

# Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne, Border Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan **SEA Environmental Report**

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## Glossary

### Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

### Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems' (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992).

Flora is all of the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all of the animals found in a given area.

### Environmental Problems

Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain Plans and programmes on the environment (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse.

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and ideal targets. If environmental problems are identified at the outset they can help focus attention on important issues and geographical areas where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.

### Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are 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.

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects.

### Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act and Regulations (as amended) to define a structure included by a planning authority in its Record of Protected Structures. Such a structure shall not be altered or demolished in whole or part without obtaining planning permission or confirmation from the planning authority that the part of the structure to be altered is not protected.

### **Recorded Monument**

A monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places that is set out County by County under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified. Any works at or in relation to a recorded monument requires two months' notice to the former Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

### **SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

### **SEA Scoping**

Scoping is the process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. SEA coping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

### **Strategic Actions**

Strategic actions include: Policies / Strategies, which may be considered as inspiration and guidance for action and which set the framework for Plans and programmes; Plans, sets of coordinated and timed objectives for the implementation of the policy; and Programmes, sets of projects in a particular area.

### **Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)**

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Masterplan and the alternatives can be 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

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

This is the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Draft Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'USSEB DEDP').

This Environmental Report, which should be read in conjunction with the USSEB DEDP, has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, environmental, planning and landscape consultants, on behalf of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

### 1.2 Destination & Experience Development Plans

A Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five-year commercial destination and experience development plan prepared for an area.

The Plan has identified a range of key initiatives that are designed to raise awareness of the destination, increase the length of stay in the area, expand the range and quality of visitor experiences, strengthen the value of tourism to local communities and protect the quality, character and distinctiveness of the local environment, heritage and culture. The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands *Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027* and the *Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030*, together provide an overarching strategic framework for USSEB DEDP.

### 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) stems from *Directive 2001/42/EC*<sup>1</sup> (the 'SEA Directive') of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Article 1 of the Directive states that:

*"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."*

In effect, SEA comprises a systematic assessment process of predicting and evaluating the 'likely significant environmental effects' of implementing a proposed plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The overall aim of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through two Statutory Instruments (S.I.):

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

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<sup>1</sup>SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

The former regulations, (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011), relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for *“agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use”*, and these provisions are applicable to the USSEB DEDP as a tourism sector plan.

The latter regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *“a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”*, and are not applicable to the USSEB DEDP.

## 1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes:

- a) *which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive<sup>2</sup>, or*
- b) *which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)<sup>3</sup> i.e. requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken on the plan or programme.*

The Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory tourism sector plan that does not set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when consent of other projects is being granted. Therefore, SEA of the USSEB DEDP is not required under Article 3(2)(a) above of the SEA Directive.

The Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a “plan” contained within the *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended)* and therefore, must be screened for the requirement to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC). The Screening for AA (BSM, 2024) has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity of European sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects are avoided are required. Therefore, in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) above and guidance provided in SEA Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>4</sup>, a SEA of the USSEB DEDP has been undertaken.

This Environmental Report provides the findings of the SEA and takes account of recommendations contained in submissions from the Environmental Authorities. On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared, summarising, *inter alia*, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, *on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*

<sup>3</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>



## 2 Outline Description of the Plan

### 2.1 Introduction

The Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five-year sustainable tourism plan for Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon north of, and including, Roscommon Town (the 'Destination'). It builds on recent and current capital investment projects including The National Famine Museum at Strokestown Park, the Shannon Pot Discovery Centre and ongoing work at Lough Key Forest and Activity Park, and it identifies new investment opportunities around the Shannon, Shannon-Erne Waterway, and the Beara Breifne Way, as well in the forest parks, lakelands and the heritage and cultural gems.

The topography of the area, with significant lakeland areas and extensive Shannon and Erne River shorelines, lends itself well to slow adventure activities and sports tourism, in particular golf and angling. Angling is recognised as having been of particular value across the Destination, supporting smaller operators, accommodation and hospitality providers in areas outside of the more traditional tourism focal points and outside of the main tourism season, thus contributing significantly to regional and seasonal spread. Key attractions in the area include the Cavan County Museum, Arigna Mining Experience, The Shed Distillery, Lough Key Forest and Activity Park and the National Famine Museum at Strokestown Park. Key activity providers include Cavan Adventure Centre, Lough Allen Adventure, Shannon River Adventures, and the group of slow tourism providers under the umbrella of Slow Adventure Leitrim.

Opportunities are also afforded by the long-distance walking route, the Beara Breifne Way, which enters the area on the Suck Valley Way and winds its way through the Destination before ending at Blacklion in Cavan. The Destination has finest forest parks in the country including Dún an Rí and Killykeen in Cavan, Glenfarne Woods in Leitrim, and Lough Key Forest And Activity Park in Roscommon, which provides one of the largest campsites in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Other notable and popular free attractions include Acres Lake (and the 'Snake on the Lake' boardwalk), Glencar Waterfall, Castle Saunderson, Roscommon Castle and upland amenities such as Sliabh Bawn. There are scenic towns, villages, excellent restaurants and bars, and stunning outdoor activity options in the outlying parts of the region.

The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands *Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027* introduces the principle of regenerative tourism and places it at the heart of the strategy. In the context of an evolving global focus on sustainability and climate action, a regenerative approach to tourism ensures community and place are at the centre of the tourism model, collectively working towards delivering a net positive benefit for all stakeholders – Visitor, Industry, Community and the Environment. A regenerative approach encourages tourism to give back more than it takes through engaging the visitor and industry in protecting and enhancing nature and its habitats, the host communities and local places. Nature will be central to destination development with the environment and sustainability front of mind in all future decision making.

### 2.2 Vision

The vision for the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border Destination and Experience Development Plan states that:

*"Nature is at the heart of an inspiring sustainable tourism destination, where tourism delivers net positive outcomes to communities and the environment. Ecotourism and slow adventure are the hallmarks of the destination delivered through best in class on and off the water experiences."*

*The visitor hubs of Carrick-on-Shannon, Cavan and Roscommon Town have developed a year round appeal for tourism. Signature attractions such as the Beara Breifne Way, Shannon Erne Blueway, National Famine Way, Forests Parks and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark inspire new levels of community and visitor engagement with slow tourism. Best in class water activities from Cruising on the Shannon to exploring our heritage through on water experiences provide inspiring visitor moments. A growing network of accredited Greenways, Blueways and trails have become the catalysts for regenerative tourism and the platform for visitors to connect with our local community delivering a year round economic impact.”*

## 2.3 Strategic Objectives

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives and are closely aligned to the Strategic Objectives that are set out for the wider Hidden Heartlands region in the *Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027*:

### 1. Strategic Objective 1: Development of a Regenerative Tourism Destination

*Establish the Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne and Border region as a leading regenerative tourism destination with high standards in sustainable tourism development and a reduced carbon footprint.*

#### Strategic Objectives:

- 1.1. Maximise the potential of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark to grow community-based tourism opportunities and demonstrate how visitors can engage with place-based eco-tourism experiences.
- 1.2. Develop the capability of the tourism industry and community tourism groups to develop new regenerative and ecotourism experiences for visitors, profiling the Destination’s commitment to sustainability and embracing the principle of regeneration as a platform for innovation.
- 1.3. Enable responsible visitor engagement with nature through sustainable in nature amenities such as the boardwalk at Acres Lake and developing viewing points and other appropriate interventions that highlight water and nature assets and the unique geology of Leitrim, Cavan and Roscommon.
- 1.4. Optimise the opportunities presented by the Just Transition Fund and, in particular, the Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme 2023-2027, to deliver new sustainable visitor experiences within communities in Roscommon.
- 1.5. Collectively achieve a reduction in carbon emissions in line with the targets set out in the National Climate Action Plan.
- 1.6. Seek opportunities to support the development of a national EV charging infrastructure, especially at visitor attractions and activity provider sites across the Destination.
- 1.7. Align with the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 in ensuring that the tourism activity in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon ‘acts for nature’ in the development of awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and in the implementation of measures to enhance biosecurity measures throughout the Destination.
- 1.8. Grow national and international recognition for how the Destination facilitates the protection and enhancement of the environment as the fundamental asset of the visitor experience in counties Leitrim, Cavan and Roscommon.

### 2. Strategic Objective 2: Growth in Destination Awareness

*Grow the profile of the Destination through collectively growing awareness, locally and in the domestic and international markets of Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon as great places to visit, where the visitor is assured of an authentic, place-based experience and which also delivers net positive benefits for the community, the environment, and the tourism industry.*

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 2.1. Grow the demand generation capabilities of the tourism industry based on understanding visitor needs and motivations, and how to attract domestic and international visitors on a year-round basis aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Brand Toolkit.
- 2.2. Employ a visitor centric approach to the development of interpretation and orientation throughout the Destination that is aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Brand Toolkit.
- 2.3. Develop and strengthen the capacity and capability of tourism industry networks and tourism clusters to establish new ways of working together and collectively grow local awareness of existing and newly developed products and experiences.
- 2.4. Increase the tourism industry's engagement with the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand to collectively grow awareness and recognition of the regional experience brand to increase the share of the domestic and international market.
- 2.5. Elevate the profile of the Destination as a regenerative tourism destination characterised by a) visitors' ability to access quality and diverse eco-tourism and slow adventure tourism experiences and b) community pride in, and stewardship of, their cultural and natural environment and c) industry /stakeholders' respect for the environment as fundamental to the destination offering.
- 2.6. Grow the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to collectively grow destination visibility and sustained marketing of new experiences and motivational itineraries to encourage visitor dispersion into and across the area.
- 2.7. Increase the destination profile as a family and multi-generational holiday destination.
- 2.8. Grow awareness within the domestic market of signature destination experiences such as cruising.

