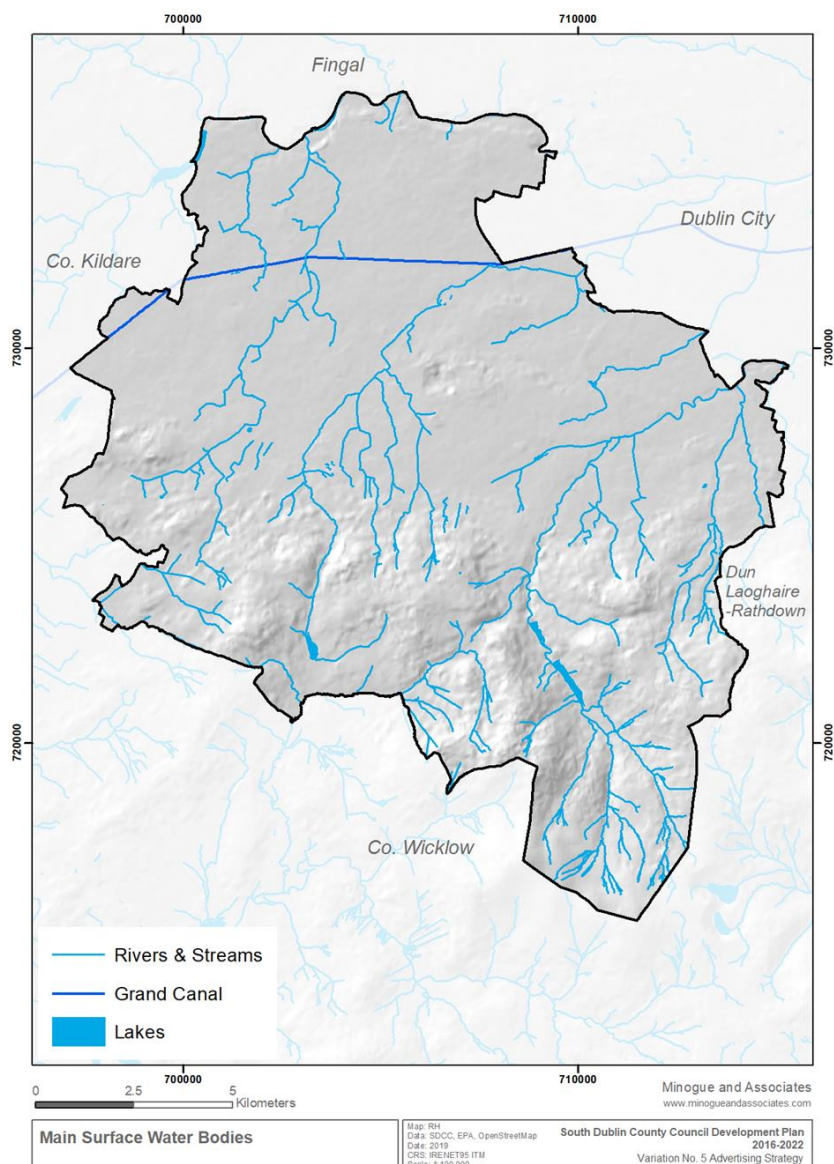
Water resources and their quality have a clear interaction and impacts with other environmental parameters, therefore its protection and enhancement is of particular importance.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a key initiative aimed at improving water quality throughout the EU. It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuarine and coastal waters. The Directive requires

an integrated approach to managing water quality on a river basin basis; with the aim of maintaining and improving water quality. The WFD identifies River Basin Districts as the key management units with clearly defined water bodies forming the basis for assessment reporting and management. The first cycle of RBD management plans were from 2009 to 2015. For the second cycle the Eastern, South Eastern, South Western, Western and Shannon River Basin Districts have been merged to form one national River Basin District.

The most recent data for the new plans being prepared is from the catchments.ie website. A catchment is an area where water is collected by the natural landscape and flows from source through river, lakes and groundwater to the sea. South Dublin County lands are situated within the Liffey and Dublin Bay Catchment (code: 09). The area of this catchment covers 1,624,42km² and supports a total population density of 777 people per km². The figure below shows the principal surface water features in the county.

FIGURE 6 SURFACE WATER FEATURES SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY



2.1.4 SOIL AND GEOLOGY

The northern half of South Dublin is formed of Carboniferous Limestone rocks deposited in a deep marine basin. These rocks were formed around 340 million years ago and are faulted against the older rocks along the base of the Dublin Mountains. The limestone deposited in this basin is a muddy limestone with few fossils, as it was generally a deeper water environment. This limestone underlies most of Dublin and is known as Calp limestone or 'the Calp'. Over the past 2 million years the Ice Age had a big effect on the landscape, eroding the mountains, depositing glacial gravels in places and then rivers such as the Dodder and Liffey have been active in recent times, modifying the sediments at surface.

Soil can be considered as a non-renewable natural resource because it develops over very long timescales. It is an extremely complex, variable and living medium and performs many vital functions including: food and other biomass production, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. Such functions of soil are worthy of protection because of their socio-economic as well as environmental importance. Soils in any area are the result of the interaction of various factors, such as parent material, climate, vegetation and human action. Whilst much of the county soils are classified as urban according to the Teagasc soil map, reflecting the built up character of parts of the county, the remaining soils are primarily surface water gleys to the west, with luvisols as well as areas of peat soils associated with the elevated areas to the south.

