

# SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

## APPENDIX IV – NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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FOR THE

# ANCIENT DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN \*

\*THE "ANCIENT DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN" WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "DRAFT ANCIENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN" DURING EARLIER CONSULTATIONS AND WITHIN EARLIER DOCUMENTS AND NOTICES. IT WAS DECIDED TO CHANGE THE TITLE OF THE PLAN TO THE "ANCIENT DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN" BEFORE IT WAS FINALISED. THIS CHANGE IS LIMITED TO THE TITLE AND WOULD NOT HAVE ANY ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTIONS.

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## **Section 1 Introduction and Terms of Reference**

This is the Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Report for the Ancient Destination Development Plan (hereafter referred to as 'DDP' or 'the Plan'). The purpose of the Environmental Report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan. The Environmental Report has been prepared as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process that is being undertaken by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Fáilte Ireland.

### **What is an SEA?**

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a proposed plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic, social and other considerations.

### **Why is it needed?**

The SEA has been carried out in order to comply with the provisions of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, and in order to contribute towards sustainable development and environmental protection and management. The output of the process is an Environmental Report that should be read in conjunction with the Plan.

### **How does it work?**

All of the main environmental issues in the area were assembled and considered by the team who prepared the Plan. This helped them to devise a Plan that contributes towards the protection and management of environmental sensitivities. It also helped to identify wherever potential conflicts between the Plan and the environment exist and enabled these conflicts to be mitigated.

The SEA was scoped in consultation with designated environmental authorities.

### **What is included in the Environmental Report that accompanies the Plan?**

The Environmental Report contains the following information:

- A description of the environment and the key environmental issues;
- A description and assessment of alternatives for the Plan;
- An assessment of the provisions of the Plan; and,
- Mitigation measures, which will avoid/reduce the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and will contribute towards compliance with important environmental protection legislation.

### **Difficulties Encountered during the SEA process**

No significant difficulties were encountered in undertaking the assessment.

### **What happens at the end of the process?**

An SEA Statement is prepared that summarises, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

## Section 2 The Plan

### 2.1 Overview

The Ancient Destination Development Plan is a five-year destination development plan. It is designed to be a roadmap for enhancing the existing Ancient visitor proposition to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers, improving dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination.

The plan will provide a destination wide tourism development focus, harnessing existing plans and examining new projects to create a world class destination, using Ancient as the core theme. The Plan seeks to capture these projects within one plan and maximise their potential over the next five years.

The target outputs from the Plan include a reduction in seasonality, increase visitor spend, grow visitor bednights, employment and visitor dispersion. In addition to the core economic performance measurements, the Plan is designed to address the following objectives:

1. Ensure visitor experience consistency across the Ancient destination in visitor experience delivery and throughout all phases of the visitor journey from pre visit to post visit.
2. Address existing destination 'bottlenecks' to tourism growth.
3. Promote tourism vibrancy within the destination through visitor dispersion across a range of Ancient Experience clusters.
4. Realise the value of the core assets within Ancient, including Destination Towns, natural assets and visitor attractions to deliver sustained growth.
5. Engage the visitor with fascinating stories of Ancient in a UNESCO World Heritage area, delivered through best in class immersive experiences and activities.
6. Create the world's most immersive and experiential ancient heritage route linking all strategic development pillars.
7. Become Ireland's food heritage destination told through immersive visitor food experiences telling the Ancient story.
8. Create iconic experiences through iconic visitor attractions and associated experiences within the destination.
9. Address the challenges of evening economy provision.
10. Work with the tourism industry to improve their capacity to deliver new and enhanced experiences.
11. Protect, sustain and enhance the natural environment of the Plan area.

In order to achieve the strategic objectives of the Plan, the development framework is structured under **two headings**:

- **The Ancient Routes** (World's leading experiential ancient routes)
- **The Ancient Senses** (Bringing the stories alive through active and cultural immersion in the stories of Ancient).

**Three interdependent layers of activity** are identified under each heading:

#### A. Achieving the 'Big Ideas' through Catalyst Projects (Transformational)

There are **two Catalyst Projects** under the Ancient Routes:

1. Re-imagining of the Boyne Valley Drive; and
2. The Boyne Greenway and Navigation.

And **two Catalyst Projects** under the Ancient Senses:

3. Bringing the stories alive, Ancient Alive; and
4. The Irish Food Story.

#### B. Strategic Development Pillars – that create the conditions for experience development

There are **four Strategic Development Pillars** with associated goals under the Catalyst Projects as follow (each goal has a number of objectives that are identified in the Plan):

- i. **Unlocking the Heritage Assets** - Develop the portfolio of accessible Ancient heritage assets to deliver best in class visitor experiences befitting an area with UNESCO World Heritage status. It will capitalise on the potential of existing sites while expanding the experience capacity of supporting sites to create the world's most experiential trail of Ancient experiences.
- ii. **Reveal the Natural Assets** - The creation a necklace of visitor experiences linking the heritage story through the natural assets of the area e.g. River Boyne, integrating the broader geographic area from Drogheda to Carbury, to Monaghan and Cavan. It will create a focal point for visitors to engage with the ancient story through immersive experiences in the ancient land and waterscapes.
- iii. **Introduce the Legends** - Build on the intrigue of the local stories, myths and legends, integrating these tales with the delivery of experiences linked to Ancient through activities and sectors such as food and agri-tourism. Provide the industry with an easily accessible narrative and focus for experience development adopting the Ancient legends and stories.

- iv. **Develop the Industry Base** - Support the development of the tourism industry to enhance their delivery of experiences across all stages of the visitor journey and advance the tourism capacity of key towns to deliver a consistent and quality experience to the international visitor.

### C. Elevation Projects - enablers

**Three Elevation Projects** are identified that are designed to focus on industry capacity development, industry collaboration and developing motivational visitor experiences that will leverage assets in the Plan area:

1. An **Industry Ancient Experience Development Programme** will be designed to develop the structures to 'incubate' the tourism industry with a particular focus on product providers with significant growth potential. The programme will also work with the local tourism industry to create new saleable experiences relevant to the Ancient themes while enhancing their ability to scale their business, aligned with the objectives of the Programme.
2. **Experience Innovation Clusters** – the geography of the Ancient DDP predominantly aligns with the River Boyne and a number of natural clusters are formed through the existence of key destination hubs along the river route. A number of clusters are proposed. Central to each cluster area is the location of the destination towns currently in development supported by towns that can emerge as cluster hubs. This targeted cluster focus will also support the industry capacity building process with key alignment with cluster themes.
3. **Partnering with the OPW** - central to the Ancient theme and contributing to the success of the Ancient DDP is the wide portfolio of OPW managed sites. The existence of the strategic partnership between Fáilte Ireland and OPW provides a communications channel to ensure future projects align with each stakeholder's operational remit and ensure a sustainable approach to delivering the Ancient story.