**3. Strategic Objective 3: Connection and integration of land and water based trails**

*Deliver new levels of connectivity between new and existing trails, both land-based and water-based, across the Destination to create an enhanced and integrated scale of outdoor activity provision and development of best-in-class slow tourism hubs.*

**Strategic Objectives:**

- 3.1. Deliver the Beara Breifne Way to become an internationally recognised way-marked walking trail and focal point for communities in the Destination to engage with the emerging tourism opportunities.

- 3.2. Develop the network of nationally accredited greenways, blueways and trails within the Destination and, where feasible and viable, connect with trails that facilitate and encourage visitor flow within the wider Hidden Heartlands' region, and to and from adjoining destinations; e.g. Ulster Way, Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway.
- 3.3. Integrate signature trails with other outdoor activities featured within the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon; e.g. development, extension and accreditation of the Shannon and Shannon-Erne Blueways.
- 3.4. Develop links between trails, attractions and activities to facilitate new ways for visitors to access and interact with local experiences; e.g. the National Famine Way and the National Famine Museum | Strokestown Park, Arigna Mining Experience and the Miners' Way, Lough Key Forest and Activity Park and the Boyle – Carrick-on-Shannon Greenway, The Shed Distillery and Electric Bike Trails, Dún an Rí Forest Park and the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway, and to and through the Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, e.g. Killykeen Forest Park and the Killykeen Way.
- 3.5. Identify means and on-water routes that facilitate slow exploration of the Destination by water; e.g. through day-boat hire, small e-powered vessels, and/or water taxis.
- 3.6. Link existing and new land- and water-based trails to build a new scale of integrated trails and opportunities to enable visitors to engage with mix of eco-tourism and 'off the beaten track' opportunities that tap into the heritage and living culture of the local area.
- 3.7. Revitalise existing trails to become more place-based and experiential, based on their capacity to orientate the visitor to established or emerging destination experiences e.g. Táin Trail, Lough Allen Drive, Miners Way, Ulster Way.
- 3.8. Create a best-in-class approach to developing walking trail heads to grow the Destination profile as a centre of excellence for outdoor activity. This will be supported by a commitment to maintaining the quality of trails and maintenance plan to ensure the sustainable management of the trails experience.

#### 4. Strategic Objective 4: Development of Place-based, Ecotourism Experiences

*Develop the range and quality of visitor experiences across the Destination drawing on the natural, community and cultural heritage with a focus on ecotourism.*

##### Strategic Objectives:

- 4.1. Develop new visitor experiences linked to eco-tourism and slow adventure leveraging the core destination assets such as the River Shannon, Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Geopark, Shannon Erne Waterway, established and emerging national trails, forest parks and water amenities, whose core objective is the protection of the natural and/or cultural heritage.
- 4.2. Create compelling in nature visitor experience moments blended with local heritage, culture and activities that utilise the on land and water trail network of greenways and blueways.

- 4.3. Expand the opportunities for community tourism groups to enable visitors to immerse themselves in local culture through the development of new experiences linking agri-tourism, local heritage, food, and culture.
- 4.4. Develop eco-tourism experiences linked to water across, e.g. paddling, cruising, cycling, angling, identified through the Loughs Tapestry plan (see Section 4.2.7 below for Loughs Tapestry).
- 4.5. Create new cross-border and cross regional experiences to introduce new visitor flows into the Destination e.g. from/to the Wild Atlantic Way, Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins VEDP, and Ireland's Ancient East.
- 4.6. Maximise the opportunity provided by the National Famine Museum and the National Famine Way to connect businesses and communities with the diaspora market.
- 4.7. Build the capability of existing visitor attractions, cultural hubs (e.g. The Dock Art Gallery, Carrick on Shannon; King House, Boyle; Ramor Theatre, Virginia among others) and activity providers to develop innovative visitor experiences to grow the range of things to do in the day and evening time.
- 4.8. Develop a number of signature climate neutral and sustainable destination experiences linked to the natural and cultural heritage and showcase the role of water in shaping the landscape and communities.
- 4.9. Develop the capability of the tourism industry to deliver new forms of nature-based wellbeing experiences and work with strategic partners to develop nature-based wellness opportunities in forest parks, on trails and on and beside water access points.
- 4.10. Develop angling across the Destination given its potential to support both geographic and seasonal dispersal.
- 4.11. Capitalise on the growing momentum signified by the development of the Hidden Heartlands' Golf Association and the existing high-quality (e.g. Slieve Russell PGA status) and extensive offering to develop the Destination's profile for international golfers.

## 5. Strategic Objective 5: Growth in Sustainable Economic Impact

*Grow the economic impact of tourism and create high quality jobs in the Destination by supporting the industry to enhance its capacity and capability and by developing and enhancing the visitor services' provision.*

### Strategic Objectives:

- 5.1. Support tourism businesses to improve their capacity and capability through a range of support programmes, such as the Digital that Delivers Programme and the Employer Excellence Programme, as well as other more tailored training supports.
- 5.2. Develop the opportunity identified in the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon and Discovery Zones to grow the ability of the main visitor hubs and towns such as Carrick on Shannon, Cavan and Roscommon Towns to disperse visitors across the wider Destination.

- 5.3. Build the profile of the Destination as a host for niche business tourism activity linking the tourism hubs of Carrick-on-Shannon, and Cavan and Roscommon Towns, as sustainable business tourism host venues.
- 5.4. Develop smaller towns across the Destination such as Manorhamilton, Drumshanbo, Boyle, Bailieborough, and Virginia as key service hubs from a daytime and evening-time visitor economy perspective, and enhance their ability to act as gateways to and from neighbouring regions.
- 5.5. Grow the level of available accommodation stock in our rural and urban areas to include hotel accommodation with alternative forms of accommodation linked to the outdoors. New accommodation development should strive for net-zero status.
- 5.6. Support the industry in developing saleable experiences for individual experience providers as well as bundled saleable experiences for clusters of experience providers where appropriate.
- 5.7. Deliver a range of developmental and promotional initiatives that are aimed at lengthening the visitor season by growing revenue during the shoulder season; e.g. targeted cruise-hire promotion during the shoulder season and the development of new festivals and events across the Destination during the shoulder season.
- 5.8. Deliver on the recommendations arising from the recently published *Feasibility Study for the Sustainable Development and Greening of the Cruise Hire Sector*, to ensure that the sector grows its capacity and diversifies its offering in a sustainable manner.
- 5.9. Work with education and training agencies in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon to align investment in building capabilities and capacity with existing and new tourism enterprises.
- 5.10. Develop a community tourism training programme to build the capabilities of the community tourism enterprise sector to realise the social and economic potential of tourism for their locality.
- 5.11. Establish new sustainable transport options working with existing providers such as Local Link to enhance visitor access to local attractions, communities and activities, and support the night-time economy in key locations.
- 5.12. Maximise the visibility of the Destination, and access routes to the Destination at ferry ports, airports, in particular regional airports such as Ireland West (Knock) and Shannon Airports. Chart the visitor journey from the point of access to the Destination, in terms of all forms of transport, but particularly all the sustainable forms of transport, including 'the last mile'.
- 5.13. Improve the signage to attract visitors off bypasses (e.g., the new N5 bypass currently under construction) and Motorways, in order to grow the visitor footfall in the smaller towns.

## **6. Strategic Objective 6: Development of New Levels of Collaboration**

*Build new levels of tourism industry and stakeholder collaboration by strengthening of existing tourism networks and clusters and creating new ones where necessary.*

- 6.1. Develop a network of geographic and themed clusters of visitor experiences rooted in regenerative tourism principles across the Destination to facilitate collaboration between the industry
- 6.2. Engender a pan-agency focus on tourism clusters and networks for tourism investment and collectively grow local community and business engagement to stimulate new tourism opportunities; e.g. the Geopark Sustainable Business network. Support networks which foster community level engagement in order to share learnings, mentoring opportunities and develop new community tourism experiences- e.g. Community Wetlands Forum.
- 6.3. Grow the capabilities of the Destination's visitor attractions and cultural hubs to work together, cross promote and collaborate, and with those in the neighbouring regional experience brands of the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.
- 6.4. Deliver on the sustainable tourism objectives of the *Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030* in partnership with all agencies and stakeholders.
- 6.5. Grow cross border destination collaboration by working on collective initiatives such as Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Geopark, and Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins VEDP.
- 6.6. Ensure tourism is integrated as a key element of future placemaking activity; e.g. public realm projects, town and village enhancements.
- 6.7. Develop a collective tourism impact measurement system for the DEDP adopting a current situation baseline model to align stakeholder activity, programming and investment with the target outcomes of the plan underwritten by the VICE model as the basis for how success is measured.
- 6.8. Leverage partnering initiatives as collaborative platforms to drive regenerative tourism and the adoption of appropriate accreditation systems.