FIGURE 7 BEDROCK GEOLOGY

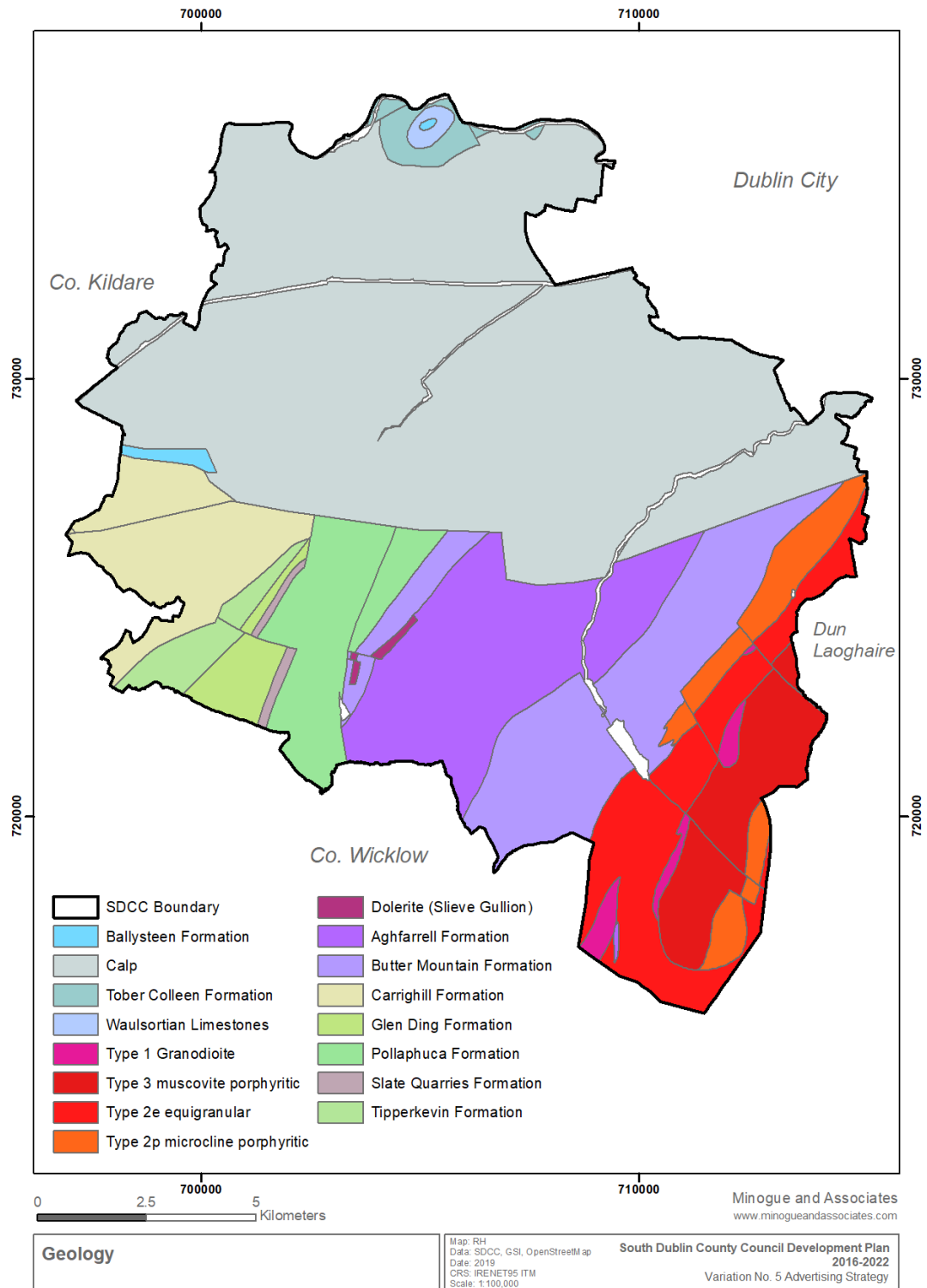
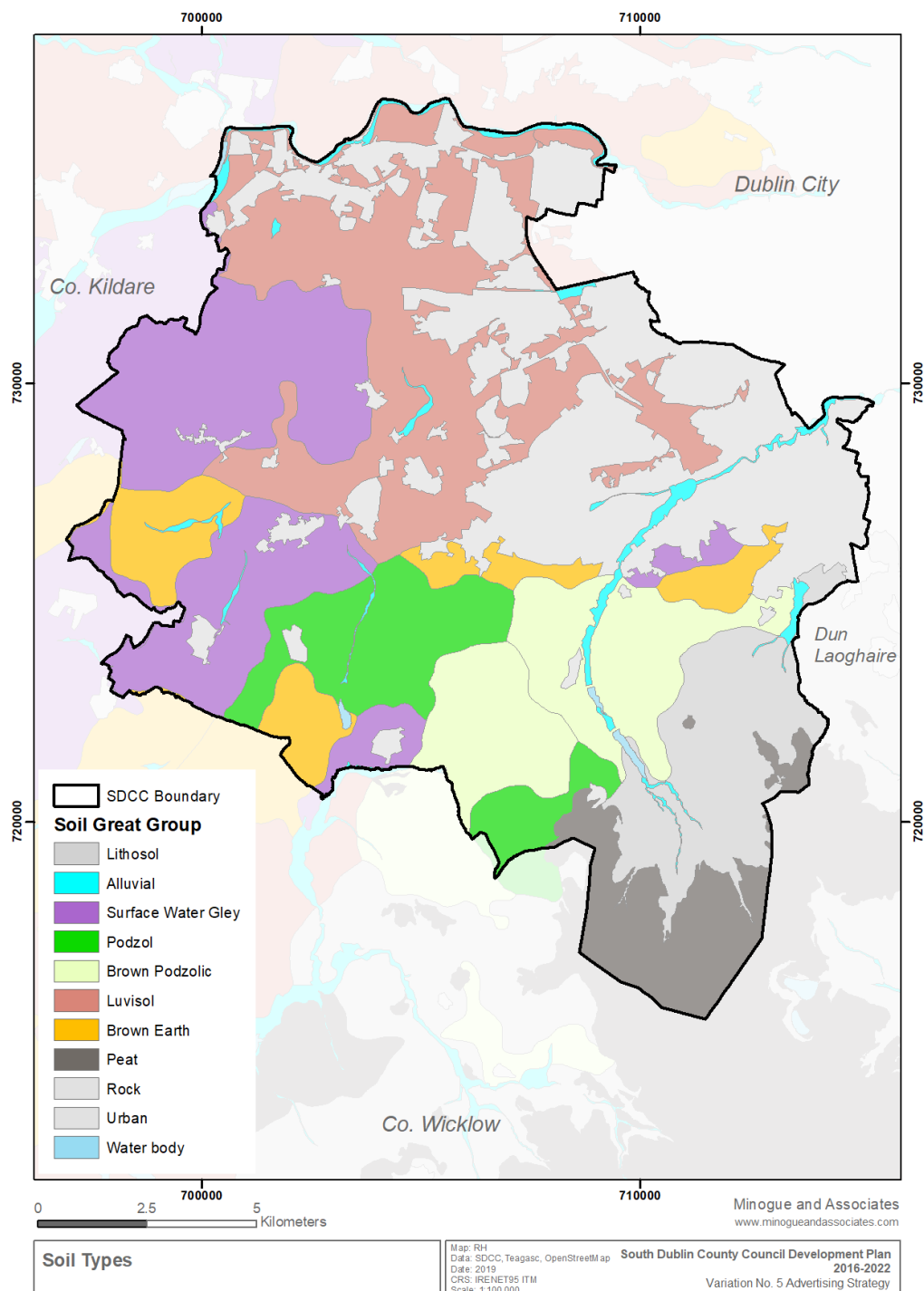