The Destination Development Plan includes an action plan that identifies a list of actions relating to all proposed projects and Strategic Pillars.

Implementing the Plan will involve Fáilte Ireland helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment. The Plan does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

The Plan is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management.

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects that emerge as part of specific, competitive, themed and time-bound grant schemes or as part of wider strategic partnerships. These include projects relating to land use, infrastructural development and land use activities and attractions. Reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance<sup>1</sup> with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 5 "Site Maintenance Guidelines" and other relevant measures from the Fáilte Ireland visitor and habitat management guidelines series (and any subsequent replacements); and
- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 6 "Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others" (and any subsequent replacements).

## 2.2 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

The Plan sits within a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and

<sup>1</sup> Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.  
CAAS for Fáilte Ireland

environmental management. These documents have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction for the next 22 years. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSEs for the Eastern & Midlands and Northern & Western Regions set out objectives relating to tourism development that have been subject to environmental assessment, including those relating to: enhancing provision of tourism and leisure amenity; promoting tourism activity; developing a road network and public transport services, facilitating improved visitor access and longer dwell times; developing walking and cycling trails, opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes; and facilitating appropriate tourism development, including that relating to greenways, blueways and peatlands. When adopted, the RSEs will inform the review of existing, assessed Development Plans and Local Area Plans, which already include various provisions relating to land use, tourism and infrastructure. Such reviews will also be subject to environmental assessments.

Implementation of the Plan shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSEs and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

## Section 3 The Environmental Baseline

### 3.1 Introduction

The summary of the environmental baseline of the area to which the Plan relates is described in this section. This baseline together with the Strategic Environmental Objectives, which are identified in Section 3.11, is used in order to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan and in order to determine appropriate monitoring measures.

### 3.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Plan

The likely evolution of the environment in the absence of a Plan would resemble the environmental effects that are described for Alternative 1 (Business as Usual).

### 3.3 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

The two most dominant CORINE land cover type in the area to which the Plan relates is pasture (as shown on Figure 3.2).

A significant portion of the area to which the Plan relates, its coastline and its surrounding waters are designated as European Sites (mapped on Figure 3.1). European Sites in the area to which the Plan relates occur in the greatest concentrations along the coastline and in upland areas. European Sites comprise:

- Special Areas of Conservation<sup>2</sup> (SACs), including candidate SACs; and
- Special Protection Areas<sup>3</sup> (SPAs).

There are number of SACs designated within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates, including: Carlingford Mountain SAC, Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC, Dundalk Bay SAC, White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo SAC, Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, Lough Forbes Complex SAC, Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SA, Clogher Head SAC, Killoosky Lough Cluster SAC and Mount Jessop Bog SAC.

There are number of SPAs designated within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates including: Dundalk Bay SPA, Glen Lough SPA, Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA, Boyne Estuary SPA, Ballykenny-Fisherstown SPA, Lough Sheelin SPA, Lough Iron SPA, Lough Oughter Complex SPA, Stabannan-Braganstown SPA, River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA.

Other ecological designations occur within and adjacent to the Plan area and these are detailed in the main SEA Environmental Report.

#### Existing Fáilte Ireland Environmental Monitoring

Fáilte Ireland regularly engages with environmental research that is used to make informed management decisions and produce robust guidelines to facilitate the protection of the environment. From its inception in 2014, the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) Operational Programme Monitoring Programme (undertaken to date by CAAS on behalf of Fáilte Ireland guided by relevant stakeholders) has been conducting research into the impacts of tourism on the receiving environment. To date the surveys have covered 43 sites and monitored the activities and effects of over 20,000 visitors to WAW discovery points.

<sup>2</sup> SACs have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

<sup>3</sup> SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

This extensive database demonstrates that over 85% of visitors observed at WAW discovery points are having low or no effects on the ecological features or processes at these sites.

### 3.4 Population and Human Health

2016 Census data, identifies the populations of the settlements identified in the Plan including:

- Cavan – 10,914 persons;
- Carrickmacross – 5,032 persons;
- Dundalk – 39,004 persons;
- Carlingford – 1,445 persons;
- Drogheda – 40,956 persons;
- Slane – 1,369 persons;
- Trim – 9,194 persons;
- Navan – 30, 173 persons;
- Kells – 6,135 persons; and
- Edenderry – 7,359 persons.

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors (i.e. environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses for example. These factors have been considered with regard to the description of: the baseline of each environmental component; and the identification and evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

The greatest health risk from radiation in Ireland is caused by radon. The presence of radon gas, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils, occurs across the country. The number of homes within the area to which the Plan relates with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country.

### 3.5 Soil

Brown earths and luvisols, are the two most dominant soil types across the area to which the Plan relates. Rain-fed and groundwater-fed peat soils occurring in the area to which the Plan relates are subject to ecological designations. Outcropping rock is identified in a number of upland locations.

There are number of County Geological Sites across the area to which the Plan relates. The greatest concentrations of County Geological Sites across the area to which the Plan relates occur in upland and/or coastal areas including locations in counties Meath, Louth, Monaghan, Westmeath, Offaly and Kildare.

The area to which the Plan relates has several locations with a history of multiple landslide events. These events occur in upland areas and in areas along the coast and include Chamberlainstown (1999), Edenderry (1916) and Mell. The GSI have identified various upland and coastal areas across the area to which the Plan relates that are of high and moderately high levels of landslide susceptibility.

More details on soils and geology across the area to which the Plan relates are available in the main SEA Environmental Report.