## 2.4 Destination Catalyst Overview

To achieve the above strategic objectives, the USSEB DEDP focuses on a number of 'destination catalyst' and 'destination enabling' initiatives. The catalyst initiatives and their key objectives are as follows:

**Embed Regenerative Tourism** - *To embed regenerative principles into all aspects of tourism development, delivery and measurement.*

**Tourism Industry Capability Development** - *To develop the capabilities of the tourism industry so that it is more resilient, more commercially viable, and more effective in how it markets the Destination domestically and internationally, and so that proactively collaborates within and across all tourism sectors and stakeholders in the development of the Destination.*

**Accredited and Activated Greenways and Blueways** - *Grow the number of nationally accredited greenways and blueways in the Destination that focuses on ensuring a quality visitor experience, in order to provide key slow tourism linkages between hubs and key attractions and activity providers.*

**The North Shannon and Shannon-Erne Waterways** - *Continue to deliver the Shannon Tourism Master Plan 2020-2030 in amplifying the North Shannon, and the Shannon-Erne Waterway, as core to the Destination, [...]*

**The Beara Breifne Way** - *Deliver the Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon elements of the Beara Breifne Way, the longest way-marked trail in Ireland, introducing new opportunities for visitors to explore places of the beaten track and generate community tourism development.*

**Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark** - *Grow the awareness of Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark and develop the number of visitor experiences that enable visitors to uncover and explore the uniqueness of the place: the combination of geology, archaeology, folklore, community and landscape.*

**The Loughs Tapestry** - *Create a tapestry (network) of co-created responsible and regenerative tourism experiences, drawing on the Destination's lakeland topography and its associated 'hidden' natural and cultural heritage. Through this, create a sense of scale and connectivity, encouraging visitors to explore further, and to visit and return at different times of the year. The approach to the development of the tapestry will ensure a greater appreciation by the visitor and host communities of the heritage of the area and how best it can be maintained for the long term benefit of all.*

**Forest Adventure** - *Building on the success of Lough Key, develop the forest park visitor experience across the USSEB to create a new scale of connected eco-tourism forest-based experiences.*

The catalyst initiatives detailed above will be supported through a significant number of destination enabling initiatives, which are individually listed in the DEDP Action Plan (Appendix 1). The overarching focus of the enabling initiative includes - *Accommodation, Community Tourism Experiences, Developing Attractions and Activity Providers, Connected Cultural Experiences, Connecting Outdoor Trails, Sustainable Transport, Tourism Gateways and Hubs and Festivals and Events.*

The complete list of destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives are provided and are assessed in **Appendix 1**.



## 3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

*Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>5</sup> on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the ‘SEA Directive’) requires EU Member States to assess the ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

*“The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”*

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

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

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for *“agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.”*<sup>6</sup>.

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *“a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”*<sup>7</sup>.

Given the nature of the Plan, the SEA for the USSEB DEDP is being prepared under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;

<sup>5</sup> SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

<sup>6</sup> See Section 9(1)(a)

<sup>7</sup> Section 5(c)

- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.



The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental Assessment and defined as:

*“...the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision...”<sup>8</sup>*

### 3.2 SEA Stages and Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the USSEB DEDP are outlined in **Table 2.1** and **Figure 2.1** below.

**Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process**

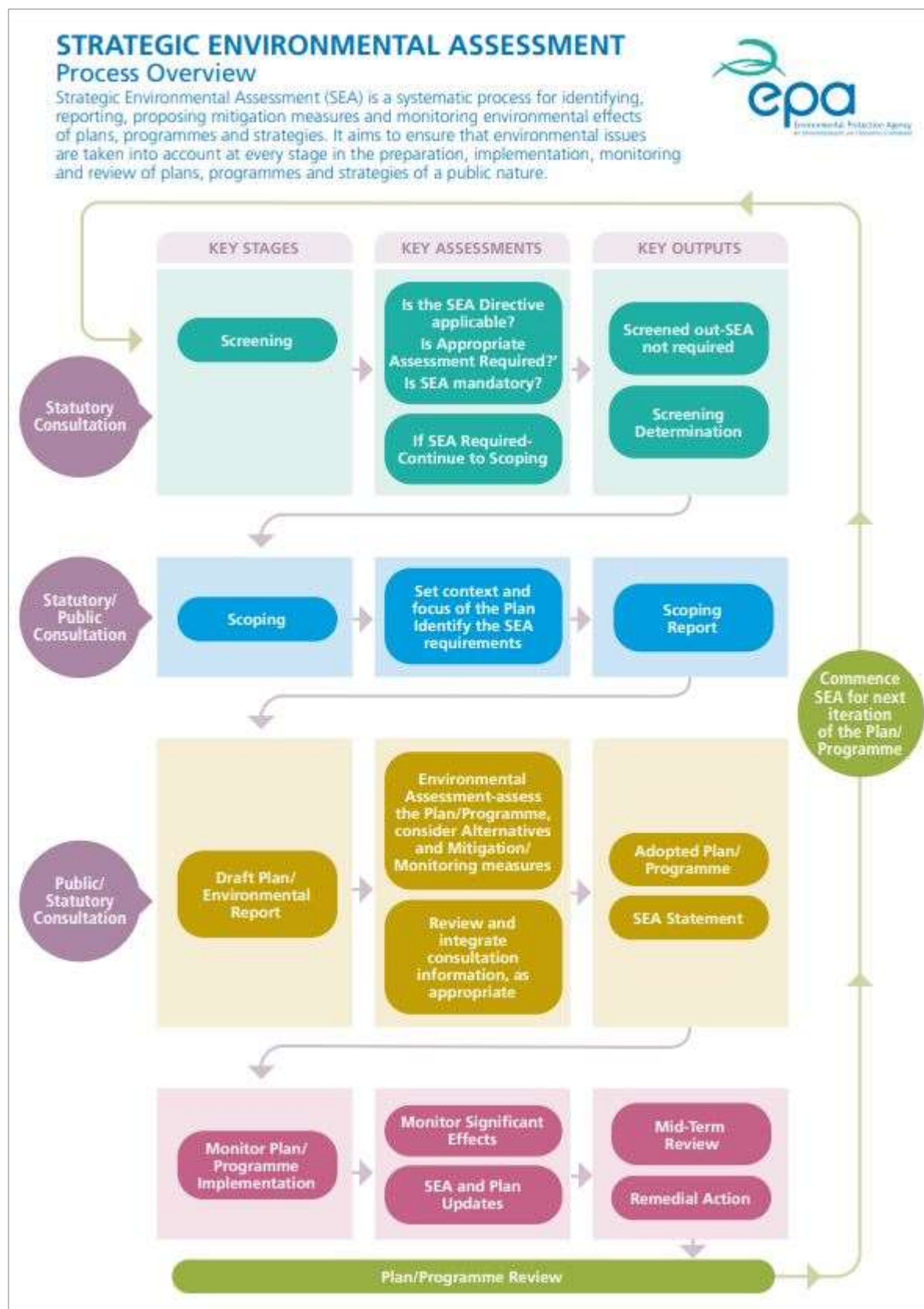
Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	<p>The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a ‘Screening process’, to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.</p> <p>The preparation of the <i>Draft USSEB DEDP</i> has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 &amp; NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft USSEB DEDP</i> was also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).</p>	Completed 
2. Scoping	<p>Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ methods of assessment;</li> <li>■ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>■ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and</li> <li>■ the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.</p>	Completed 

<sup>8</sup> Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

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Stage	Description	Status
<b>3. Environmental Report</b>	<p>Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P.</p> <p>The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (e.g. Draft, Amended Draft etc.), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011.</p> <p>The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanied the draft P / P required on public display.</p>	<b>Current Stage</b>
<b>4. SEA Statement</b>	<p>Completion / adoption of the Final USSEB DEDP, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report is concluded and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>▪ how the environmental report, and any submissions / observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>▪ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</li> <li>▪ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme.</li> </ul>	<b>Next (Final) Stage</b>

Figure 2.1: Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021<sup>9</sup>)



<sup>9</sup> EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Process%20Checklist.pdf>

### 3.3 SEA Screening and Requirement for SEA

The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain P / Ps that are above specified thresholds. Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / P is subject to a 'Screening process', (Stage 1) to consider if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.

Screening for the purposes of SEA is defined as *"the determination of whether implementation of a P / P [Plan or Programme] would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P / P [Plan or Programme] requires SEA."*<sup>10</sup> The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria:

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

It is also noted that in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>11</sup>, SEA for a P / P is also a mandatory requirement where the P / P requires Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive requires that:

*"Subject to paragraph 3, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes,*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC, or*

*(b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC."*

Article 9(1) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, states that:

*"Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:*

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

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

Articles 9(2) and 9(3) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, further state that:

*(2) "A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall*

<sup>10</sup> EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

*require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.*

*(3) A competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment”*

The Draft USSEB DEDP has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive* (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The AA Screening has concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and therefore appropriate assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required.

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*<sup>12</sup> the Draft USSEB DEDP was also required to undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*<sup>13</sup> (the SEA Directive).

This Environmental Report has been prepared as the USSEB DEDP is subject to requirements of SEA.

Refer to **Appendix 2** for the SEA Screening Determination.

### 3.4 SEA Scoping

Scoping allowed for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

The consultation was undertaken with the following Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, on 10 October 2023:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications;
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media;
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Natural Ireland Environmental Agency).

Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and comments have been incorporated into the Plan and Environmental Report as set out in **Table 3.1**.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Table 3.1 SEA Scoping Submissions / Observation from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations:  Governance and implementation – The Plan should set out the implementation arrangements and governance structures including lines of responsibility for implementation, delivery, interim review and progress reporting. The Plan should address the relationship with the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, existing Local Authority plans/ programmes.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.
	Synergies with key national plan – EPA recommends that the Plan documents the synergies with the key national plans and programmes. The relevant actions of the Climate Action Plan 2023 (and Climate Action Plan 2024 under preparation) and the objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework, River Basin Management Plan, and the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy should be aligned with and considered, as appropriate.	
	Integration of the SEA and the Plan – EPA highlights that the integration of the SEA process into the Plan should reflect the overall objective of the SEA Directive. It is essential for SEA to address climate and biodiversity issues and take account of the Ireland’s climate crisis and biodiversity emergency.  Recommendations from the SEA & AA including mitigation measures and monitoring proposals should be integrated into the Plan. SEA Environmental Report and the Plan should include a chapter on how the recommendations and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Plan.	
	EPA recommend that the SEA Environmental Report includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and Plan policies/measures.	
	EPA highlight their recently published guidance note to help provide guidance and ideas on how to carry out strategic environmental assessments (SEA) of tourism sectoral plans and	



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### SEA Environmental Report

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>programmes in Ireland - 'Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector' (EPA, 2023).</p> <p>The submission describes the key findings and chapters of the 'State of the Environment Report- Ireland's Environment An Integrated Assessment 2020'. The report recognises the need for full implementation of existing environmental legislation and review of governance/coordination on environmental protection across public bodies.</p> <p>EPA highlights the requirement under the SEA Regulations to consult with Environmental Authorities (EPA, Minister of Housing, Local Government &amp; Heritage, Department of Environment, Climate &amp; Communications, Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)</p> <p>Appendix I to the EPA submission includes comments on the SEA Scoping Report - scope of the SEA, data and knowledge gaps, range of effects, monitoring, implementation &amp; reporting, SEA statement, integration with other key Plans and Programmes, available guidance &amp; resources, webtools.</p>	
<b>Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)</b>	GSI encourage use of and reference to their datasets attached to their submission. These include geoheritage (county geological sites), culture & tourism (Cuilcagh lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark, PROJECT Belturbet), Dimension Stone / Stone built Ireland, groundwater, geological mapping, geohazards, historic mines, marine and coastal unit, physiographic units. GSI also includes a list of publicly available datasets relevant to planning, EIA & SEA processes.	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.
<b>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</b>	Department recommends to have regard to the following in the preparation of the SEA report – The National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014, Record of Monuments and Places, Sites and Monuments Record, Register of Historic Monuments (established under section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987), Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, International Conventions. The Department also includes a list of publicly available GIS datasets relevant to environmental assessments. This includes Historic Environment Viewer, Wreck Viewer, RMP, List of National Monuments in Ownership or Guardianship of the	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.



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Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	Minister, List of Preservation Orders, World Heritage in Ireland website and Irish excavation reports.	
<b>Department for Communications – Historic Environment Division (HED)</b>	<p>The submission from HED in reference to transboundary effects and discusses inter-relationship of sites, buildings and places, potential effects with regard to impacts on their setting. The submission lists the following Northern Ireland (NI) legislation and national plans for consideration –</p> <p>National Legislation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011</li> <li>• Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995</li> <li>• Protection of Wrecks Act 1973</li> </ul> <p>National / Plans Programmes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Development Strategy 2035 (infrastructure -ni.gov.uk)</li> <li>• Archaeology 2030 A strategic approach for Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015</li> </ul> <p>The submission also lists GIS datasets for recorded, designated and non-designated heritage assets and also marine historic environment. Consideration of potential transboundary impacts in relation to cultural heritage should include consideration of impacts on setting, also considering potential impacts on intangible heritage, i.e. folklore, customs, beliefs, traditions and knowledge. Where appropriate the report should consider potential effects on non-designated heritage assets, such as vernacular and industrial heritage.</p>	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.
<b>Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)</b>	The submission from DAERA recommends to include within the ER a dedicated section providing information on the background of the plan, environmental baseline of the geographical area, relationship between other plans and programs including appropriate objectives, indicators and targets. An appraisal of the Plan should be undertaken to include only those elements of it that are likely to have significant environmental effects should be included in the next stages of the ER.	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.

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Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>Transboundary issues arising from this plan should be considered including the potential disturbance to/impact on NI/RoI migratory/mobile species. Cross border designated sites, European sites in Northern Ireland adjacent to or with pathways to/from the Republic of Ireland, priority habitats, river basins, and other landscape types also require special attention as ecological functionality and ‘views’ of landscape cross political boundaries. The SEA should consider all potential impacts including those which may impact Northern Ireland both directly and indirectly. Consideration should be given to all potential impacts on NI habitats (particularly designated sites, priority habitats and those important for migratory species and NI populations) including habitat quality and conservation status.</p>	
	<p>NED notes that the plan boundary includes or is close proximity to Lough Melvin (designated as a Special Area of Conservation, SAC, and an Area of Special Scientific Interest, ASSI) and Upper Lough Erne (ASSI, SAC and Special Protection Area, SPA). The submission highlights that the collective term of “Natura 2000” sites, the network of European protected sites, are now known as “National Site Network” sites within the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.</p>	
	<p>The submission highlights the following useful information sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended)</li> <li>• Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011</li> <li>• The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)</li> <li>• The Environment (NI) Order 2002</li> <li>• The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017</li> <li>• The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Planning Policy Statements</li> <li>• Biodiversity Strategy for NI to 2020 <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-strategy-northern-ireland-2020-0">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-strategy-northern-ireland-2020-0</a></li> <li>• Draft Environment Strategy <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/esni-public-discussion-document">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/esni-public-discussion-document</a></li> </ul>	

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### SEA Environmental Report

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Draft NI peatland policy: <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/ni-peatland-strategy-consultation">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/ni-peatland-strategy-consultation</a>.</li> <li>• The Draft Green Growth Strategy Consultation on the draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland   Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 2050 Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 2050   Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)</li> <li>• Northern Ireland State of the Environment Reports: <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/state-environment-report-2013">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/state-environment-report-2013</a></li> <li>• Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Reports: <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report</a></li> <li>• Designated Scientific Sites: <a href="http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas">www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas</a></li> <li>• Regional Landscape Character Map viewer: <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/regional-landscape-character-areas-map-viewer">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/regional-landscape-character-areas-map-viewer</a></li> <li>• DAERA have a map browser for NI protected sites and known priority habitat: <a href="http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer">www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer</a></li> <li>• Our natural environment datasets are available at the link below: <a href="http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/download-digital-datasets">www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/download-digital-datasets</a></li> </ul>	
	The submission recommends that the Appropriate Assessment should refer to the status of habitats and species in the relevant reports available on the JNCC website as follows: UK Article 17 report for the Habitats Directive and the UK Article 12 report for the Birds Directive	
	The submission recommends that the SEA should consider transboundary impacts on the Northern Ireland landscape, especially in relation to Landscape Character Areas and the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark. The NIEA Map Viewer may be of use in identifying Landscape Character Assessment locations.	
	The submission recommends that the SEA should consider all issues in relation to the aquatic environment impacts that should be considered include, those relating to water quality, water quantity, hydromorphology, and in addition any impact on NI/RoI migratory/mobile species such as salmon. Assessment should consider all potential impacts both direct and indirect. It	

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### SEA Environmental Report

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	is important that cross border river basins are given special attention as ecological functionality cross jurisdictional boundaries.	
	The submission advises that the NI River Basin Management Plans must be considered during the SEA process. The submission further highlights and links several key pieces of environmental legislation relating to the Water Environment and its protection in NI.	
	The submission highlights further useful information sources such as Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report the latest of which currently is dated May 2023, Significant Water Management Issues to inform the development of the third cycle River Basin Management Plan (2021-2027), Water Information Request Web Viewer and NIEA Catchment Data Map Viewer etc.	
	The submission states that the mitigation measures and monitoring regimes should be clearly identified in the SEA ER.	

### 3.5 SEA Environmental Report

The current stage of the SEA process (Stage 3) involves the preparation of the Environmental Report for the identification, description, evaluation and mitigation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the USSEB DEDP and the alternatives taking account of the geographical scope of the Plan.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provides detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report. **Table 3.2** provides a checklist of the information referred to in Article 5(1) with a confirmation of where the relevant information is contained within the SEA.

The SEA Environmental Report was placed on public display, together with the Draft USSEB DEDP and for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

**Table 3.2 Information required under Annex I of the SEA Directive**

Information referred to in Article 5(1)	Environmental Report Section
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2 & Section 4
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 5
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 5
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	Section 5
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 6
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Section 8 and Appendix 1
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 9
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Section 7
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	Section 10
(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Refer to Non-technical Summary Report

### 3.6 SEA Statement

Following approval of the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border Destination & Experience Development Plan, an SEA Statement (Stage 4) will be prepared which includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the USSEB DEDP, highlighting the main changes to the USSEB DEDP which resulted from the SEA process;
- How the SEA Environmental Report and consultations have been taken into account, summarising the key issues raised in consultations and in the Environmental Report indicating what action was taken in response;
- The reasons for choosing the USSEB DEDP in the light of the other alternatives, identifying the other alternatives considered, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the USSEB DEDP, as adopted, was selected; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the USSEB DEDP.

### 3.7 SEA Guidance

The SEA Environmental Report reflects the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the *SEA Directive*) and the national implementing Regulations S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and by the PDR 2001, as amended.

The following principal sources of guidance were used in the SEA process including in the preparation of this Environmental Report:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004.
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 -Environmental Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.
- Guidance on Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission, 2004, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923\\_sea\\_guidance.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf)
- SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans - EPA Recommendations and Resources. EPA, Updated October 2024.
- SEA Pack. EPA, Updated January 2023.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. EPA, Updated April 2024.
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA, 2015.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector. EPA, June 2023.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape. EPA, December 2023.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statements and Monitoring. EPA, March 2023.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Impact Assessment Tiering, EPA, 2021.
- Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, March 2023.

- EPA Mapping. Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) tools are available at: <http://gis.epa.ie/SeeMaps>
- EPA Water and Air Quality Reports at: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/legislation/air/quality/>
- EPA Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024, <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/state-of-the-environment/irelands-state-of-the-environment-report-2024.php>
- EPA Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report-/#>
- SEA (EPA) Spatial Information Sources at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment, EPA 2015 at: [https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157\\_web.pdf](https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157_web.pdf)
- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note. EPA, 2015.
- Climate Action Plan 2024. Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, 2024.
- Circular Letter PL 9/2013: Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011: Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011.
- Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008.
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment - Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner's Manual. Strive Report Series No. 106. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment. European Commission 2013.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision\\_of\\_art6\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf)
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2002, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_asses\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_en.pdf)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009, at: [http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS\\_2009\\_AA\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf)

### 3.8 Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is *likely to have a significant impact* on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Stage 1 is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary

assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>14</sup> (15 February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA screening in that *“where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- An AA of the plan must be carried out, and
- In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out.”

