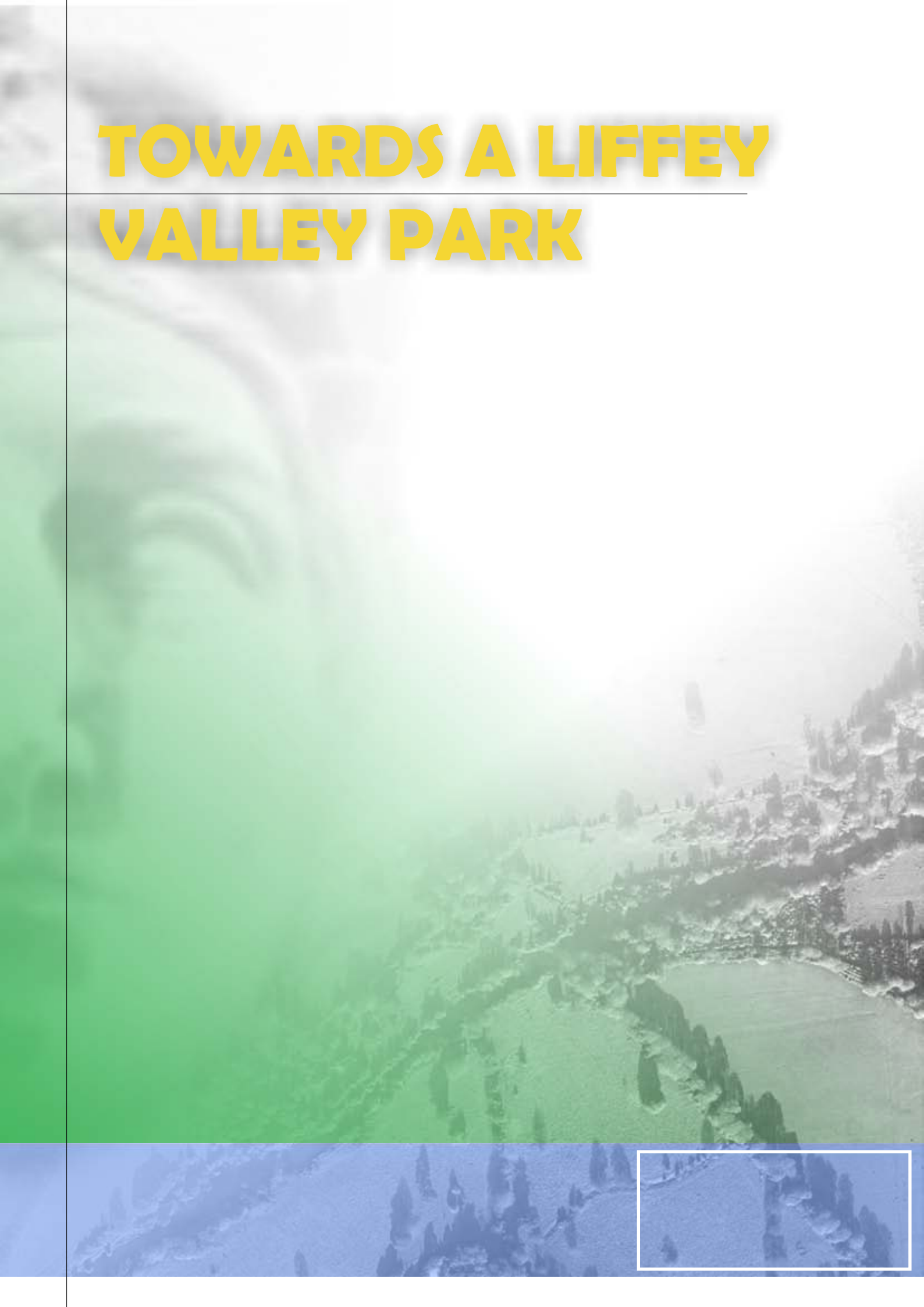


# TOWARDS A LIFFEY VALLEY PARK







The Islandbridge with the River Liffey

Photo: ERM Ireland





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Geographic Scope of The Strategy

The Liffey Valley lies to the west of Dublin City, flowing past Celbridge and Leixlip before entering the city limits and flowing into Dublin Bay.