FIGURE 8 SOIL TYPES



2.1.5 LANDSCAPES

The Landscape Character Assessment prepared as part of the County Development Plan review in 2015 identified the following landscape character areas in the county, with LCAs shown in Figure 9.

Liffey Valley LCA: a river valley of significant historical importance with an important ecological corridor associated with the River Liffey. The landscape characteristics and landscape value of this LCA confer on it a distinct sense of place. The elements that are key include historic and cultural heritage exemplified by Lucan and Palmerstown, and the variety of preserved naturalistic and rural

landscapes in the area. This sense is potentially at risk due to urbanisation. Recommendations are thus made aimed at preserving that sense of place and relate to conservation, protection and enhancement where possible of those key landscape elements and values.

Newcastle Lowlands LCA: a low lying agricultural area of high agricultural productivity, long history of human settlement and important landscape setting to the urbanised east.

The Newcastle lowlands function as an important agricultural resource but are vulnerable to urbanising pressures. In addition, its character as a rural landscape provides a distinct and important identity to this area of western Dublin. To conserve its sense of place requires measures protecting the integrity of the agricultural landscape by controls on urban expansion, ribbon development and other sources of erosion and fragmentation, and recommends that site planning guidance on the use of appropriate vernacular styles and treatments in new developments be provided in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans.

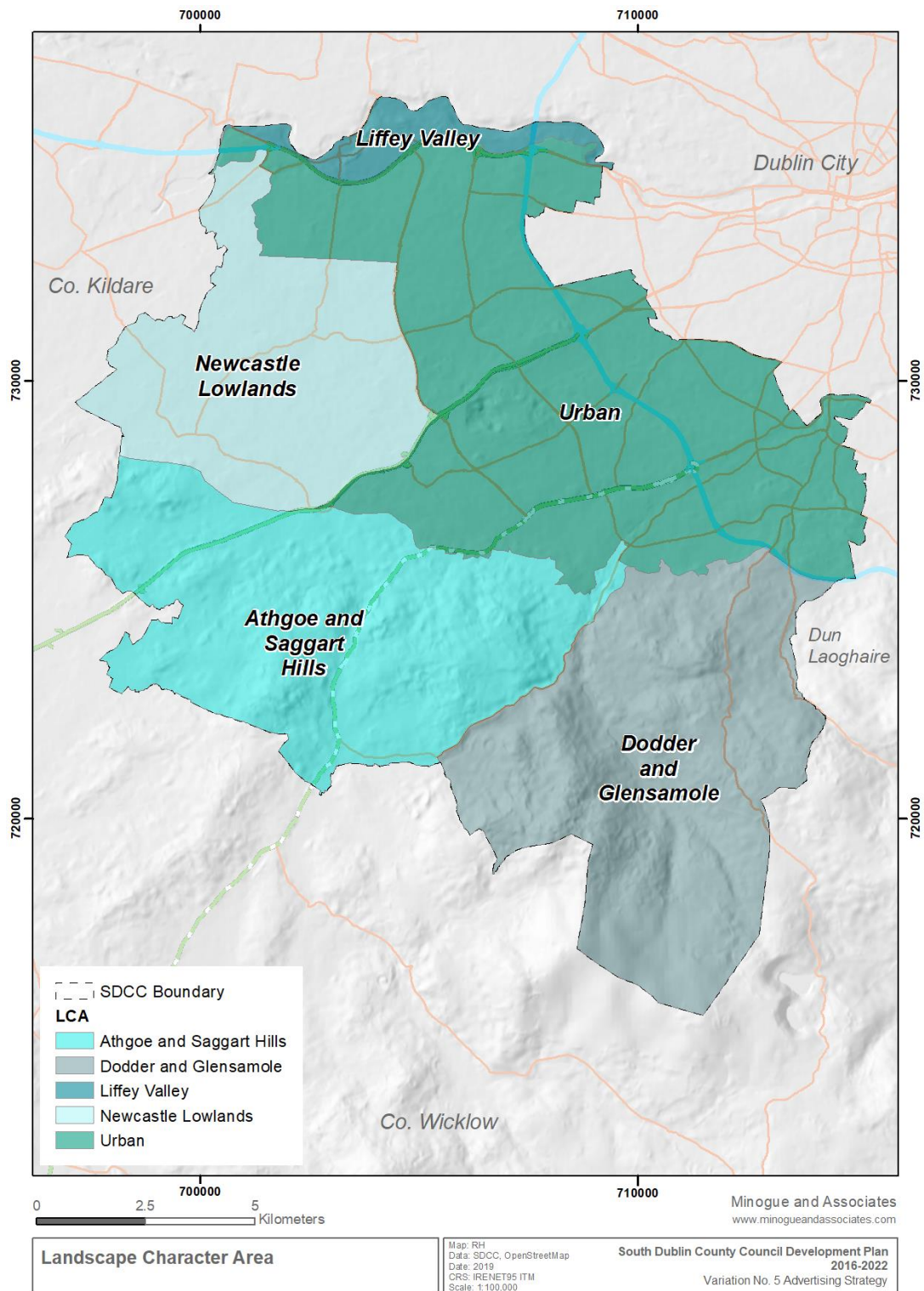
Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA: The foothills and hills that form the backdrop and southern setting to the greater Dublin area; these hills provide a variety of uses including agriculture, forestry, recreation as well as important ecological services associated with their habitats. The LCA is diverse and offers the access into the more strongly rural areas of the county and beyond. Long views over the lowlands and south to the Wicklow Mountains are an important characteristics. The integrity of the landscape character is derived from agriculture combined with other rural land uses including coniferous plantations. The integrity of its character, and of its value as a landscape setting have been compromised by housing developments in the area and measures are recommended to enhance this rural diverse agricultural landscape and protect the long views that are a defining feature of this LCA.