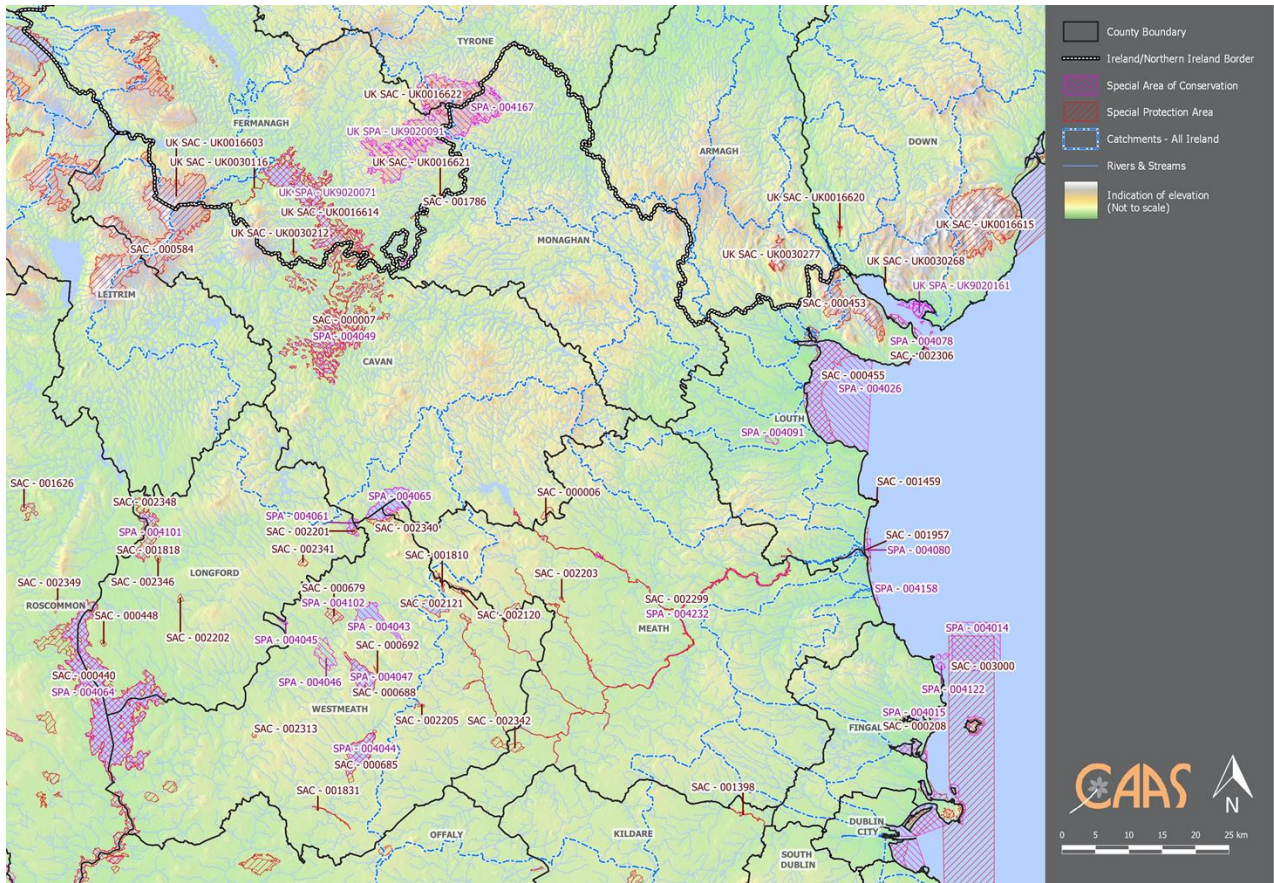


Figure 3.1 European Sites within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates

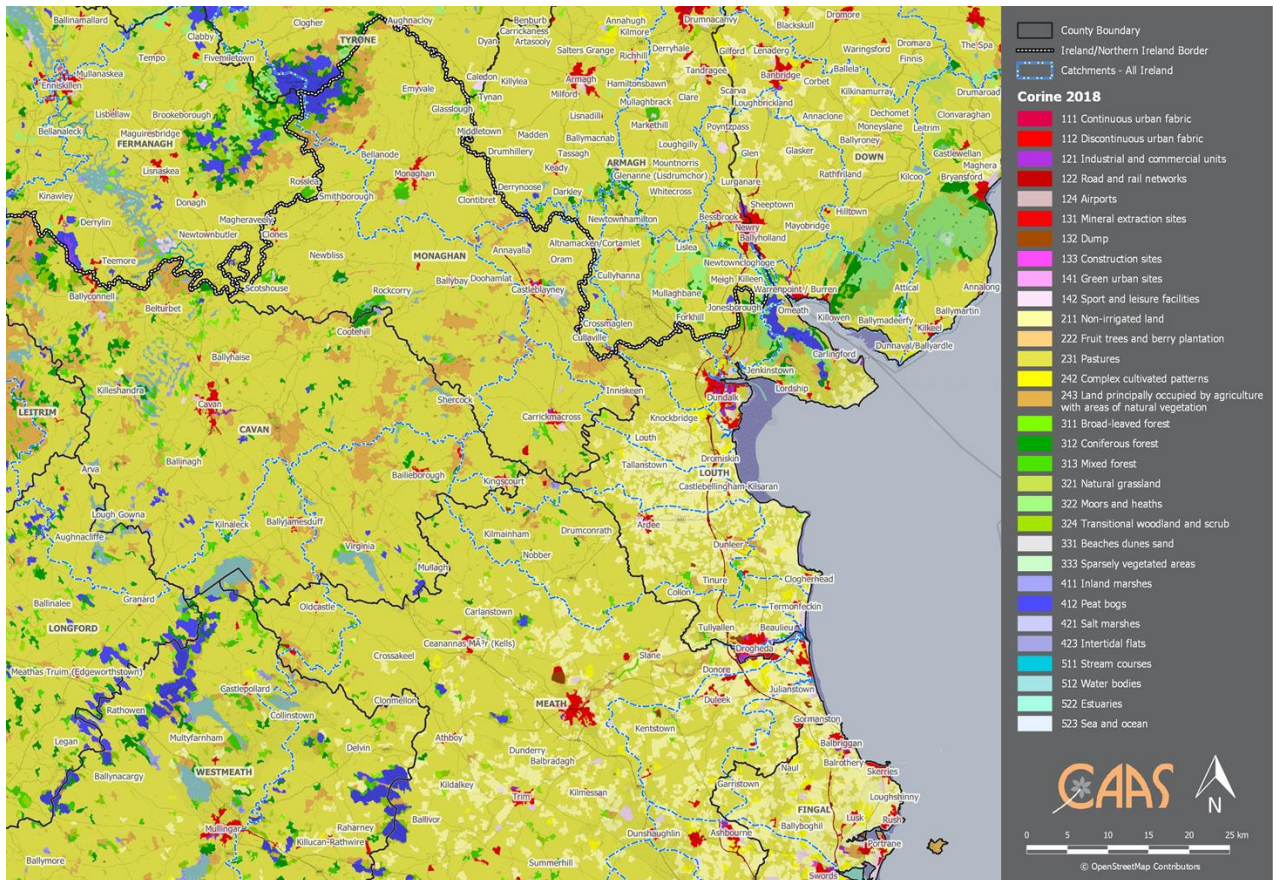


Figure 3.2 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018



### 3.6 Water

#### Surface and Ground Water Status

Lakes, rivers and their tributaries in the area to which the Plan relates range in status from *high* and *good*, to *moderate*, *poor* and *bad*. In addition, there are a number of unassigned rivers and lakes across the area to which the Plan relates.

The River Boyne catchment includes the area drained by the River Boyne and by all streams entering tidal water between the Haven and Mornington Point. There were 30 river and lake water bodies within the River Boyne catchment at good or high status, and 68 at less than good status in 2015. The 2010-2015 WFD status of the main channel of the River Boyne was identified as moderate. The WFD surface water status (2010-2015) of rivers, lakes, coastal and transitional waters, within and surrounding the area to which the Plan relates is shown on Figure 3.3.

The WFD status (2010-2015) of most of groundwater underlying the area to which the Plan relates is identified as being of *good* status, meeting the objectives of the WFD.

#### Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

The aquifers underlying most the area to which the Plan relates are generally classified as being of *high vulnerability* and *extreme vulnerability* and *rock at or near surface or Karst*. Groundwater vulnerability in Northern Ireland ranges from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

#### Bathing Waters

The most recent available data from the EPA shows that all bathing waters within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates reported on are of excellent or good water quality. The bathing locations at Shellinghill/Templetown, Port/Lurganboy and Clogherhead were awarded with the Blue Flag in 2019.

#### Flooding

Certain areas across the area to which the Plan relates are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding. Historical flooding is documented at various locations across the area to which the Plan relates, including the settlements of Drogheda, Edenderry, Kells, Dundalk, Carrickmacross, Navan, Slane and Trim.

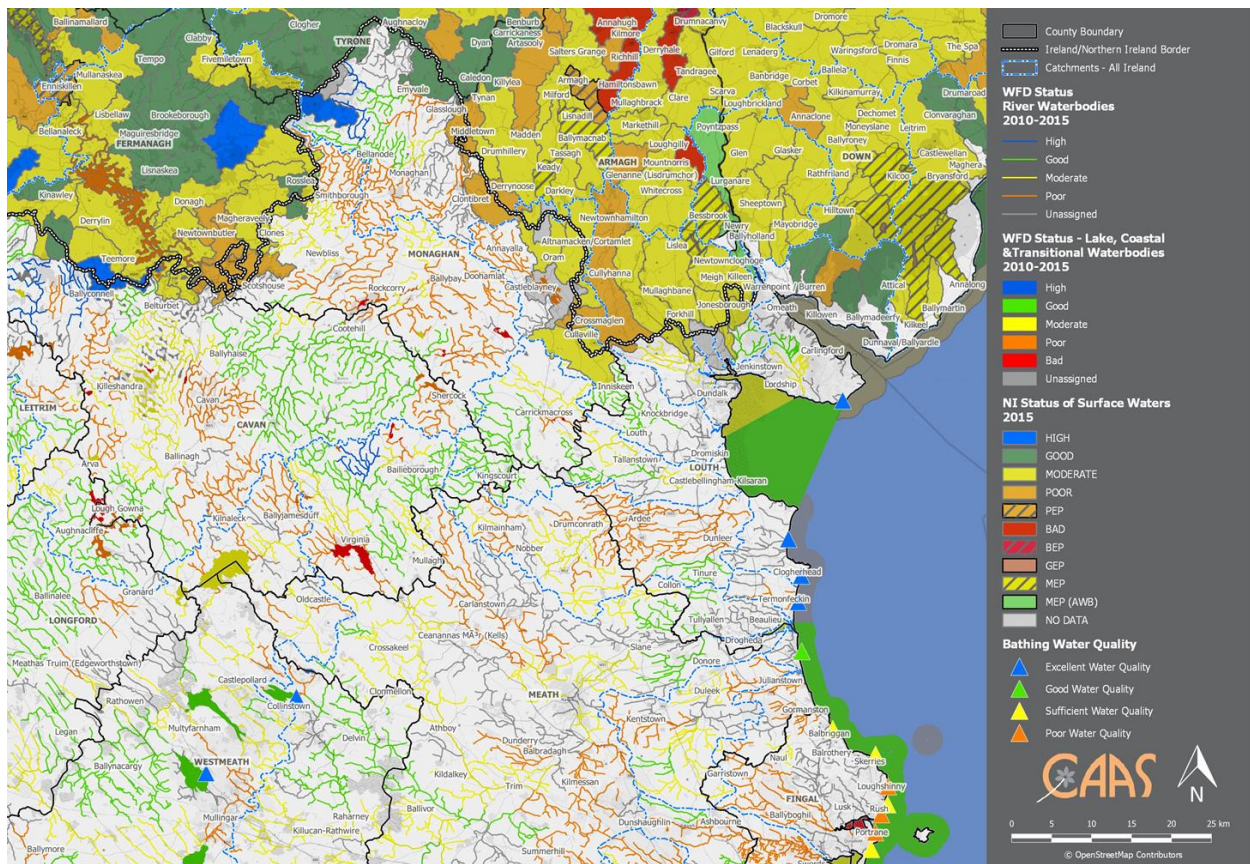


Figure 3.3 Surface Water Status (2010-2015)

### 3.7 Air and Climatic Factors

Various provisions relating to climatic factors have been integrated into the Plan, compliance with which will need to be demonstrated by those seeking or maintaining funding from Fáilte Ireland. Such measures include those relating to:

- Walking and cycling; and
- Contribution towards European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures including those relating to resilience.

Interactions with climatic factors are also present with other environmental components including water/flooding (see Section 3.6).