The study geographic area extends from Ballymore Eustace in South Kildare to Islandbridge in Dublin City. However, in terms of a priority area, it is the consultants opinion (informed by professional judgement and wider consultation) that in the first instance, actions to create the park should concentrate on the area between Islandbridge in Dublin City to Celbridge in County Kildare. Therefore, this strategy concentrates on this geographic area, whilst providing more general policy guidance for the remaining Liffey Valley region.

In defining the initial Liffey Valley and Liffey Valley Park area, the following criteria were considered:

- How the Park can function as a viable river valley space providing recreational opportunities to the Greater Dublin Area;
- Public submissions that identified particular areas in need of stronger protection for conservation and recreation;
- A necklace of lands already in public ownership;
- Access opportunities;
- Visual catchment along the River Liffey (ie: lands that can be viewed from the River Liffey, key viewpoints along the River Liffey protected in County Development Plans, the visual character of the Liffey Valley landscape); and
- An existing 'start' and 'end' point defined by existing recreational and tourist attractions along the Valley.



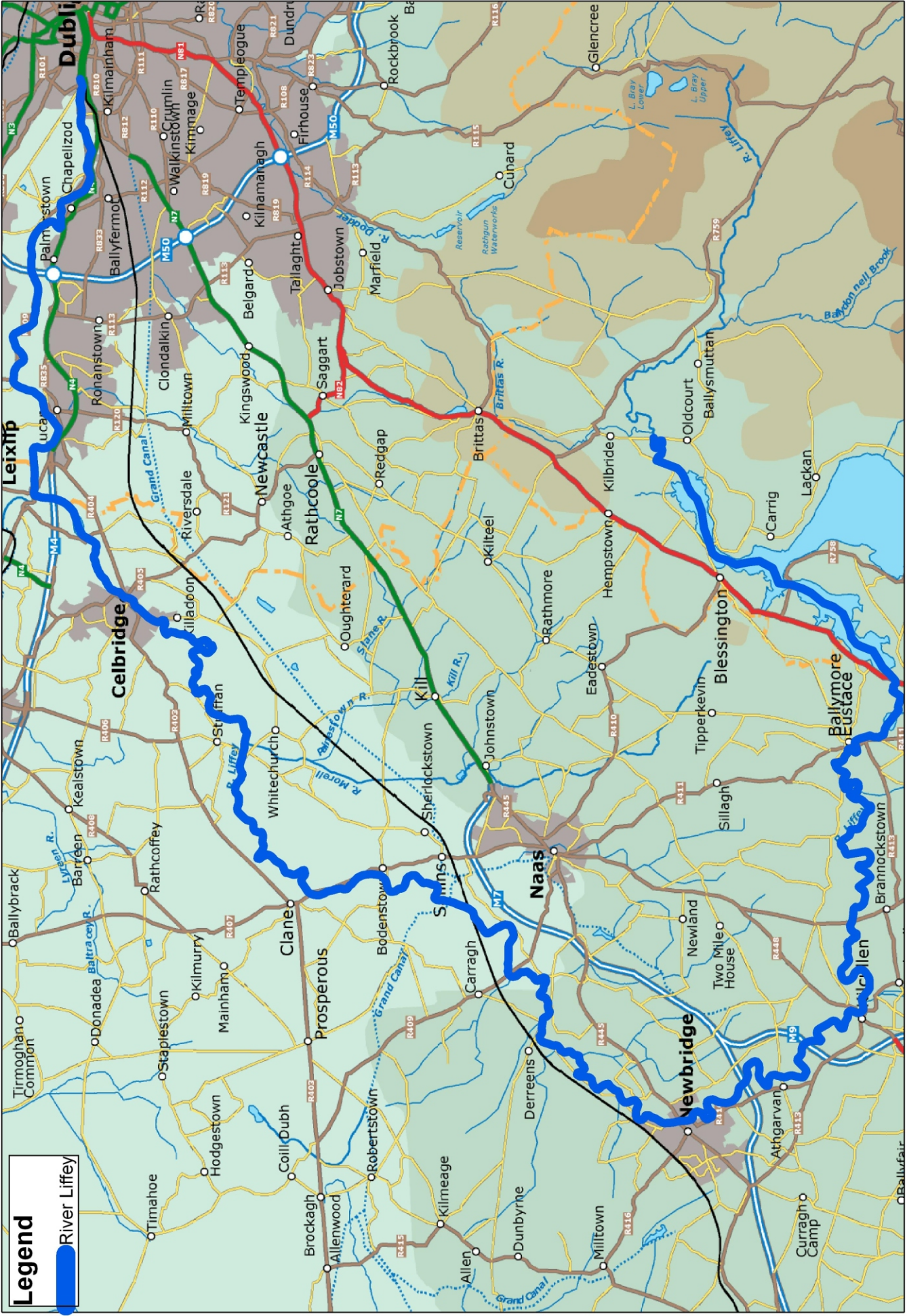




The River Liffey in County Kildare

Photo: ERM Ireland





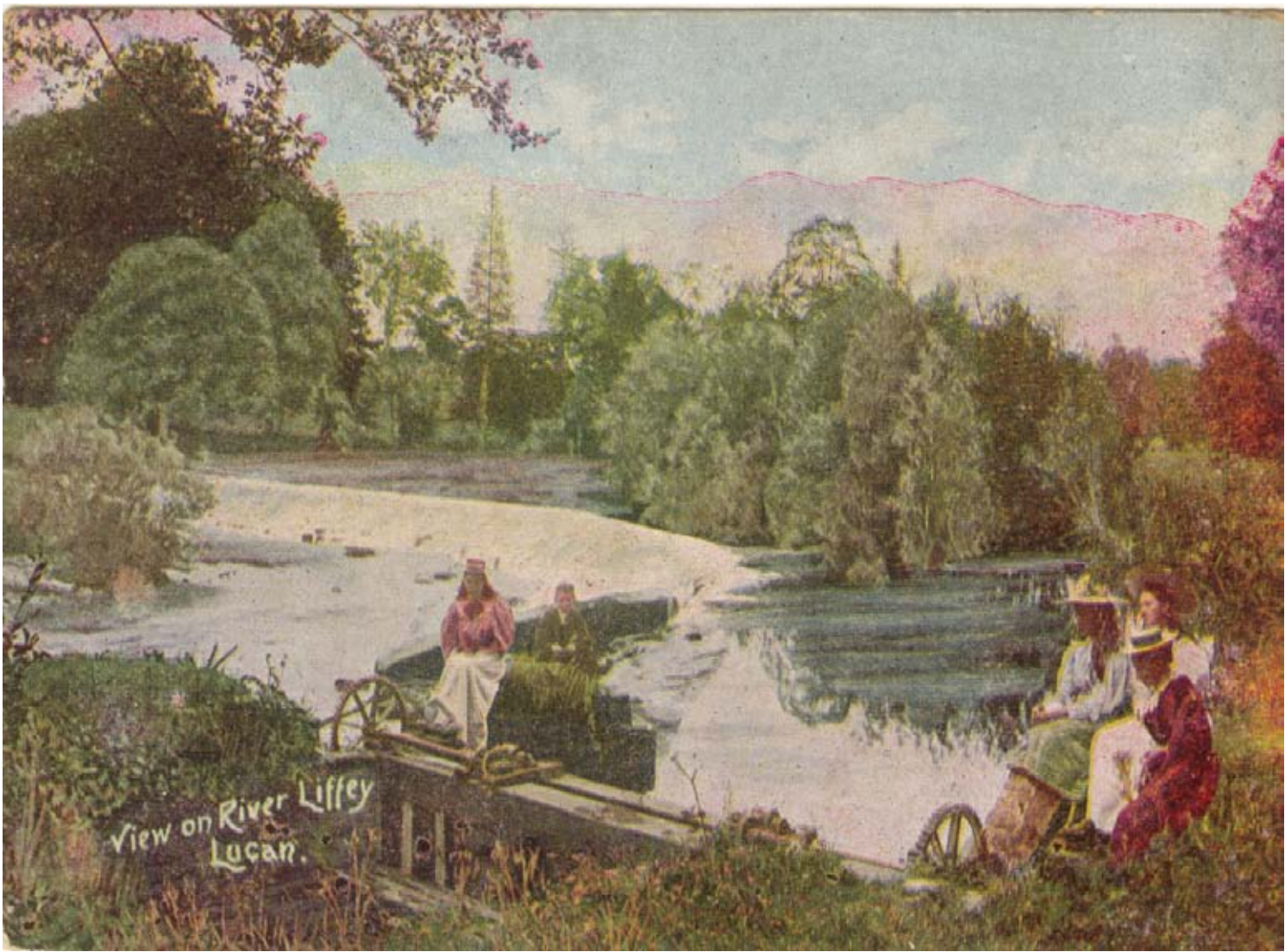
Maps Produced by  
 ERA-Maptec  
 36 Dame Street  
 Dublin 2  
 Tel: +353-1-6330516