Hence, where a plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the USSEB DEDP and the SEA Environmental Report.

The AA has concluded that the USSEB DEDP will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

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<sup>14</sup> NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>



## 4 Relationship with Plans and Programmes

### 4.1 Overview

Fáilte Ireland has prepared this Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne, Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. The plan is designed to build on the ambition of the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Tourism Development Strategy. Regional Tourism Development Plans, 2023- 2027 (RTDS) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). These plans provide the strategic framework for other tourism development strategies, most notably, Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) and County Tourism Strategies. The USSEB DEDP has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

The USSEB is a five-year commercial destination and experience development plan. The role of the USSEB DEDP is to support the development of unique and compelling destination experiences focused on a number of immediate and strategic destination opportunities. The USSEB DEDP was developed through a consultative process involving tourism industry representatives, members of the local community and County Councils. The USSEB DEDP will guide tourism development through a roadmap of projects linked to a number of destination development opportunities. Over the course of the plan implementation, success will be measured by achieving growth across a range of indicators from new experience supply, visitor demand patterns, growing the value per visitor and a number of additional destination competitiveness indicators.

As part of the SEA process, it is necessary to consider the environmental protection objectives, established at the international; European and national level which are relevant to the USSEB DEDP and how they have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. In its making, the USSEB DEDP sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, are detailed below.

### 4.2 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's overarching planning and development policy for the country to 2040. It constitutes a *"strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people"* by setting public investment policy at a high level. It comprises two documents: the *National Planning Framework* (NPF), which details the strategy for development to 2040; and the *National Development Plan* (NDP), which outlines the public expenditure required to implement this strategy and identifies priority future projects.

The NPF is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment. At its core are ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), *"a shared set of goals for every community across the country"* (p. 10), which the plan aims to deliver:

1. Compact Growth
2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility
3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
4. Sustainable Mobility

5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
6. High-quality International Connectivity
7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage
8. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources
10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

With a view to achieving these NSOs, the NPF identifies a suite of National Policy Objectives (NPOs).

The NPF identifies under NSO 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage that-

*'This will ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.'*

The NPF addresses the Plan for Ireland's growing population and economy and to promote new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism). Local services sectors, including tourism and small-scale manufacturing, are a significant part of the rural economy and are also important local employers.

The National Policy Objective 22 states to –

*'Facilitate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.'*

The NPF emphasises on tourism opportunities for rural Ireland and states that –

*'The development of greenways, blueways and peatways offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland. The development of a strategic national network of these trails is a priority and will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy, as well as the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity.'*

The NPF further elaborates on the importance of Ireland's natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape and their role and contribution towards the tourism industry and economic investment.

#### **4.2.1 Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework**

The National Planning Framework (NPF), published in 2018 has been revised and updated to take account of changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and to build on the framework that is in place. A Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework has been published on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and is currently out for public consultation. The Draft Revision focuses on the need to update the Framework in order to appropriately reflect changes to government policy that have taken place since its initial publication six years ago, such as climate transition, regional development, demographics, digitalisation and investment and prioritisation.

The Draft highlights how tourism has the capacity to directly and indirectly sustain communities, create employment and deliver real social benefits for rural Ireland. The development of greenways, blueways and peatways offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland.

The development of a strategic national network of these trails is a priority and will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy, as well as the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity.

The Draft states that the key future planning and development and place-making policy priorities among others include:

*‘Tourism development and promotional branding to ensure that areas such as ‘Ireland’s Ancient East’ and ‘Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands’ are developed and promoted in such a way as to play their full part in tapping the economic potential of regional and rural areas in the region.’*

*‘Integrated planning, management and development of the areas traversed by the Wild Atlantic Way to maximise both the quality and integrity of the visitor experience and the added benefit in economic terms, especially for rural and local communities.’*

The National Policy Objective 35 states-

*‘Continue to facilitate tourism development and in particular the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, and a Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of their environmental sustainability, achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level while ensuring their development is compliant with the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the national climate change objective and requirements for environmental assessments.’*

The National Policy Objective 64 states-

*‘Support the coordination and promotion of all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland, pursue the further development of sport, and invest in the diverse heritage, arts and cultural and linguistic traditions of the island.’*

The draft revised framework retains the original NPF focus on a more balanced distribution of growth across all of Ireland’s regions – emphasising the potential for regional growth to harness the attractiveness and assets of all regions and places to a greater extent than ever before. Once finalised, the revised National Planning Framework will be incorporated into the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and the City and County Development Plans.

### 4.3 Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

There are three administrative Regions in Ireland: the Northern and Western Region, the Southern Region, and the Eastern and Midland Region. Under national policy, Regional Assemblies are tasked with drafting Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs), which effectively set the agenda for implementing the national level development policy – the NPF – at the Regional level. The USSEB DEDP area is situated in the Northern and Western Region and, therefore, falls under the remit of the Northern and Western RSE.

The RSE provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. The policies in the RSE are structured under Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Policy Objectives.

The Northern and Western region supports sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism, renewables, construction and many others. The region’s distinctive Cultural Heritage is a key asset that presents a competitive advantage to the region in encouraging economic activity. It has an enviable international reputation arising from the quality and originality of music, theatre, film/video, visual arts,

literature, native language, song and dance. This is reinforced through archaeology, historic buildings and streetscapes, while the considerable infrastructure that has been created to facilitate their enjoyment by the public, such as in libraries, theatres and museums, is a source of employment and enjoyment for many thousands of the region's inhabitants.

The sustainable development and promotion of a successful well managed tourism industry is critical to the economy of this region. This strategy takes note of the overall Government policy, as set out in People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025. In particular, it takes note of the policy proposal that consideration be given to the contribution that sustainable tourism can make to the protection of heritage assets.

Further, the Regional Policy Objectives states as follows:

*RPO 4.1 - To support working with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and our coastal areas, and to ensure maintenance and access to the existing network of trails, paths, ways etc.*

*RPO 4.2 - To support the maintenance of, and enhanced access to state lands, such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes.*

*RPO 4.3 - To support the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) within the Northern and Western Region, to underpin the overarching regional tourism benefits and to promote the natural and cultural assets of the region.*

Fáilte Ireland's newest brand destination presents significant opportunities for counties Roscommon, Leitrim, west Cavan and east Galway rebranding the midlands as 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' as a way to boost tourism in the area. The River Shannon is a central focus of the brand, and a 'Shannon Masterplan' has been prepared to focus tourism concentration on and around the river and in surrounding towns. It focusses on the River Shannon, the development of new food networks and trails and the creation of new walking hubs are part of the campaign to attract a larger number of visitors. The plan is to entice visitors with the area's walkways and lakes, and the campaign will promote activities like walking, cycling, fishing and boating. A walkway and trail network, the Beara Breifne Way, will have an extensive reach, with many towns along the route to be identified as 'walking hubs'. The Regional Policy Objectives states as follows:

*RPO 4.9 – To ensure provision is made for the expansion in accommodation, and facilities within key destination towns, such as Carrick on Shannon, Cavan, Roscommon Town and Athlone, together with necessary supporting infrastructural investments, including improvements in the public realm, transport links, accommodation, the night-time economy, and sustainable development of our natural and built economy.*

*RPO 4.10 - To ensure Orientation and Information Points targeted at 'Slow Tourism' market are provided at key Towns, such as Carrick on Shannon, Athlone, and Ballinasloe as an enabler for increasing bed-nights, and visitor numbers.*

*RPO 4.12 - Develop the water-based leisure sector in the region in a sustainable manner making the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and resources, in a manner that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources.*

*RPO 4.14 - Promote the development of integrated walking, cycling and bridle routes throughout the region as an activity for both international visitors and local tourists in a manner that is compatible with nature conservation and other environmental policies.*

*RPO 4.15 - To protect and preserve our Coastal Heritage, archaeological and built heritage, and to restore/regenerate our key coastal assets, including those within state ownership (e.g. OPW) as well as Discovery Points and Signature Points along the WAW.*

The RSES Vision for the Northern and Western Region is - ‘To play a leading role in the transformation of this region into a vibrant, connected, natural, inclusive and smart place to work and live.’

#### **4.4 Cavan County Development Plan 2022 – 2028**

The Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 including a Local Area Plan for Cavan Town area sets out the Councils proposed policies and objectives for the development of the County over the Plan period.

The County has a varied landscape with the highlands of western Cavan including the UNESCO Global Geopark which covers Cavan town westwards, taking in the towns of Killeshandra, Milltown, Belturbet, Ballyconnell, Swanlinbar, Glangevlin and Blacklion. The River Shannon rises in West Cavan at the Shannon Pot. The Eastern parts of the county include the Lakeland areas of Lough Oughter and the south-east of the County has the predominately drumlin landscape with highlands around Bailieborough and Kingscourt. The River Erne also rises in Gowna and flows through Belturbet.

Tourism constitutes one of Cavan’s most important economic sectors in providing business and employment opportunities leading to job creation. Natural tourism assets in County Cavan include the UNESCO Global Geopark which covers Cavan town westwards, taking in the settlements of Killeshandra, Milltown, Belturbet, Ballyconnell, Swanlinbar, Glangevlin and Blacklion. Cavan is famous for its scenic natural heritage, most famously its rivers and lakes and drowned drumlin landscape of Lough Oughter and the River Erne system. Cuilcagh Mountain forms a backdrop to the west while Lough an Leagh to the east of the county provides another high point. The River Shannon rises in County Cavan at the Shannon Pot. The River Erne also rises in Gowna and flows through Belturbet. The Shannon – Erne Waterway links the villages of Belturbet and Ballyconnell and is a designated blueway.