Total emissions of greenhouse gases by humans come from various sectors including transport, agriculture, energy industries, manufacturing combustion, industrial processes, residential developments, commercial services developments, waste management processes and fluorinated gases equipment (such as refrigeration and fire protection systems). Ireland's National Policy position is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2050 by 80% on 1990 levels across the Energy Generation, Built Environment and Transport sectors, with a goal of Climate neutrality in the Agriculture and Land-Use sector. For 2017, total national greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 0.9% lower than emissions in 2016.

The National Mitigation Plan (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2017), represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the level of decarbonisation required. It is a whole-of-Government Plan, reflecting in particular the central roles of the key Ministers responsible for the sectors covered by the Plan – Electricity Generation, the Built Environment, Transport and Agriculture, as well as drawing on the perspectives and responsibilities of a range of other Government Departments. The National Adaptation Framework (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018), sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. The National Adaptation Framework outlines a whole of government and society approach to climate adaptation. Under the Framework, a number of Government Departments will be required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans in relation to a priority area that they are responsible for.

The National Climate Action Plan 2019 is an all of Government plan to tackle climate change and bring about a step change in Ireland's climate ambition over the coming years. The plan sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address the diverse and wide-ranging impacts climate disruption is having on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. The Climate Action Plan sets out clear 2030 targets for each sector with the ultimate objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable society and economy by 2050.

In order to apply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at locations across the country. The current<sup>4</sup> air quality in the Leinster Air Quality Region is identified by the EPA as being *good*.

### 3.8 Material Assets

#### Waste Water

There are urban areas in the counties within or partially within the area to which the Plan relates, listed currently as priority areas where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues:

- Six areas in County Louth;
- Five areas in County Cavan;
- Two areas in County Monaghan;
- Five areas in County Westmeath; and
- Two areas in County Offaly.

Settlements and rural areas across the area to which the Plan relates are served by a combined sewer network, including septic tanks and sewerage treatment schemes serving agglomerations under 500 P.E.

Irish Water, working in partnership with Monaghan County Council, Louth County Council, Meath County Council, Cavan County Council, Westmeath County Council, Offaly County Council and Kildare County

<sup>4</sup> 11/12/2019 (<http://www.epa.ie/air/quality/>)  
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Council is making investments to undertake essential upgrade works to wastewater treatment plants in towns and villages across their counties.

### **Water Supply**

The most recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q3 of 2019) lists a number of drinking water supplies serving the population within or partially within the area to which the Plan relates:

- Six water supplies in County Cavan, including Cavan Rural Water Supply Scheme (due to elevated levels of pesticides);
- Three water supplies in County Louth, including South Louth-East Meath Water Supply Scheme (due to elevated levels of Trihalomethanes);
- Two water supplies in County Meath, including Navan and Mid-Meath Public Water Supply (due to treatment and management issues);
- One water supply in County Offaly (due to elevated levels of Trihalomethanes);
- One water supply in County Westmeath (due to inadequate treatment for cryptosporidium); and
- One water supply in County Fingal (due to treatment and management issues)<sup>5</sup>.

### **Public Assets and Infrastructure**

Settlements across the area to which the Plan relates include Cavan, Carrickmacross, Dundalk, Carlingford, Drogheda, Slane, Trim, Navan, Kells and Edenderry. Dundalk and Drogheda are the largest settlements in the area to which the Plan relates and are designated Regional Growth Centres. Dundalk is also designated a Gateway Region by the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial Economic Strategy. The settlements in the area to which the Plan relates is served by rail, bus and regional and strategic roads. The area is also served by the Dublin Airport and also Dundalk and Drogheda ports and harbours, which have many functions including industrial, fishing, transport, marine leisure and tourism.

### **Waste Management**

Waste management across the area to which the plan relates is guided by the Eastern and Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and Connacht Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021.

## **3.9 Cultural Heritage**

### **Archaeological Heritage**

Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004), Natural Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is an inventory, put on a statutory basis by amendment to the National Monuments Act 1994, of sites and areas of archaeological significance, numbered and mapped.

Clusters of monuments are indicated within already developed urban and suburban areas and in other locations. Archaeological heritage designations in Northern Ireland include entries to the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record and Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest and Archaeological Potential and Historic Parks and Gardens, as shown on Figure 3.4.

More details on archaeological heritage across the area to which the Plan relates are available in the main SEA Environmental Report.

### **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne**

The World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, refers to the area within the bend of the river Boyne around Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, and is one of the world's most important archaeological complexes. It contains many outstanding archaeological features, notably its megalithic art, the large and varied grouping of monuments, and evidence of continuous settlement and activity in the area for some 7,000 years.

### **Architectural Heritage**

Records of Protected Structures are legislated for under Section 12 and Section 51 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Protected structures are defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within already developed villages, urban and suburban areas such as Slane, Navan, Drogheda, Trim, Kells, Dundalk, Carlingford, Carrickmacross, Cavan and Edenderry.

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<sup>5</sup> EPA has recently issued boil water notices for areas of Dublin, Meath and Kildare supplied by the Leixlip Water Treatment Plant due to 'inadequate treatment – disinfection' (October 2019) and 'poor turbidity removal' (November 2019).