**Figure 1. Liffey Valley Study Area**  
 0 1.5 3 6 9 Kilometers

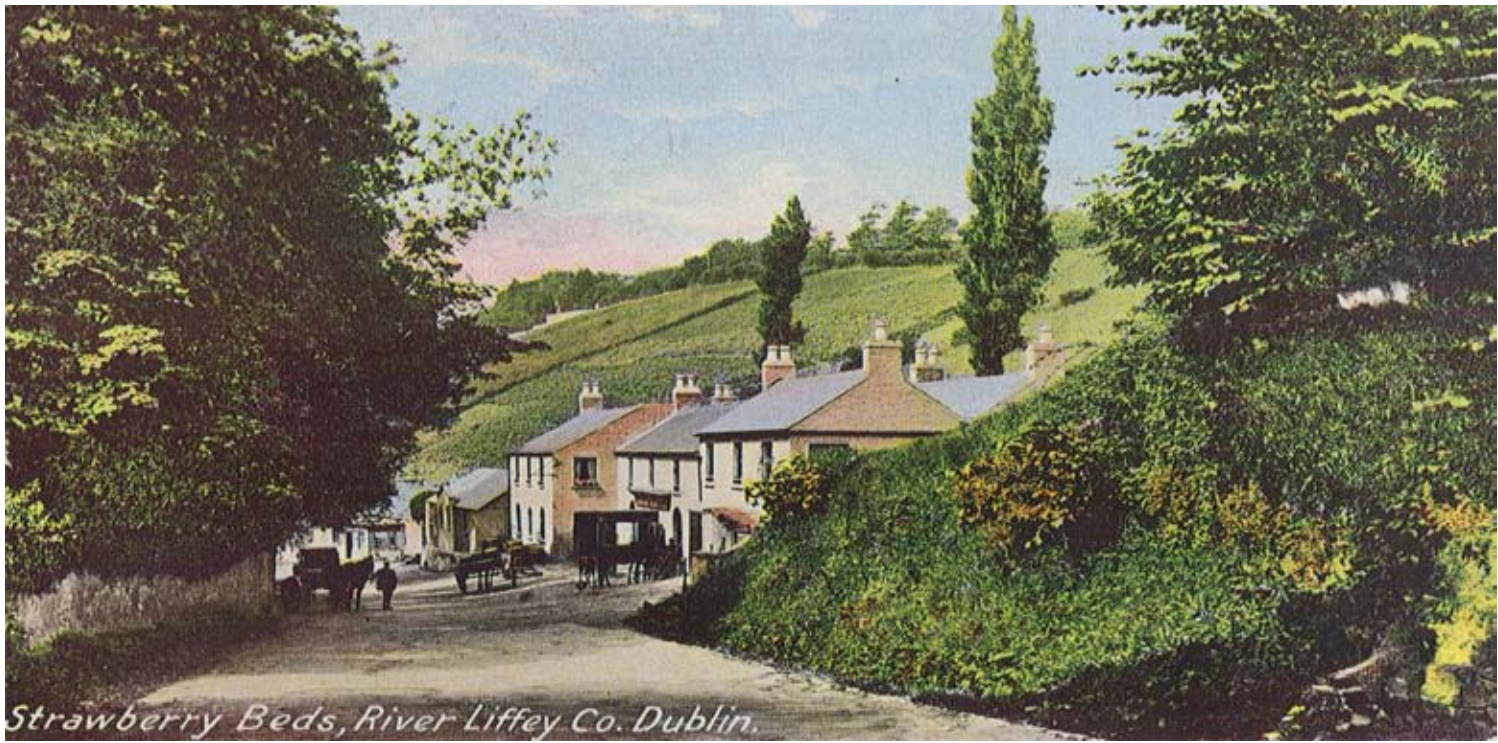


ERM  
 22 Earlsfort Terrace  
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View on River Liffey  
Lucan.



Strawberry Beds, River Liffey Co. Dublin.