River Dodder and Glenasmole Valley LCA: A highly scenic and distinctive glacial valley with variety of attractive features, and enclosed fields contrasting with the upland blanket bog areas. Distinctive stone cut cottages and boundaries are present along the along the valley floor, this LCA also contains significant archaeological clusters. This LCA offers varied and extensive views across Dublin Bay and to the Wicklow mountains and is an important recreational and ecological landscape, evidenced by its statutory designations. It forms a significant backdrop to the greater Dublin area, and is a remarkable landscape in its wildness and remoteness so close to heavily urbanised areas. Its character and integrity is of importance to local residents, and it is a very significant resource for recreation users and for tourism. The objectives of managing this LCA is to preserve its overall character and the features and values that contribute to its uniqueness

The urban areas of the county were not assessed as they would normally merit more detailed and finer scale assessment, through townscape assessment or through local area plans. A summary description was provided for the Urban Areas as follows:

Suburban Lowlands: extensive urbanised area radiating from the east this area has historically functioned as the hinterland to the city; variety of housing estates and styles largely dating from the late 19th and early 20th century, with major communications corridors including roads, trains and tram routes. Green corridors are of great significance given their relative rarity within this LCA, the prime example being the River Dodder; other green spaces relate to golf courses, amenity and recreational facilities.

FIGURE 9 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS OF SOUTH DUBLIN



2.1.6 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Archaeological heritage is defined as including structures, places, caves, sites, features or other objects, whether on land, underwater or in inter-tidal zones. All archaeological structures, constructions, groups of buildings, development sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated both on land and underwater are part of the Archaeological Heritage. Therefore, the archaeological heritage of the area is not confined to the archaeological sites within the Record of Monuments and Places. It also includes any archaeological sites that may not have been recorded yet, as well as archaeology beneath the ground surface, or underwater as well as the context of any such site discovered.

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) defines the term “architectural heritage” as structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings, groups of structures and buildings and sites, which are of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and “where a structure is protected, the protection includes the structure, its interiors and the land within its curtilage (including their interiors) and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of all these structures”.

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is of special, architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures. The following figures present the sites and monuments record at county level, the Record of Protected Structures at county level and finally, the Architectural Conservation Areas in South Dublin.