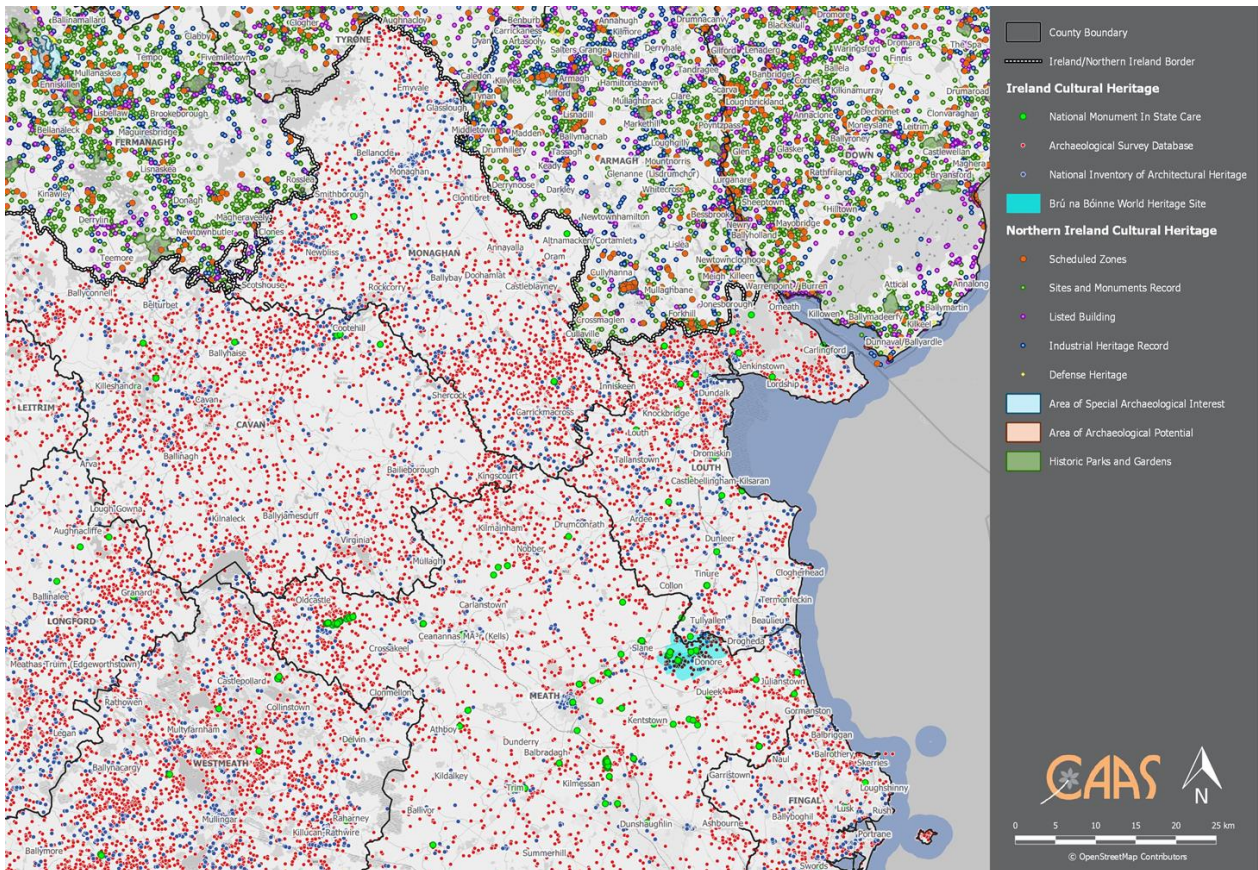


In addition to Protected Structures, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The ACA designation requires that planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure in the ACA that might alter the character of the structure or the ACA. There are number of ACAs designated within the settlements in the area to which the Plan relates, including Slane, Laytown, Julianstown, Carlingford, Ardee, Carrickmacross and Cavan.

### 3.10 Landscape

The area to which the Plan relates is identified as being situated mainly within counties Louth and Meath, and partially within counties Cavan, Monaghan, Westmeath, Offaly and Kildare. Relevant Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are listed in the main Environmental Report.

The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of its protection are recognised in the Act as amended, which requires that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty. These objectives and associated plan content often designate different aspects of the landscape, which vary from local authority to local authority and change over time.



**Figure 3.4 Archaeological and Architectural Heritage**

### 3.11 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies that generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level e.g. the environmental protection objectives of various European Directives that have been transposed into Irish law and that are required to be implemented. The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives are evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

**Table 3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

<b>Environmental Component</b>	<b>Strategic Environmental Objectives</b>
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	To contribute towards compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species <sup>6</sup>
	To contribute towards compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species
	To contribute towards avoidance of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites <sup>7</sup> and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	To contribute towards the protection of populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses
<b>Soil</b>	To minimise land take and loss to extent of soil resource
<b>Water</b>	To contribute towards the maintenance and improvement, where possible, of the quality and status of surface waters
	To contribute towards maintaining and improving, where possible, the chemical and quantitative status of groundwaters
	To contribute towards compliance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines
<b>Air and Climatic Factors</b>	To contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation
<b>Material Assets</b>	For development to be served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health
	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, including that relating to recreation and leisure, transport, utilities and marine areas and fisheries
	To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	To contribute towards the protection of archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context
	To contribute towards the protection of architectural heritage, including entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context
<b>Landscape</b>	To avoid conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans

<sup>6</sup> 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

<sup>7</sup> The definition of a 'wildlife site' provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, includes Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs.

## Section 4 Alternatives

### 4.1 Description of Alternatives

#### Alternative 1: Business as Usual

There are various strengths associated with the current tourism development situation include:

- Depth of "Ancient" heritage assets including globally renowned locations;
- Authenticity of the local food story and first farmers association with the area;
- UNESCO World Heritage site status creating global destination recognition;
- Depth of the Ireland's Ancient East story across the destination supported by extended range of hero and signature experiences; and
- Boyne Blueway at Trim and current Boyne Navigation segment facilitating immersive heritage experiences.

However, there are a number of weaknesses associated with this situation, including:

- Limited number of accessible food experiences available throughout the year.
- Operational model for a number of key sites resulting in site closures outside of peak visitor periods limiting the area's capacity to become a year-round destination.
- Lack of promotable evening economy visitor options.
- Current perception of area as a transit zone particularly among tour operators.
- Destination not maximising economic value of major attractions to increase dwell time and dispersion of visitors throughout the area.
- Natural assets of the area not entirely accessible or presented in a visitor centric manner.
- Number of international acclaimed visitor sites not delivering international standard experiences.
- Existing range of way marked routes and trails are not fit for purpose or effective in delivering tourism value to the destination from driving routes to current walking and cycling trail provision.
- The area is not communicating the range of experiences currently available to the visitor or to the internal referral market
- Perceived difficulty of accessing slower paced activities and experiences.
- Quality of industry marketing of destination experiences.
- Lack of consistent narrative being adopted by industry and failing to embrace the Ireland's Ancient East opportunity to attract international visitors.

This current situation presents **Alternative 1 (Business as Usual)** to be considered by the SEA. Numbers of visitors would continue to increase under this scenario – consistent with the development of tourism over many decades. The most popular locations in the area to which the Plan relates would see the largest increases in visitors, which would occur during the peak season.