# THE STRATEGY

## The Vision

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*The Liffey Valley will be a high quality, vibrant and attractive environment, securing the protection of its natural resources and cultural heritage*

A series of public parks and adjacent land uses along the river collectively form the River Valley Park in which there are considerable opportunities for recreation, tourism, economic development and habitat creation. This strategy aims to present a holistic vision for development and promotion of the Liffey Valley Park and to help guide the administration, management and allocation of resources of the Office of Public Works and the four Local Authorities in whom the future of the Liffey Valley is entrusted.

**The Vision is founded on the following seven core objectives:**

- ❑ Establish a launch programme for the strategy centred on the delivery of the flagship projects;
- ❑ Bring planning and related policy together for the purpose of directing the development and management of the Liffey Valley;
- ❑ Engage the local and wider community and promote the Liffey Valley as a site for recreation, education and for the enjoyment of the environment for all;
- ❑ Support sustainable economic activity and development that is sympathetic to the character of the Liffey Valley, maintains viable communities and encourages the use of the river valleys assets for tourism and recreation;
- ❑ Ensure the River is accessible through the public parks and spaces along the maximum extent of the Liffey Valley Park;
- ❑ Protect, conserve and enhance the natural resources of the Liffey Valley in the interests of maintaining a diverse biodiversity and for the benefit of future generations; and
- ❑ Ensure the preservation, enhancement and continued use of the Liffey Valley's cultural heritage assets.





View of Islandbridge, with the Cammack River and Liffey River,  
from Phoenix Park (Samual Frederick Brocas, c. 1820)

Picture with thanks to the National Library





# THE LAUNCH PROGRAMME

## The Flagship Projects

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This is the first of the seven key objectives which aim to realise the vision of the strategy and establish a commitment to create the Liffey Valley Park.

The objectives and actions discussed in the strategy have identified a number of Flagship Projects which collectively will establish a firm identity for a Liffey Valley Park and facilitate significant public usage. It will also re-enforce the connectivity of the existing parks to make up what will ultimately become the Liffey Valley Park. These flagship projects are capital projects, intended to be undertaken in the early stages of the strategies implementation. The flagship projects are identified, in the first instance, for the river valley as it extends from Islandbridge to Celbridge. Flagship projects and indeed further detailed strategy actions are outlined for this area which will form the basis of an overall strategy to be applied across the entire river valley.





# THE LAUNCH PROGRAMME

## *Boardwalks In The City:*

In the context of the more urban and developed (residential) character of this part of the River Liffey, opportunities are to be explored to provide riverside walkways, in particular the extension of the boardwalk in the City Centre to Heuston Station and onwards to Islandbridge.



## *National War Memorial Gardens:*

The Strategy recognises the opportunities which exist to enhance the setting of the National War Memorial Gardens. The original proposals for the Gardens include a river crossing. The opportunity needs to be taken to secure valuable linked access between this parkland and the Phoenix Park together with a recognition of the original plans proposed by Edwin Lutyens. Although the location of the bridge may differ to that historically proposed, it is recommended that the bridge be named 'Lutyens Bridge' after the architect of this famous park. In addition, the implementation of the winning design of the OPW/Dublin City Council international design competition for an enhanced entrance to the Gardens from Con Colbert Road is endorsed by this strategy.



## *Liffey Park:*

Design proposals have been developed by Dublin City Council for a 'Liffey Valley Park' located between the War Memorial park and Anna Livia Bridge to the west of Chapelizod. The proposals provide for a pedestrian bridge crossing of the river, recreational open space and strengthened access and linkage to adjacent public open spaces along the river, in particular the Phoenix Park, the War Memorial Gardens and Waterstown Park. The implementation of these park proposals is endorsed as a flagship project by this strategy.



## *Anna Livia Bridge:*

The centre of Chapelizod is and continues to be very much focused on the River Liffey, specifically at the Anna Livia Bridge which is a recognisable and important focal point for this settlement. The strategy recognises the somewhat rundown condition and proposes refurbishment and urban renewal works for this area. Central to this urban renewal will be the enhancement of the waterfront as an amenity and the heightening of awareness of the river amenity in this localised setting, centered around the existing bridge crossing. These objectives are to take priority over any further residential or commercial development in this area.