County Cavan has two designated forest parks – Dún an Rí, Kingscourt and Killykeen Forest Park, Cavan. Both parks attract thousands of visitors every year. The Castle Lake in Bailieborough and Deerpark Forest in Virginia are also open to visitors and are popular amenities. There are four designated national looped walks in County Cavan – Killeshandra Looped Walk; Ballyconnell Canal Loop, Swanlinbar Loop and the Castle Lake, Bailieborough. The Cavan Way in the West of the county is a long distance national way marked trail. There are several other short – medium walks throughout the county. The four forests mentioned above all have trails within the boundary of the park. There is one designated 12km cycle way in the county in Killykeen Forest Park, linking the park to Killeshandra.

Cavan Burren Park in Blacklion and the island castle of Clogh Oughter are iconic tourism heritage attractions in the county. Other heritage sites popular with visitors include Turbet Island in Belturbet, Drumlane Abbey in Milltown and the Shannon Pot near Glangevlin. Cavan Burren attracts close to 30,000 visitors per year and is a flagship attraction in the UNESCO Global Geopark. Cavan County Museum and the World War 1 Trench Experience in Ballyjamesduff is the county’s biggest indoor visitor attraction, with a range of exhibits and experiences, delivering a year-round programme of events.

It is development objective of Cavan County Council to:

*T 01 - Promote the development and strengthening of the overall value of Cavan as a tourist destination by encouraging the enhancement and development of sustainable and high-quality visitor attractions, activities and infrastructure, enabling an increase in the overall capacity and long-term development of*

*the county's tourism industry, subject to appropriate siting and design criteria and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.*

*T 03 - Support the implementation of the County's Tourism Strategy in line with national and regional policy, tourism trends and identified challenges, in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, tourism businesses and communities and other supporting agencies.*

*T 04 - Continue to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to maximise the benefit of national and regional initiatives/plans/strategies for the county, with a particular emphasis on initiatives which will increase the economic benefit from tourism, support local business development and encourage new enterprise opportunities.*

*T 06 - Protect and conserve the natural, built and cultural heritage features which add value to the visitor experience in Cavan and seek to restrict developments which would damage or detract from the quality of scenic areas and identified natural and cultural heritage assets.*

*T 11 - Promote Tourism as an integral part of Cavan's economic profile supporting urban and rural enterprises.*

*T 15 - The Council will support the preparation of Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which crosses from the county into neighbouring counties in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders. The Council will work with Fáilte Ireland to prepare and implement The Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEPD) as it extends into parts of the county.*

Furthermore, it is Council policy to –

*Provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating strong visitor towns and sufficient high-quality visitor services and the continued development and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities to provide memorable, immersive visitor experiences, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.*

The Development Plan has been subject to SEA, AA and SFRA. These are discussed, where relevant, below.

## **4.5 Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029**

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County for the next six years whilst also aligning with longer term national and regional objectives up to 2040. The Plan seeks to ensure the sustainable physical and social development of the county, ensuring the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment.

The tourism objectives and policies seek to maximise opportunities for growth and realise the economic benefits of tourism for the county in a sustainable manner in line within the national and regional policy framework. The Shannon-Erne waterway runs from the north-east of the county to the south-west, with Carrick-on-Shannon the 'navigational capital' along the waterway. This coupled with the spectacular mountains and valleys of the north-west ensure a remarkable landscape for tourists to explore. The County is renowned for its festival and events and as an angling and boating county and has opportunities abounding for walking and outdoor activities. The county's natural assets (waterways; loughs and lakes; glens, valleys and waterfalls; and mountain ranges) are characterised by an abundance of tourist attractions, cultural and built heritage, village life, water-based benefits, visitor amenities and vitality with a charming sense of identity.



Leitrim County Council is committed to supporting the growth of tourism in the county by taking full advantage of national and regional initiatives and funding schemes and maximising the potential of our unique natural, heritage, cultural and amenity assets. The Council seeks to further develop Slow Adventure Tourism for the County.

The Plan states the following Policies in relation to Tourism:

*TOUR POL 2 - To enable, facilitate and encourage the growth of sustainable tourism enterprise developments in rural areas including open farms and eco-tourism initiatives subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.*

*TOUR POL 3 - To preserve and protect verified public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank, canals or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility.*

*TOUR POL 4 - To develop opportunities for 'Slow Tourism' or 'Regenerative Tourism' clusters to be established within the county.*

*TOUR POL 6 - To seek to sustainably manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as blueways and greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.*

*TOUR POL 7 - Where relevant, the Council and those receiving consent for development shall seek to sustainably manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects to sensitive habitats, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.*

*TOUR POL 8 - To consider and mitigate, as appropriate, the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations and/or along particular routes in the assessment of development proposals. Such consideration shall include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.*

*TOUR POL 9 - To protect, harness and develop the natural heritage assets of the town including the River Shannon, wetlands and other 'Green Infrastructure' for tourism and recreational purposes and to promote sustainable mobility.*

*TOUR POL 10 - To facilitate, where appropriate, proposals to improve access for all at existing tourism sites and facilities, and to require all new tourism related developments to ensure the development is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, or ability.*

*ARTS POL 2 - To support and promote existing festivals, heritage and cultural events, in conjunction with the relevant tourism agencies to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the county, and to facilitate the establishment of new events.*

*ADV TOUR POL 1 – To develop the water-based leisure sector in the region in a sustainable manner making the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and resources, in a manner that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources.*

*ADV TOUR POL 2 - To support the development of angling centres and associated infrastructure/products in the county to meet customer demands and expectations in every aspect of the angling experience.*

ADV TOUR POL 3 - *To maintain water quality and develop shared facilities at designated water bathing sites.*

ADV TOUR POL 4 - *To support both the enhancement of existing and development of new access to water locations in the county for recreation purposes. The provision of shared facility centres for water-based activities in the county shall be supported by the Council.*

TOUR INF POL 6 - *To support the implementation of new tourist facilities or upgrading/extension of existing tourist facilities at tourist sites within the county, within proper planning and sustainable development principles.*

The Plan also includes the following objectives in this regard –

TOUR OBJ 2 - *To develop sustainable tourism products and work in conjunction with local groups and communities and other relevant agencies in the development and promotion of sustainable tourism offerings which extend the tourist season and stay-time by providing memorable experiences.*

TOUR OBJ 4 - *To utilise the county's natural and heritage resources to foster the development of tourism as a viable sustainable sector of the economy, in a sustainable manner, which complements the scale, quality and unique features of the county.*

TOUR OBJ 6 - *To work with all relevant stakeholders to promote and support the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan, the Tourism Masterplan for the Beara Breifne Way and findings of the technical trail audit for the Beara Breifne Way and promote and support the 'Wild Atlantic Way' and 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands'.*

TOUR OBJ 10 - *To support the preparation and implementation of Regional Tourism Plans and when complete, to support the continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these Tourism Plans.*

TOUR OBJ 11 - *To support the preparation of Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which cross from the county into neighbouring counties in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders.*

TOUR OBJ 13 - *To support the future success and deliverability of The Beara Breifne Way and promote and identify the need for key facilities and services for visitors such as accommodation, signage, parking, and sustainable transport as identified in the 'Tourism Masterplan for the Beara Breifne Way' prepared by Fáilte Ireland.*

ARTS OBJ 1 - *To support the promotion of local culture, arts, food and crafts as unique visitor experiences in the form of events, festivals, food trails, craft fairs, visitor centres and arts venues.*

ARTS OBJ 2 - *To support the development of food networks and trails, particularly those that can showcase the wealth of artisan food producers in the county in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland and other relevant stakeholders.*

ADV TOUR OBJ 2 - *To support the development of infrastructure and tourism enterprises which increase the tourism offering on waterways including boating, canoeing, angling, water sports, bird watching, and the provision of storage, shelters and other facilities to enhance the user experience subject to planning permission and only where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.*

ADV TOUR OBJ 3 - *To continue to develop and enhance the Shannon Erne Blueway from Leitrim Village to Ballinamore.*



ADV TOUR OBJ 6 - *To support and facilitate the continued development of the Greenways/Blueways and maximise the economic opportunities presented by Greenways/Blueways.*

The Development Plan has been subject to SEA, AA and SFRA. These are discussed, where relevant, below.

## 4.6 Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the overall strategy and vision for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county over the six-year plan period. The Plan has been prepared in the context of the framework of national and regional strategies and guidelines and must be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

County Roscommon is rich in history and heritage, and benefits from a range of popular attractions such as the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex, Lough Key Forest and Activity Park, The Beara Breifne Way, Roscommon Castle, Clonalis House, Arigna Mining Experience and Strokestown Park House, Gardens and National Famine Museum, attracting both national and international visitors. The county offers a unique tourism experience, provided by these attractions in combination with the natural landscape, waterways and walking and cycling routes.