FIGURE 10 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY

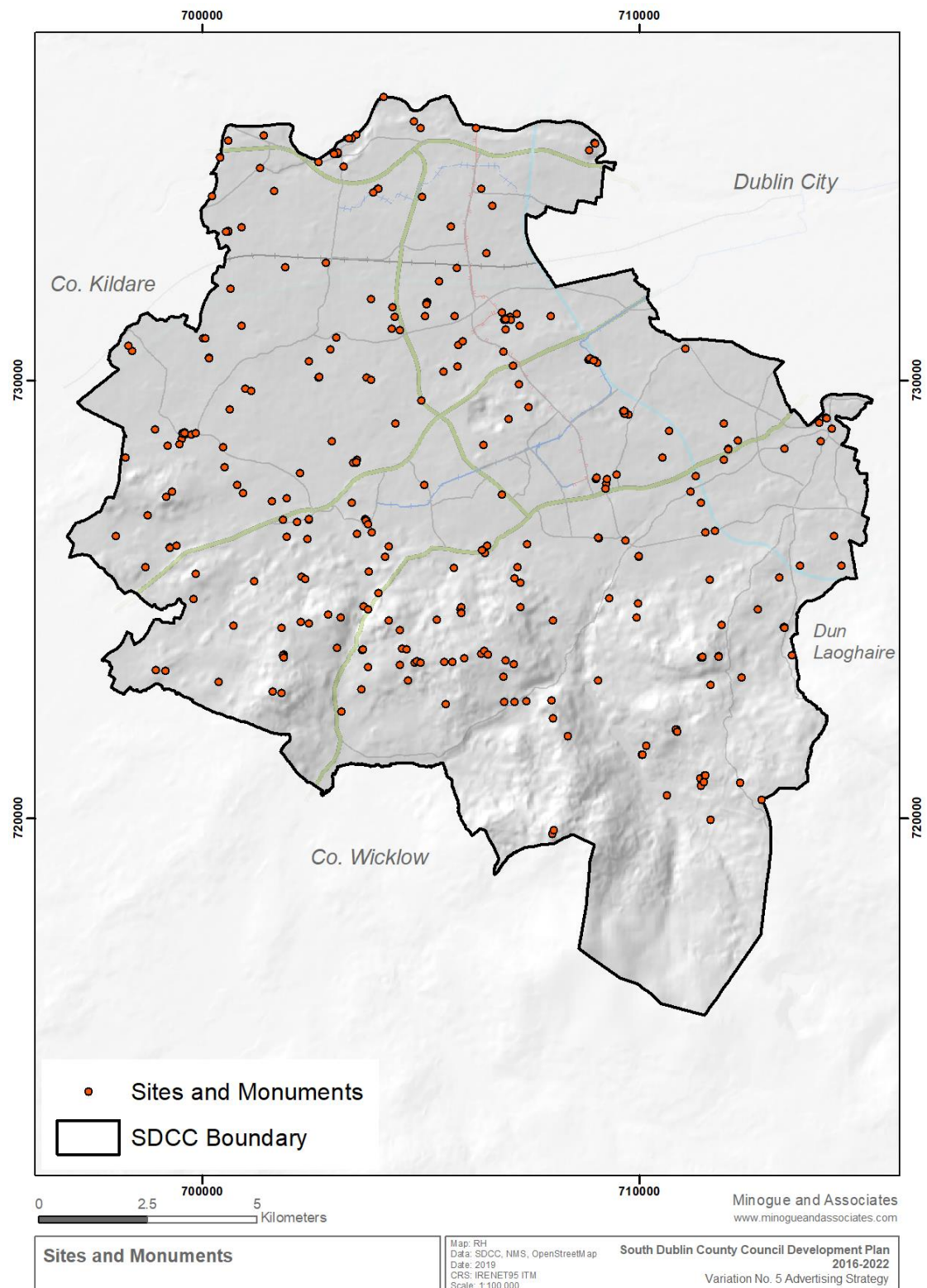


FIGURE 11 RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY

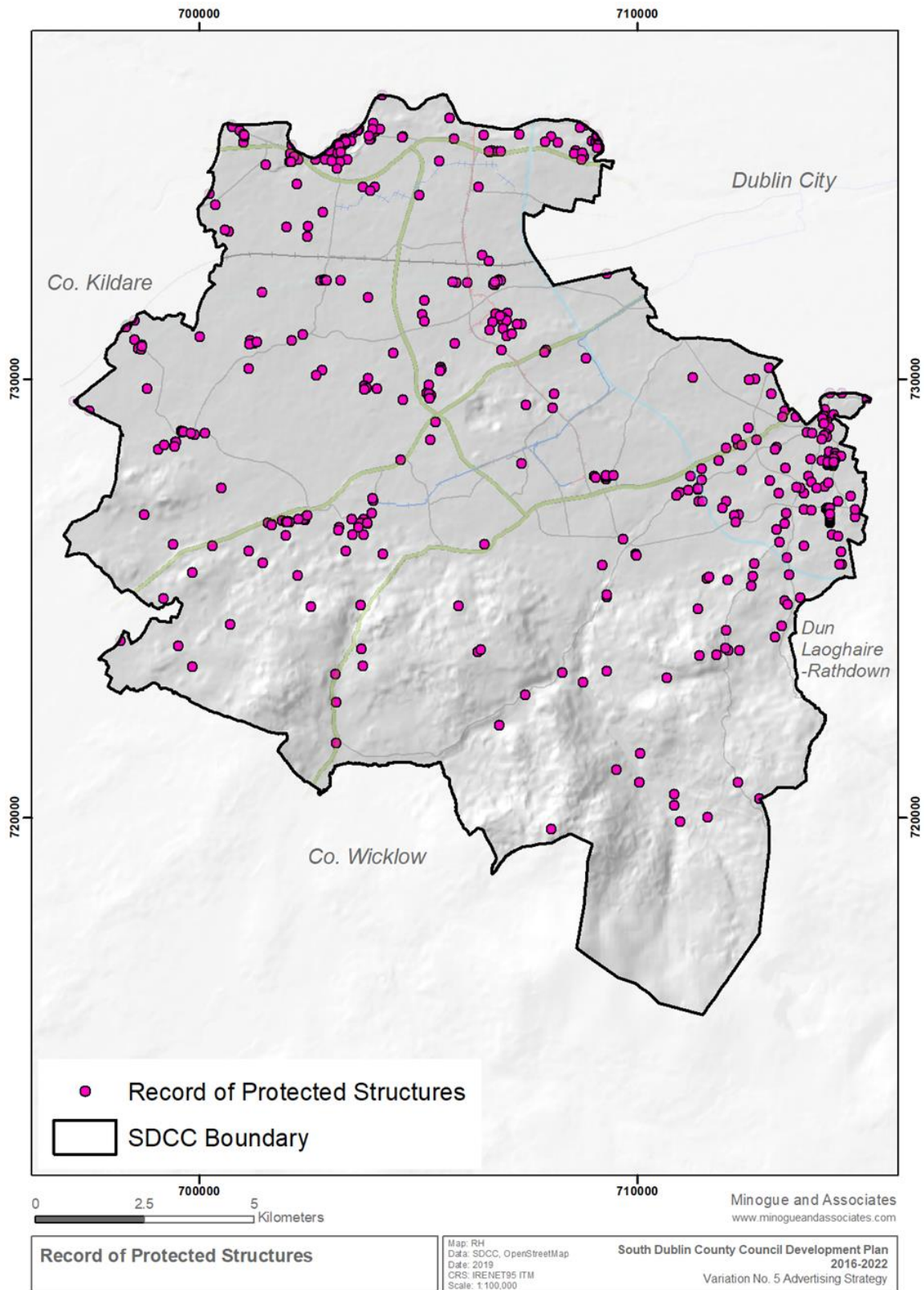
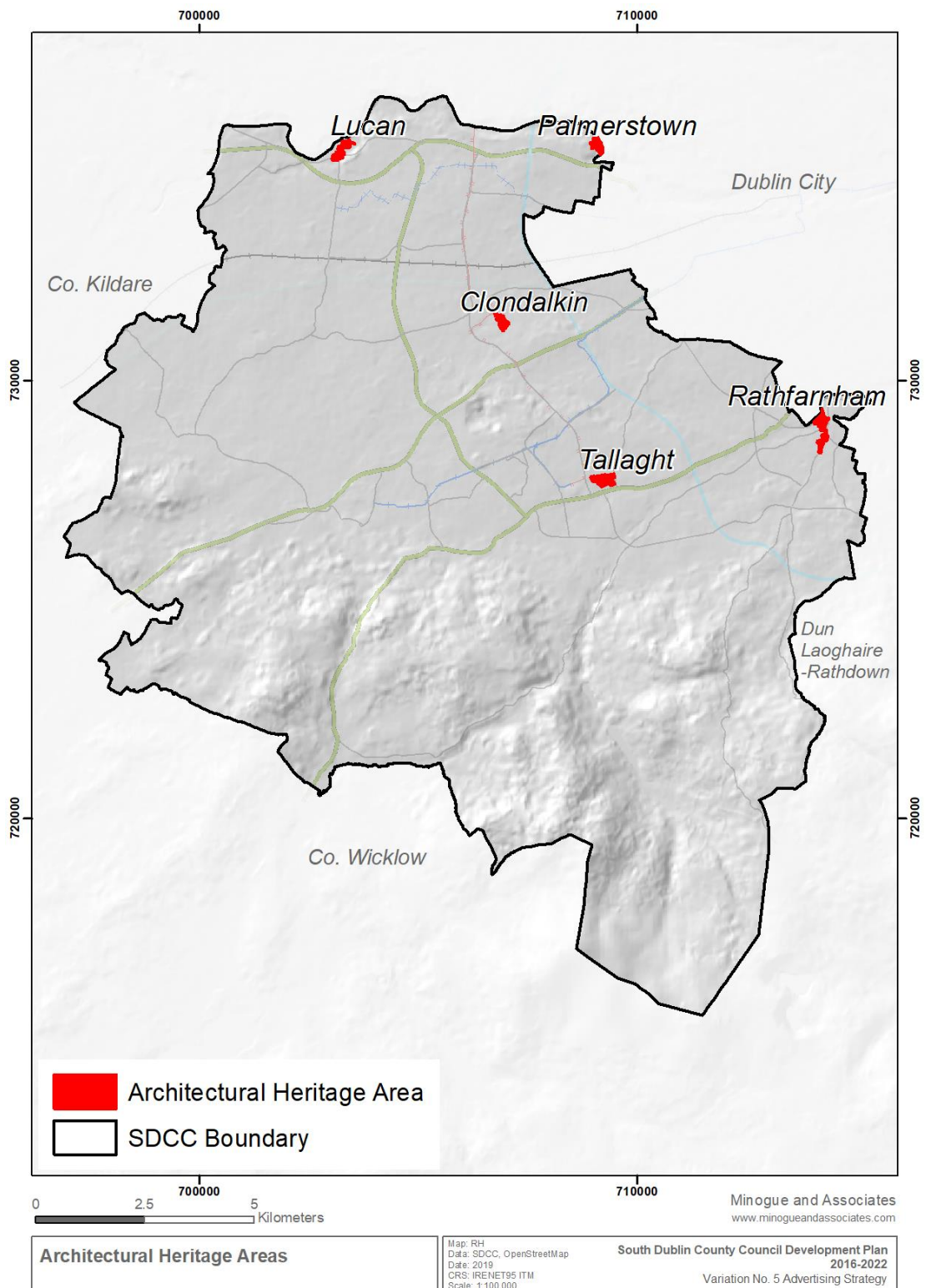