# THE LAUNCH PROGRAMME

## *Waterstown Park:*

Proposals for this public open space are currently being implemented by South Dublin County Council. In this regard, the Strategy recommends prompt completion of these works in order that the facility is quickly brought into use. Access and linkage with related river front open spaces is seen as critical to the success of the wider Liffey Valley.



## *The Guinness Bridge:*



Of historical importance, this existing structure is critically located, given the overall vision for the Liffey Valley. Its refurbishment is seen as highly desirable given the potential as a river crossing link between Waterstown Park and the northern Bank of the river with near access to the

Phoenix Park. A feasibility study should be commissioned to assess the physical constraints of the site and the restoration costs of the Guinness Bridge.

## *The Strawberry Beds Route:*

Traffic calming measures are recommended for the local road that lines the north bank of the River Liffey between Palmerstown and Lucan, otherwise known as the 'Lower Road' leading to the 'Lower Lucan Road'. This route is to be recognised also for the high scenic quality of the views that are currently gained from it. These measures will promote this route as a non vehicular recreational route in the long term.





# THE LAUNCH PROGRAMME

## *Anna Liffey Mills:*



The site of the former Shackleton Flour Mills, recently acquired by Fingal County Council, comprises a series of mill buildings, mill race and weir located on the north banks of the River Liffey east of Lucan Village. The scenic quality of this facility is outstanding and is likely to draw great interest if refurbished as a visitor attraction and centre for the Park.

## *Lucan Bridge:*

The town of Lucan, now much developed and extended in terms of residential area expansion, continues to be centered on the River Liffey as probably the most important focal point in the town centre. The industrial heritage (weir and mill buildings) is very much evident in this central location and indeed highly attractive. The strategy proposes environmental enhancement works focused on maintaining and enhancing this heritage setting. Particular emphasis will be placed on the needed renovation of waterfront open space.

## *St Catherine's and the Lucan Demesne:*

These open spaces which are in public ownership lie adjacent to each other on opposite banks of the River Liffey. As highly attractive semi rural settings they will serve the communities of Leixlip and Lucan with a highly valuable and desirable amenity in which the River Liffey is a key focal point. Linked access between these public parks over the river is encouraged and apart from bringing the river amenity more closely to the local people, these links will serve to forge an association between the settlements of Lucan and Leixlip.

## *Backweston:*

The widened River Liffey that serves as a reservoir at Backweston and Coneyburrow is a scenic and valued part of the Liffey Valley. Light recreational activities should be introduced as part of a general recreational and land management plan for this area. There is currently no access along the river at this location and liaison with the ESB should be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of providing access at this location.





# THE LAUNCH PROGRAMME

## *Liffey Falls:*

Access to the River Liffey from Leixlip Town Centre could be greatly improved. The existing available small pockets of open space that front onto the river would be greatly enhanced with the addition and in some cases the renovation of waterside walkways. This particular setting carries a high scenic quality, made particularly attractive by the waterfall associated with the confluence of the Liffey and the Rye.



## *Celbridge Mill and River Crossing:*

The mill buildings at the heart of Celbridge Town Centre are actively used for a range of community based activities. With the River Liffey as a focal point, enhancement works to the town centre including the industrial heritage are recommended. These works are to include the refurbishment of the somewhat run down but well used pedestrian bridge over the River Liffey adjacent to the principal mill building.

## *A New Riverside Park for Celbridge:*

A new riverside park for Celbridge and environs is recommended. The site for a future public park is about to be acquired by Kildare County Council in the former townland of Donaghcumper. The development of this public park, endorsed by the strategy brings with it the positive opportunities to create river based linkages with the historic estate of Castletown.