#### Prepare a Plan (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Plan)

The weaknesses presented by the current situation (see Alternative 1 above) establish a potential need for a plan that seeks to better manage tourism in the area to which the Plan relates; facilitating, promoting, supporting and coordinating stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment. Such a plan would not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent (such frameworks fall under the remit of other public authorities). Any projects would continue to be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

Features of such a Plan (in combination with the wider and extensive policy and wider and extensive policy and planning framework planning framework) would include:

- Enhancement of the existing Ancient visitor proposition to achieve the following objectives (and associated overseas revenue and employment) of:

- Addressing seasonality
  - Increasing visitor numbers
  - Improving dwell time
  - Improving visitor dispersion across the region
- Provision of a destination wide tourism development focus, harnessing existing plans and examining new projects to create a world class destination, using "Ancient" as the core theme. The Plan would capture these projects within one plan and maximise their potential.
  - Addressing the challenges of seasonality, regional dispersion of visitors and sustainability.

Under Alternative 2 there are two separate alternatives:

### **Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management**

Fáilte Ireland provides funding sustainable tourism projects including land use and infrastructural development and land use activities. In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, **Alternative 2A** would require Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 5 "Site Maintenance Guidelines" and other relevant measures from the Fáilte Ireland visitor and habitat management guidelines series (and any subsequent replacements); and
- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 6 "Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others" (and any subsequent replacements).

In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) would have to demonstrate compliance, as relevant, with various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Further environmental requirements would be integrated into the Plan under Alternative 2A, relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

### **Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management**

Alternative 2B would not include the requirements for environmental protection and management described under Alternative 2A. Projects would continue to be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

## **4.2 Summary Evaluation of Alternatives**

### **Alternative 1: Business as Usual**

Sustainable development, environmental management and environmental protection under Alternative 1 is provided through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. These measures would contribute towards positive effects on the protection and management of all environmental components.

Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects would continue to be mitigated through that process.



In the absence of a Plan, there would continue to be an increase in tourist numbers – consistent with the development of tourism over many decades. The most popular locations in the area to which the Plan relates would see the largest increases in visitors, which would occur during the peak season. This would give rise to greater concentration of tourists during peak seasons and in the most popular locations thereby increasing potential environmental effects on all components and peak load additions on various infrastructure in particular locations/at particular times.

Contributions towards an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation, would not occur as a result of a Plan that seeks to lengthen dwell time and grow visitor numbers however increases in tourist numbers would occur. Similarly, the positive mitigatory effects as a result of provisions of a Plan, such as those relating to sustainable mobility, traffic management and compliance with climate adaptation and management plans/strategies would not be provided for.

There would be one layer of mitigation under Alternative, through the existing statutory planning and consent framework.

### **Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management**

In addition to the measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, environmental management, which are provided under all alternatives, and measures relating to seasonality and regionality, provided for by this alternative and Alternative 2B, this alternative would provide additional requirements for environmental protection and management, including those taken from the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme and those relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services. In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) would have to demonstrate compliance, as relevant, with various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects would continue to be mitigated through that process.

Although a Plan would help to improve the seasonal and geographic spread of visitors, a Plan's objective would be to increase the number of visitors to the Plan area. Although this would be likely to happen without a Plan, a Plan would have the potential to increase numbers of tourists – and associated potential adverse effects – to a greater degree than would be the case if there was no Plan. This would be likely to contribute towards an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. These increases will be mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and compliance with the Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions), the National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions) and planning authority Climate Change Action Plans.

A Plan would also help to promote new experiences – including those relating to land use activities and developments. These would also have the potential to increase adverse effects. Notwithstanding this, there would be three layers of mitigation, through: the existing statutory planning and consent framework; visitor management strategies; and additional environmental requirements for environmental protection and management, under this alternative.

### **Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management**

In addition to the measures relating to sustainable development, environmental management and environmental protection, which are provided under all alternatives, this Alternative (2B) would provide measures to improve seasonality and regionality – Alternative 2A would provide this also. Seasonality and regionality provide a greater spread of tourists throughout the year and across the area to which the Plan relates thereby reducing potential environmental effects and peak load additions on various infrastructure in particular locations/at particular times.

Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects would continue to be mitigated through that process.

Although a Plan would help to improve the seasonal and geographic spread of visitors, a Plan's objective would be to increase the number of visitors to the area to which the Plan relates. Although this would be likely to happen without a Plan, a Plan would have the potential to increase numbers of tourists – and associated potential adverse effects – to a greater degree than would be the case if there was no Plan.

This would be likely to contribute towards an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. These increases would be mitigated by the wider planning framework.

A Plan would also help to promote new experiences – including those relating to land use activities and developments. These would also have the potential to increase adverse effects. Notwithstanding this, there would be one layer of mitigation, through the existing statutory planning and consent framework.

Table 4.1 below provides a comparative evaluation of alternatives against SEOs (for detailed SEOs please refer to Table 3.1).

**Table 4.1 Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives against SEOs**

	Likely to <b>Improve</b> status of SEOs			<b>Potential Conflict</b> with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated by complying with other measures included within the Plan		
	to the <b>Greatest</b> degree	to <b>Moderate</b> <sup>a</sup> degree	to a <b>Lesser</b> degree	to a <b>Lesser</b> degree	to a <b>Moderate</b> degree	to <b>Greater</b> <sup>a</sup> degree
Alternative 1: Business as Usual			✓	✓		
Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management	✓				✓	
Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management		✓				✓

### 4.3 Selected Alternative for the Plan

Taking into account the environmental effects summarised above and the challenges and opportunities present for tourism across the area to which the Plan relates, Fáilte Ireland have proceeded with Alternative 2A "A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management".

## Section 5 Summary of Effects arising from Plan

**Table 5.1 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Plan Provisions**

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework <sup>8, 9</sup>		
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects
<b>Biodiversity and flora and fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna (in designated sites, including European Sites and Wildlife Sites, and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats) including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor management strategies; and</li> <li>Destination Development Plan requirements for environmental protection and management.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Contributes towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services.</li> <li>Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil.</li> </ul>	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;</li> <li>Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and</li> <li>Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces arising from projects consented through the statutory planning/consent-granting framework.</li> <li>Losses or damage to ecology (these would be: in compliance with relevant legislation; and mitigated as projects would demonstrate compliance with various environmental protection and management measures)</li> </ul>
<b>Population and human health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards the protection of human health including through DDP requirements for environmental protection and management.</li> <li>Contribution towards the protection of human health as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) have been identified.</li> <li>Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access.</li> <li>Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities in the area to which the Plan relates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated.</li> <li>Potential interactions if additional tourists are directed towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) have been identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism) that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework including the NPF, RSEs and lower-tier land use plans. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, access or accommodation. Mitigation includes that which has been integrated into the Plan – please refer to Section 6 of this report.