FIGURE 12 ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREAS



2.1.7 MATERIAL ASSETS

The EPA SEA Process Draft Checklist (2008) defines material assets as the critical infrastructure essential for the functioning of society such as: electricity generation and distribution, water supply, wastewater treatment, transportation, etc. An overview is provided below.

Transport: The county is well served by transport links with the Dublin Kildare Railway Line, the Luas Red Line and a number of bus corridors. In addition, the M50, N7 and N4 traverses the county. A greenway is constructed along the southern towpath of the Grand Canal and another Greenway is constructed along the River Dodder. Figure 13 presents the main transport links.

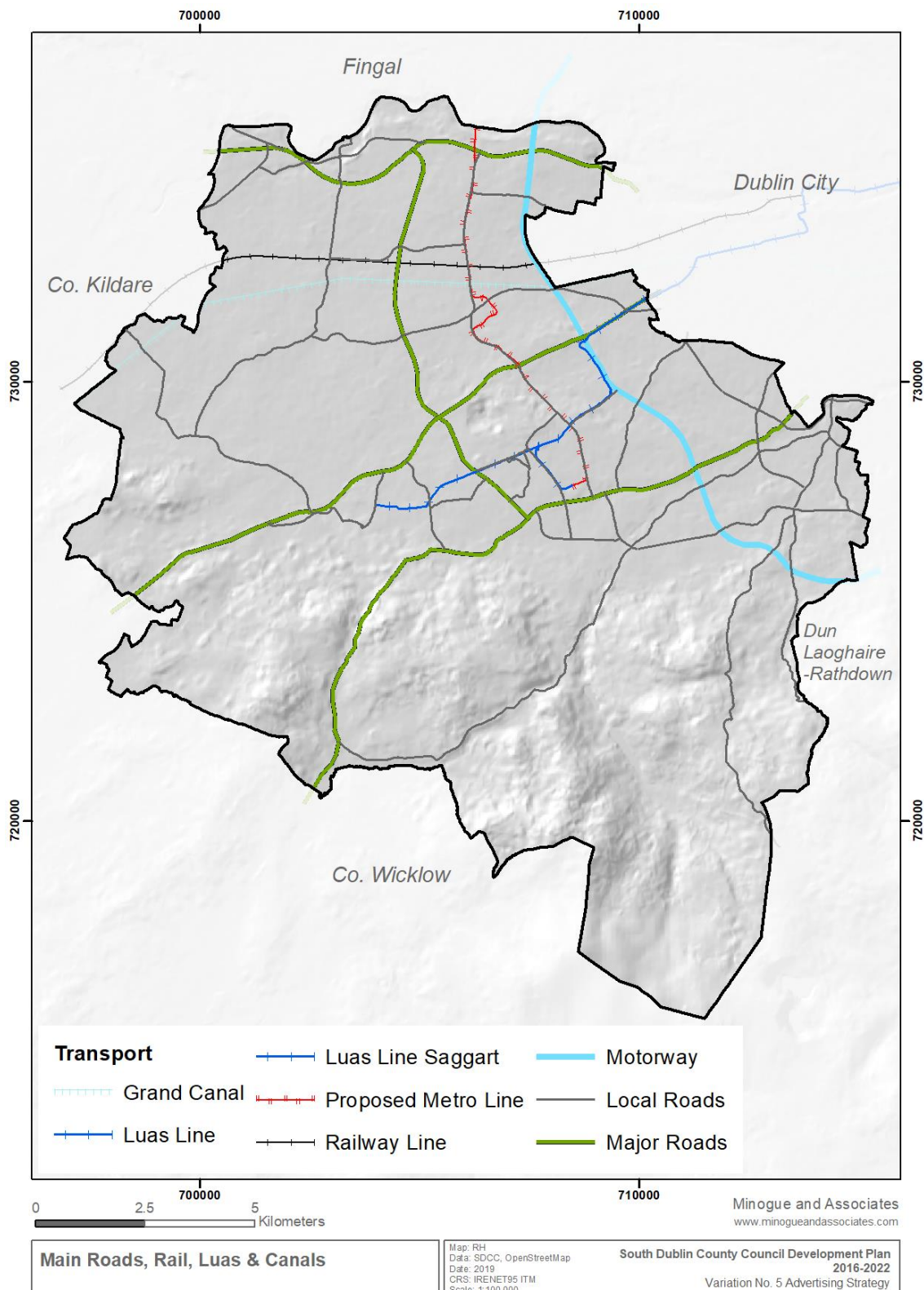
Wastewater: Almost all of the waste water in South Dublin is currently treated in Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Works which discharges into Dublin Bay. The treated waters are treated to a Tertiary standard, which is in compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. The quality of the discharged waters is within the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.