It is a policy objective of Roscommon County Council to:

ED 6.22 - *Promote tourism as an integral part of County Roscommon's economic profile, supporting urban and rural enterprise, and recognising the key strategic location of the county and access to tourist sites and attractions.*

ED 6.24 - *Support the preparation and implementation of Regional Tourism Plans in the County Development Plan, to support the continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these tourism plans.*

ED 6.25 - *Promote the development of sustainable tourism as part of our economy, that recognises our landscapes, our cultural heritage and our environment.*

ED 6.27 - *Collaborate with relevant state bodies, neighbouring Local Authorities and local communities in delivering a UNESCO accredited, Biosphere for Lough Ree and the Mid- Shannon Wilderness Park.*

ED 6.28 - *Encourage walking and cycling as sustainable transport modes and healthy recreational activities by ensuring that a network of safe, well-marked and maintained rights-of-way, walking and cycle routes, and footpaths are provided throughout the county.*

ED 6.29 - *Facilitate the creation of a network of cycling/ walking routes (including existing footpaths and walking routes, off road routes, local walks, tourist walks, medium and long distance walking routes) within the county.*

ED 6.30 - *Develop linkages between existing and new trails, particularly those with a historic association in adjoining counties, in cooperation with Inland Waterways, Fáilte Ireland and with other relevant stakeholders to provide linkages with trails in adjoining counties in partnership with their Councils.*

The Development Plan has been subject to SEA, AA and SFRA. These are discussed, where relevant, below.

## 4.7 Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027

Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). The purpose of the Regional Tourism Strategies is to identify sustainable tourism development priorities that will unlock the commercial potential of the region and generate socio-economic benefits for all local stakeholders and the tourism industry. These plans provide the strategic framework for the development of the USSEB DEDP.

The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 identifies five strategic objectives to develop the tourism economy in the region. The projects outlined in the USSEB DEDP align to these overall regional objectives. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Raise awareness and recognition of the region and brand among domestic and international visitors and increase the duration of visitor stays, particularly within the domestic market.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance the range and quality of our visitor experiences to underpin the Hidden Heartlands brand proposition, leveraging the natural and cultural assets of the region in a sustainable way with a focus on eco-tourism.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Grow the economic impact of tourism and create jobs in local tourism by supporting the tourism industry (private, public and community sectors) to develop its capacity and capability while reducing its carbon footprint.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Establish the region as one of the leading regenerative tourism destinations in Europe in which tourism results in net positive outcomes for communities and nature.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Build a committed industry and stakeholder coalition to guide and co-ordinate the sustainable development of destinations across the region.*

This Regional Tourism Development Strategy represents a 10-year vision for the sustainable development of tourism in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, together with a 5-year strategy to guide the achievement of that vision. It identifies the elements required at a strategic level to unlock the commercial potential of the region while protecting the environment, enhancing the lives of local communities and exceeding the expectations of our visitors. It is intended that this strategy will be the blueprint for sustainable tourism development in the region ensuring our stakeholders and partners can work together towards a shared vision. It provides a guiding strategic framework for other more detailed tourism development plans that will be prepared within the region over the next five years. These include, Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs), County Tourism Strategies and the tourism sections of County Development Plans.

The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027 has been subject to SEA and AA. These are discussed, where relevant, below.

## 4.8 Shannon Tourism Masterplan

'The Shannon, Mighty River of Ireland, A Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020 – 2030' was prepared by Fáilte Ireland in association with Waterways Ireland and the relevant Local Authorities as part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands marketing programme. The objective of this plan is to reposition the River Shannon as a key destination in Ireland identifying visitor experiences based on the region's natural and cultural assets. The Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon considers the tourism and visitor development opportunities for the entire length of the Shannon Navigation and the Shannon Erne

Waterway (collectively referred to hereinafter as ‘The Shannon’), from Cavan-Leitrim southwards to Limerick City.

The Shannon forms the spine of Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands, the experience tourism proposition for Ireland. This recognises the value and potential of both the Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway, and their associated lakes and canals, as a critical corridor for water-based and land-based tourism activities. The Tourism Masterplan identifies the key issues and challenges for tourism development on the Shannon, as well as core attributes and themes that make the Shannon unique. The Masterplan defines seven inter-dependent Strategic Initiatives that will position the development of the Shannon over the coming 10 years, as a distinctive and sustainable tourist destination into the future. This includes the following:

- Strategic Initiative 1: Communicating a Clear & Consistent Message
- Strategic Initiative 2: Enhancing the On-Water Visitor Experience
- Strategic Initiative 3: Enhancing the Waterside Visitor Experience
- Strategic Initiative 4: Shannon Towns and Villages
- Strategic Initiative 5: Protecting & Enhancing the Shannon Environment
- Strategic Initiative 6: Improving Connectivity
- Strategic Initiative 7: Building Enterprise & Community Networks

To ensure the successful implementation of the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon, a series of key principles have been established to guide the implementation of the Action Plan as below:

- *All project proposals for the Shannon Tourism Masterplan must be seen in the context of Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands, the overarching strategic tourism proposition for the Irish midlands.*
- *The principles of responsible tourism, including consultation with local stakeholders and landowners, will be embedded in all strategic initiatives and actions, creating better places to live, work and visit.*
- *All projects will be ‘on-message’ with the Shannon Thematic & Experiential Framework and aligned to the broader objectives of the Masterplan.*
- *The Strategic Initiatives and related project proposals for the Discovery Zones will focus on differentiating the Shannon and set it apart from its competitors.*
- *All projects will aim to add value to the Shannon as a unique destination and provide a demonstrable link to either attracting greater visitor numbers and revenues; extending visitor dwell time (length of stay); extending the tourism season; or, developing a new or niche market.*
- *Commerciality will be a key consideration for many project proposals and the implementing partners will work to support innovative and sustainable projects that align with the aims of the Shannon Masterplan.*

## 4.9 Other Plans and Programmes

There is a legislative framework for the protection of the environment and our natural resources relevant to the USSEB DEDP. **Table 4.1** below provides a list of the principle legislative framework.

**Table 4.2** and **Table 4.3** below provide a working list of the principal plans and programmes influencing the formulation of the USSEB DEDP and the Environmental Report, either directly or through European, National and / or County level policy. The relationship with other plans and programmes is discussed, as appropriate, under the Current State of the Environment in **Section 5** of this Report.

Table 4.1 Legislative Framework

Legislative Framework	
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended	Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended	Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EEC)	Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by (2014/52/EU)	Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU) as amended by (EU/2023/2413)
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended)
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979	Renewable Energies in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC)	EU 2020 climate and energy package
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	EU Renewable Energy Road Map
Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)	European Landscape Convention 2000
Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)	Wildlife Acts 1976-2023
Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)	The Water Services Act (2007 – 2017)
Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)	Foreshore Act 1933-2022
Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)	Aquaculture Act 1997-2006
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	Sea Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)	The National Monuments Act 1930-2014
EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Roads Act 1993, as amended
Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)	European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea Fisheries) Regulations 2013

Table 4.2 Relevant National & Regional Plans and Programmes

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)	National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development
Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework (July 2024)	Climate Action Plan 2024
National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030	National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022	Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region	The Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)
Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020	Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042

## Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne, Border Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

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National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
National Mitigation Plan 2017	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)
Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)	Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework 2009
Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)	National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 - 2030
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2022)	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan
Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness - 2016	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2017-2020
National 4 <sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	The National Broadband Plan 2020
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014- 2020	National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025
Draft National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2030	Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
National CFRAMS Programme	Heritage Ireland 2030
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021	Food Harvest 2020
Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027	National Adaptation Framework Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2018 and Review of the National Adaptation Framework 2022
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)	Climate Action Plan 2024
South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Water Services Strategic Plan / Capital Investment Programme (Uisce Éireann)
People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025	Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) & Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan	Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019 – 2021	Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices 2021 - 2023
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways	The Shannon, Mighty River of Ireland, A Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020 – 2030
National Physical Activity Plan 2013 – 2025	Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024

**Table 4.3 Relevant Local Plans and Programmes**

Local Plans and Programmes	
Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

Local Plans and Programmes	
Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	

Some of the key Plans / Programmes, which were subject to SEA and AA, are discussed further in the following sections.

## 5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline)

### 5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the USSEB DEDP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the USSEB DEDP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the USSEB DEDP, if unmitigated.

### 5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border Destination & Experience Development Plan

The development plans for Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon promote the development and strengthening of the overall value of tourism in this region as stated below.

The Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that:

*T 15 - The Council will support the preparation of Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which crosses from the county into neighbouring counties in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders. The Council will work with Fáilte Ireland to prepare and implement The Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEPD) as it extends into parts of the county.*

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 states that:

*TOUR OBJ 11 - To support the preparation of Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which crosses from the county into neighbouring counties in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders.*

The Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that:

*ED 6.24 - Support the preparation and implementation of Regional Tourism Plans in the County Development Plan, to support the continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these tourism plans.*

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – ‘the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.’ In the absence of the USSEB DEDP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDPs) and Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the Counties. The CDPs detail policies and objectives specific to tourism, however, the standalone USSEB DEDP provides significant opportunities for specific set of tourism-related mitigation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

The USSEB DEDP will play an important role in promoting and developing tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon, help to attract visitors to the counties, enhance the visitor experience and support the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry.

Therefore, while higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of County Development Plans and various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the absence of the USSEB DEDP would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled. Less coordinated and controlled development would be less certain to result in the positive effects provided for by the USSEB DEDP.

### 5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline

The baseline data helps to assess the current state of the environment, facilitate the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the Plan. Thus, this information creates a platform whereby existing issues relevant to the study area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of USSEB DEDP does not exacerbate identifiable problems.

Baseline data collection is a first step in the process of evaluating the sensitivity of the environment. The *SEA Directive* requires that information is provided on ‘*any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan or programme...*’. Information is therefore provided on existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan, thus helping to ensure that the Plan does not exacerbate any existing environmental problems in the study area.

The environmental aspects are described in line with the legislative requirements, under the following headings:

- Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna);
- Population and Human Health;
- Land, Soils and Geology;
- Water Quality;
- Air, Noise and Climate;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape;
- Material Assets;
- Interaction of the foregoing; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

#### 5.3.1 Biodiversity

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage.