<sup>9</sup> The scope of the assessment (including description of baseline, the relationship to other plans and programmes and the evaluation of effects) has considered the environment of both Ireland and Northern Ireland. Taking into account, *inter alia*, the detailed mitigation which has been integrated into the Plan (including that which is summarised at Section 6 of this summary) and the status of the Plan (the Plan does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent – refer also to Section 2 or Section 6 of this summary), it has been determined that significant residual adverse environmental effects will not occur in either Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework <sup>8, 9</sup>		
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects
<b>Soil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various provisions (e.g. relating to maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed) help to minimise land-take and loss of extent of soil resource.</li> <li>Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination.</li> <li>Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource.</li> <li>Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites.</li> <li>Potential for increase in coastal /river bank erosion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces and from sea level rise/coastal erosion.</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards the protection of water resources (including the status of surface and groundwaters), bathing water quality and water-based designations including through integrating requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan.</li> <li>Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology.</li> <li>Increase in flood risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan.</li> <li>Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by: measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework.</li> </ul>
<b>Air and climatic factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking and cycling; and</li> <li>Contribution towards European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures including those relating to resilience.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential conflict, in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors including transport and land use planning, between increases in visitors (which is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions to air, including from aviation, with associated interactions with climatic factors) and local, national and European objectives to reduce carbon emissions.</li> <li>Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and compliance with the Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions), the National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions) and planning authority Climate Change Action Plans.</li> <li>Risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate and interactions with issues including flooding and material assets.</li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure.</li> <li>Contains clear objectives around seasonality and regionality which look not only to spread the benefits of tourism but also the potential impacts/ load associated with tourism.</li> <li>Helps to minimise likelihood of exceeding capacity in material assets as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) have been identified.</li> <li>Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels.</li> <li>The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Irish Water to provide for such needs).</li> <li>Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments.</li> <li>Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies.</li> <li>Increased loading on critical infrastructure (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) where no significant problems have been identified with this infrastructure.</li> <li>Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however such risks will be mitigated by: measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework.</li> <li>Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework.</li> </ul>

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework <sup>8, 9</sup>		
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage by encouraging greater levels of awareness and appreciation through, use, interpretation and access, in line with the requirements relating to the protection of cultural heritage including: entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context; and entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage.</li> <li>Potential effects on architectural heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation.</li> <li>Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation.</li> <li>Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations as a result of: facilitating compliance with relevant plans; and maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, estuary and ridge areas where, and conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape.</li> <li>Changes in the appearance of the landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residual visual effects (these would comply with landscape designation provisions).</li> </ul>

## Section 6 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

### 6.1 Mitigation

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Plan. Various environmental sensitivities and issues have been communicated to Fáilte Ireland through the SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes.

By integrating all SEA and AA recommendations into the Plan, Fáilte Ireland is helping to ensure that:

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan are maximised.

Mitigation was achieved through the following:

- Establishing the status of the Plan and its interrelationship with the Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework; and
- Integrating Requirements for Environmental Compliance into the Plan.

The SEA and AA team worked with the Plan-preparation team at Fáilte Ireland in order to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan.

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects that emerge as part of specific, competitive, themed and time-bound grant schemes or as part of wider strategic partnerships. These include projects relating to land use, infrastructural development and land use activities and attractions. Reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 5 "*Site Maintenance Guidelines*" and other relevant measures from the Fáilte Ireland visitor and habitat management guidelines series (and any subsequent replacements); and
- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 6 "*Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others*" (and any subsequent replacements).

In order to be realised, projects included in the DDP (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the DDP is not part and does not contribute towards. Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, including EIA and AA;
- Statutory land use plans that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework (e.g. Development Plans and Local Area Plans) and that have undergone environmental assessment, as appropriate, including various provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management; and
- The Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions), the National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions) and planning authority Climate Change Action Plans.

Further measures relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management, green infrastructure and ecosystem services have been integrated into the Plan.

## 6.2 Monitoring

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified at Table 3.1 and used in the evaluation.

### Sources

Confirmation of compliance with relevant environmental measures) will be a source of information for the Monitoring Programme. This documentation may include monitoring undertaken by beneficiaries to demonstrate compliance with the environmental requirements.

Other existing monitoring sources will be used, including:

- Sources maintained by planning authorities (such as those arising from the SEA of land use plans) and the relevant authorities e.g. the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Statistics Office; and
- Lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making – including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents – will also be utilised as part of the Monitoring Programme.

### Reporting and Responsibility

Reporting on environmental monitoring will address the indicators set out below. Fáilte Ireland is responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action, in combination with the relevant authorities.

Environmental monitoring for the DDP and other existing/future Fáilte Ireland plans, programmes, etc. may be undertaken and reported on at the same time. The findings of monitoring will be reported on periodically with frequencies to be determined during implementation.

Table 6.1 overleaf shows the current indicators and targets that have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing relevant Fáilte Ireland Plans, Programmes, etc. These monitoring measures are updated on an ongoing basis.

**Table 6.1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources**

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan <sup>10</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)</li> <li>• Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years)</li> <li>• Consultations with the NPWS</li> <li>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from Plan	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan	
	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan  B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan  B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan	
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Consultations with the HSE and EPA</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Soil</b>	S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent	S1: Contribute towards the target of the National Planning Framework's SEA (2018) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) No alternative solution available; (b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the programme to proceed; and (c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.



SEA Environmental Report Appendix IV: Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
<b>Water</b>	<p>W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)</p> <p>W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p>	<p>W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan</p> <p>W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual)</li> <li>• EPA <i>The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland</i> reports</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	<p>W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan</p>	<p>W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD</p>	
	<p>W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<p>W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	
<b>Air and Climatic Factors</b>	<p>AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.</p>	<p>C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets</b>	<p>M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable</p>	<p>M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water and/or planning authorities</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	<p>M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure</p>	<p>M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure</p>	
	<p>M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans</p>	<p>M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects</p>	

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Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.2</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>