Water supply: The Greater Dublin Water Supply Area (GDWSA) serves much of the county. The GDWSA is served by 5 major water treatment plants, Ballymore Eustace, Srowland, Leixlip, Ballyboden and Vartry, and a number of smaller sources. It is anticipated that Dublin will need a new major water source by 2025, based on projection of growth in the Greater Dublin Area.

Waste: Waste is baled at the SDCC Baling Station at Ballymount and is disposed of in the Council's engineered landfill at Arthurstown, Co. Kildare. In addition, South Dublin County Council will be committing a certain amount of waste to the thermal treatment plant in Ringsend within Dublin City Councils administrative area, the construction and use of which forms a part of the waste management strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

Seveso Sites: Seveso sites are those which store significant amounts of dangerous or harmful substances and proximity to these sites could represent a potential impact to human health. If there are planning applications for development occurring within a certain distance of the perimeter of Seveso sites, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) provides appropriate advice to the planning authorities in respect of development within a distance of these sites. A number of such sites are present around the county.

FIGURE 13 MAIN TRANSPORT LINKS



2.1.8 AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE

The Air Quality Index for health (EPA) provides air quality information with health advice for both the general public and people sensitive to air pollution. As of 17th September 2019 air quality for the Dublin Region was classified as 'good'.¹

Adaption to climate change will be guided by the Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (EPA, 2016), Integrating Climate Change into SEA (EPA 2015) and the recent Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation. The context for addressing climate change and energy issues in South Dublin County, are set within a hierarchy of EU and National Legislation and Policy. At a European level these directives include, the EU Climate and Energy Package 2008, EU Renewables Directive 2009/28/EC and EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU. The Climate Change Action Plan for South Dublin was recently launched and covers from 2019-2014 key actions are included around the areas of transport, energy, resource use, awareness and nature based solutions.

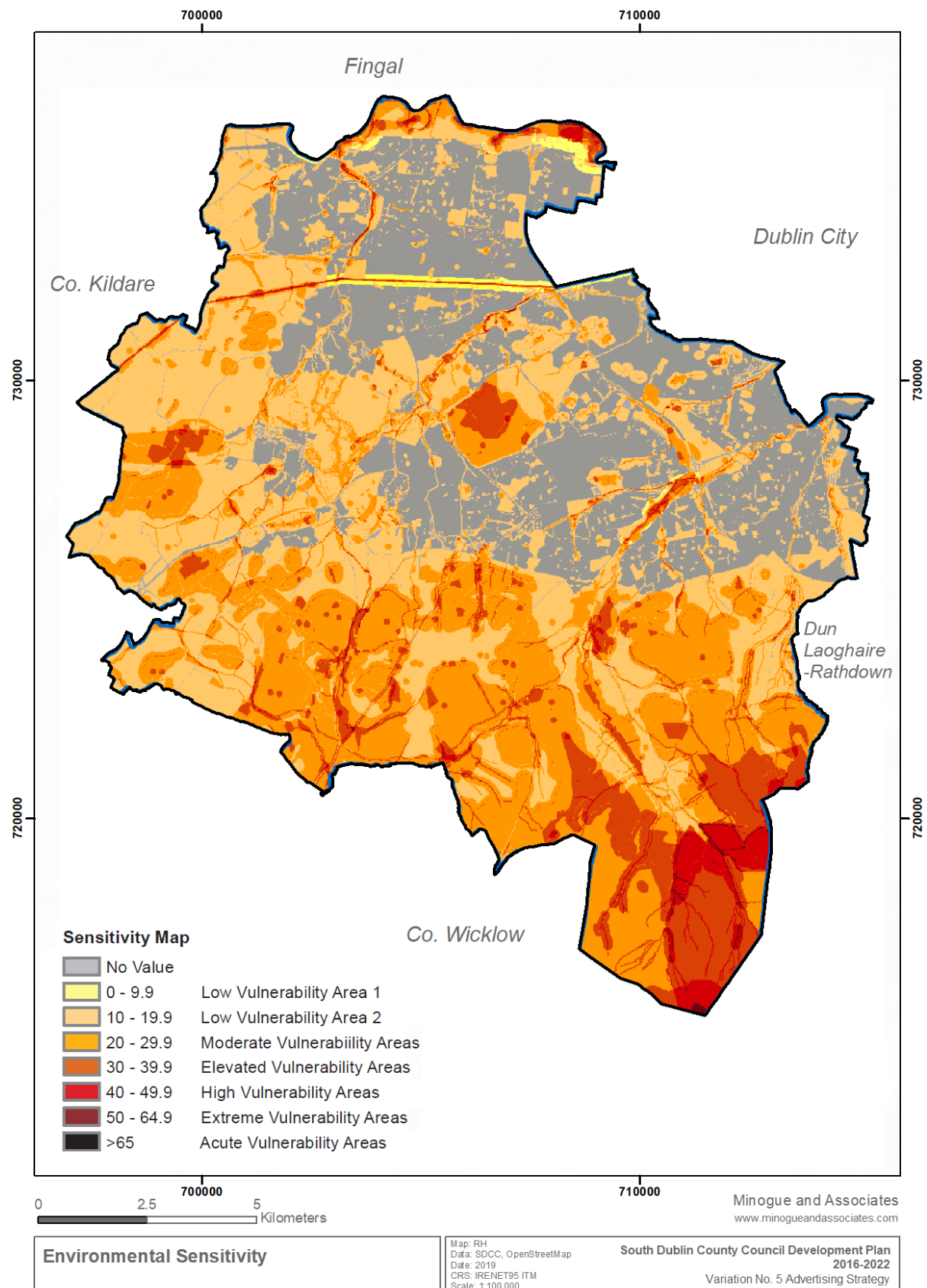
2.1.9 INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

In accordance with the SEA Directive, the interrelationship between the environmental parameters above must be taken into account. Although all such parameters may be considered interrelated and may impact on each other at some level environmental sensitivity mapping is commonly used to help identify areas of greater or lesser sensitivity. The Figure below shows the overall environmental sensitivity for the plan area and sphere of influence, and follows the same approach (i.e.: ranking of environmental parameters) as that used in the South Dublin CDP 2016-2022 SEA process.