## *Establishing the Identity:*

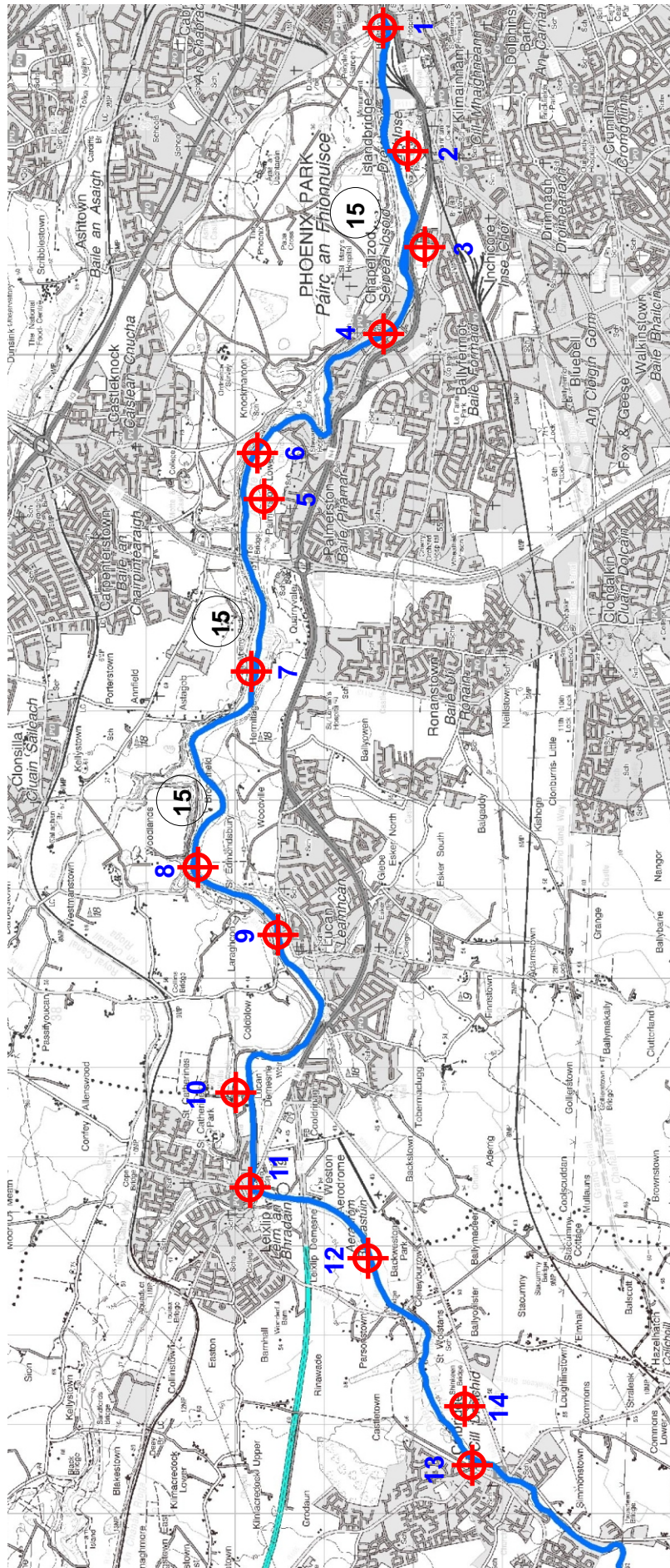
It is essential that a clear identity for the Liffey Valley is developed to direct visitors and locals around the Valley and to the various points of interest. The identity needs to heighten awareness of the Valley amongst the wider population. It is proposed that a distinct high quality brand be developed for the Liffey Valley and that it is consistently applied at all publically accessible areas and in the use of promotional material and livery for staff. Initial actions are proposed as follows:

- the development of a single recognisable and meaningful brand for the River Liffey to be applied throughout the four Local Authority areas;
- the development and installation of a high quality bespoke signage system directing visitors to the Park areas from main roads and public transport node; and
- the development and installation of high quality interpretative boards in each of the towns and villages along the Liffey from Islandbridge to Ballymore Eustace. It is suggested that these boards promote the 'River Liffey Historic Towns/Villages'.

Each interpretive board can provide information on the recreational, built and natural heritage features in each settlement and environs, and direct people to access along the river where it is currently available. Information derived from the baseline assessment of resources along the river can be used in these interpretive boards and again, these can be manufactured to bespoke designs by local craftsmen.



# THE LAUNCH PROGRAMME



- 1** Boardwalks in the City
- 2** Lutyens Bridge
- 3** Liffey Park
- 4** Anna Livia Bridge
- 5** Waterstown Park
- 6** The Guinness Bridge
- 7** The Strawberry Beds
- 8** Anna Liffey Mill
- 9** The Lucan Bridge
- 10** St Catherines and the Lucan Demesne
- 11** The Liffey Falls
- 12** Backweston
- 13** Celbridge Mill and River Crossing
- 14** Celbridge Riverside Park
- 15** Looped Walks