By mapping key environmental layers (GIS) to produce an environmental sensitivities map, it provides a visual impression which can assist in identifying which areas within the Plan area experience the highest concentration of environmental sensitivities and consequently the areas potentially most vulnerable to potential environmental impacts from development. Figure 14 shows the environmental sensitivity map for the County.

¹ Air Quality for Health map accessed on 17.09.2019 at 14:43 <https://www.epa.ie/air/quality/>

FIGURE 14 ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY MAP OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY.



3 SEA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section presents the SEA screening assessment of the proposed variation to the Development Plan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the Habitats Directive Screening report.

TABLE 1 SCHEDULE 2 A SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Criteria for determining whether the Proposed Variation is likely to have significant effects on the environment
<p>1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to:</p>
<p><i>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,</i></p>
<p>The main purpose of the Variation No 5 is to amend the landuse zoning tables to make advertisements in some zones ‘open to consideration’, amend the policy context for signage and also to append the Outdoor Advertising Strategy to the Development Plan. The outdoor advertising strategy aims to reflect technological advances and the contribution or enhancement where appropriate of advertising in the public realm.</p> <p>These are small in scale, would be subject to development management controls and also subject to the criteria applied for each advertising zone (ie: zones 1 to 5).</p> <p>Projects relating to signage on buildings will be required to comply with existing provisions of the Development Plan and the criteria included in the Outdoor Advertising strategy. These are small in scale, avoid areas of greatest landscape/townscape/architectural/ecological sensitivity.</p>
<p><i>the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</i></p>
<p>The Proposed Variation and any proposals arising therein, would be subject to all relevant requirements of the Development Plan and would represent a proposed variation to the Development Plan through amending the advertising landuse category to open for consideration in the landuse zoning tables.</p>
<p><i>the relevance of the plan in the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,</i></p>
<p>Existing environmental considerations and requirements in the Development Plan would apply. The Outdoor Advertising Strategy seeks to consider advertising in terms of contribution to public realm, reflect technological changes in this area and also avoiding visual clutter or advertising in inappropriate areas as outlined through the Advertising Zones.</p>
<p><i>Environmental problems relevant to the plan</i></p>
<p>At county level, a number of environmental issues and problems are present including water quality, traffic and transport, ecological quality and connectivity as well as erosion of local landscape and</p>

historically poor public realm projects. In terms of the proposed variation it seeks to strategically promote and permit, where appropriate, advertising and avoid areas of greatest environmental sensitivity.

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

The proposed variation is not relevant to implementation of EU legislation; however all proposals relating to same will be required to show compliance with the environmental and development management standards in the Development Plan which includes policies relating to environmental protection, water supply, water quality, ground water, waste management, landscape and cultural heritage in compliance with EU legislation. These include the *Water Framework Directive*, *Groundwater Directive*, *Habitats Directive* and *Birds Directive*.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

Minor environmental effects given the nature, scale and location of advertising development potentially and the criteria based approach in the proposed outdoor advertising strategy.

the cumulative nature of the effects,

Given the strategic approach to advertising, and clear aim to avoid visual clutter, no cumulative effects at strategic environmental level are identified.

the transboundary nature of the effects

It is considered that with proper regard and consistency with the environmental protection policies and objectives contained in the Development Plan and the completion of appropriate environmental assessments and planning process for any proposed development arising from the Variation, no negative transboundary environmental effects are predicted.

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

Given the protective policies and objectives contained in the Development Plan, it is not identified at this stage as giving rise to effects that would present as 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).

Minor and local effects, which may contribute to public realm considerations, whilst avoiding areas of greatest sensitivity to advertising are identified.

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

(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

The Outdoor Advertising Strategy specifically identifies and seeks to reduce /prohibit advertising in areas of natural or cultural heritage significance such as the Liffey Valley or Glensamole.

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

Any landuse activities will be required to be compliant with relevant standards, policies and objectives of the current Development Plan. No such effects are identified.

(c) intensive land-use,

The change in zoning tables consideration for advertising aims to allow greater flexibility in advertising at appropriate areas whilst avoiding areas or locations of greater environmental sensitivity such as architectural conservation areas or areas of high landscape quality.

(d) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status..

A Habitats Directive Screening Statement has been prepared in tandem with this SEA Screening to assess if likely significant effects arise in relation to conservation management objectives of European Sites and the proposed variation. The Screening Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment has found that no likely significant effects are identified in relation to conservation management objectives of European Sites and the proposed variation.

It is not considered that any significant effects will arise in relation to landscapes of national, EU or International protection status.

3.2 SCREENING DECISION

Section 9 (1) of the (2004) Regulations (S.I. No. 436) (as amended) states *“subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes*

(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or

(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.”.

The purpose of this report is to screen the proposed variation of the Development Plan to ensure that there are no unexpected or significant environmental effects as a result of the proposed variation.

The policies and objectives as set out in the Development Plan (which were subject to a full SEA and AA Screening in 2016) are in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and a commitment to the enhancement and protection of the natural and manmade environment. The proposed variation of the Development Plan amends the zoning objective land use tables, amends the signage policy context in Chapter 11 and adds the SDCC Outdoor Advertising Strategy to the Development Plan as Schedule 6. As the assessment against the above criteria in the SEA Directive and SI 435 of 2004 demonstrate, no significant environmental effects are identified for this variation and therefore this variation is determined not to require full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

This determination will be concluded upon consultation with statutory environmental authorities.