The biodiversity within the study area underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the green infrastructure. A number of areas in study area have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level and are protected through national and European legislation. The study area also shares a border with Northern Ireland and the potential for likely significant transboundary environmental effects have been considered.



#### 5.3.1.1 Designated European Sites

Within the study area, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

Within the potential zone of influence, the SPAs and SACs sites within Northern Ireland, collectively referred to as the 'National Site Network' have also been assessed.

All designated Natura 2000 Sites and National Site Network located within the study area and within the potential zone of influence (20km) is shown in **Figure 5.1**.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website<sup>15</sup> for Ireland and on Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural affairs website<sup>16</sup> for Northern Ireland. Any potential for impact on European Sites and National Site Network have been fully addressed in the NIS that accompanies the USSEB DEDP and SEA Environment Report.

#### 5.3.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites in the Ireland include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation<sup>17</sup>.

Within Northern Ireland, Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) represent the protected areas for wildlife and geological sites that make a considerable contribution to the conservation of the most valuable natural places.

Refer to **Figure 5.2** below for the NHAs, pNHAs and ASSIs located within the study area and within the potential zone of influence of the study area boundary

#### 5.3.1.3 Ecological Networks and Connectivity

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within

<sup>15</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

<sup>16</sup> DAERA website - <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-areas-conservation>

<sup>17</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas of the study area.

Hedgerows contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. They have an important farming function, they are wildlife habitats, and corridors, between habitats, and they also have historical significance as townland and field boundaries. The rivers provide a rich landscape setting for the towns and village of the study area and are the primary green infrastructure network in the study area.

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, and provide open space and recreational opportunities.

#### 5.3.1.4 National Biodiversity Action Plan

Ireland's fourth *National Biodiversity Action Plan* (NBAP) sets national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030. The Plan's vision for Ireland in 2050 is as follows:

*Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.*

The Key objectives of the NBAP are as follows:

- Adopt a Whole-of Government, Whole of-Society Approach to Biodiversity;
- Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs;
- Secure Nature's Contribution to People;
- Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity;
- Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.

#### 5.3.1.5 Water Framework Directive (WFD) Register of Protected Area

Under the requirements of the *Water Framework Directive* (WFD) a number of waterbodies (or parts of) must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). This register is split into five categories as outlined by the EPA:

- Areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption under Article 7;
- Areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species (i.e. shellfish);
- Bodies of water designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters under Directive 76/160/EEC;
- Nutrient-sensitive areas, including areas designated as vulnerable zones under Directive 91/676/EEC and areas designated as sensitive areas under Directive 91/271/EEC; and
- Areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including relevant European sites (Natura 2000) designated under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 79/409/EEC.

A number of these protected areas are present within the study area and these are as follows:

- The entire ground waterbody beneath the study area is included on the Drinking Water - Ground Waterbody.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – Lough Oughter, County Cavan (NW\_36\_657) & Lough Ree on the River Shannon (SH\_26\_750a)

- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Rivers) - Cavan River (IEGBNIRI\_NW\_2001\_0013) & Shannon River (IERI\_SH\_2001\_0018)
- WFD RPA Shellfish Areas – Drumcliff Shellfish Area and Sligo Bay Shellfish Area, c. 8.7km to the west of the study area
- Salmonid Rivers – Owengrave Sligo (IE\_WE\_340030100)

#### 5.3.1.6 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There is no area of Shellfish waters within the study area. The closest ones are Drumcliff Shellfish Area and Sligo Bay Shellfish Area, c. 8.7km to the west of the study area.

#### 5.3.1.7 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

The Owengrave Sligo on the border of County Roscommon is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

#### 5.3.1.8 Other Designations

##### RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. Relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations. The only Ramsar Site within the study area Lough Oughter (Ramsar Site no. 853) in County Cavan. There is also Lough Gara (Ramsar Site no. 852) in County Sligo, c. 250m to the north-west of the study area.

##### Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68no. sanctuaries in the State<sup>18</sup>. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The Lough Ramor (WFS-03) and Dartrey/Fairfield (WFD-04) is located within County Cavan. There are no sites within County Leitrim. The Annaghmore Lough (WFS-

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<sup>18</sup> NPWS (2021).

44), Lough Croan (WFS-45), Lough Funshinagh (WFS-46) and Lough Key (part) (WFS-47) are located within County Roscommon.

### Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order. There are no nature reserves within the study area. The closest nature reserve is the Union Wood Nature Reserve in County Sligo, c. 25km to the west of the study area.

### *Margaritifera* Sensitive Area

Freshwater pearl mussel is a globally threatened, long-lived and extremely sensitive species that can be impacted by many forms of pollution, particularly sediment and nutrient pollution and by hydrological and morphological changes, which may arise from developments, activities or changes in any part of the catchment. There are two species of freshwater pearl mussel in Ireland (*Margaritifera margaritifera* and *Margaritifera durrovensis*) and both are protected under Annex II and Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive. Within the study area the *Margaritifera* Sensitive Areas are found within the following – Erne Claddagh or Swanlinbar, Erne-Annalee-Larah and Erne-Annalee.

Refer to **Figure 5.3**.

#### 5.3.1.9 Biodiversity Issues

Ireland is currently experiencing a decline in floral and faunal populations. Implementation of measures to achieve the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the objectives of the WFD are likely to benefit protected sites in the future.

Certain developments and activities associated with urban developments, tourism and recreation that are located within, or close to, ecologically sensitive sites can give rise to significant environmental pressures. Within the study area, the protection of waterways, wetlands and peatlands and the avoidance of the spread of invasive species are major issues.

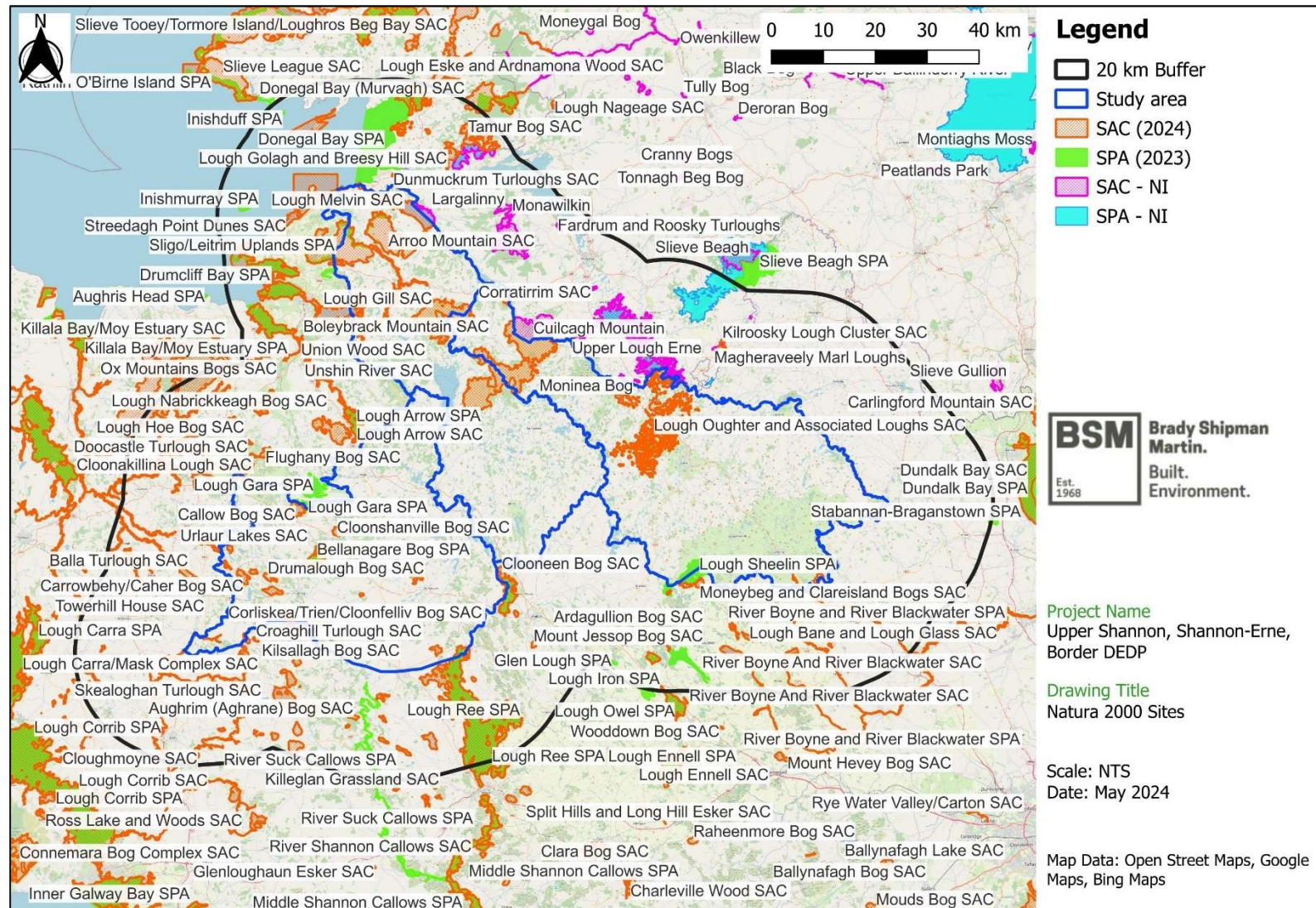
Existing biodiversity issues / pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species, which are also relevant to the study area, include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, recreational activity works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of commercial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example development within watercourses.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes.
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at coastal sites, riverside walkways, pressure from increased visitor numbers etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.



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Figure 5.1 European Sites within the study area and in the surrounding the potential zone of influence



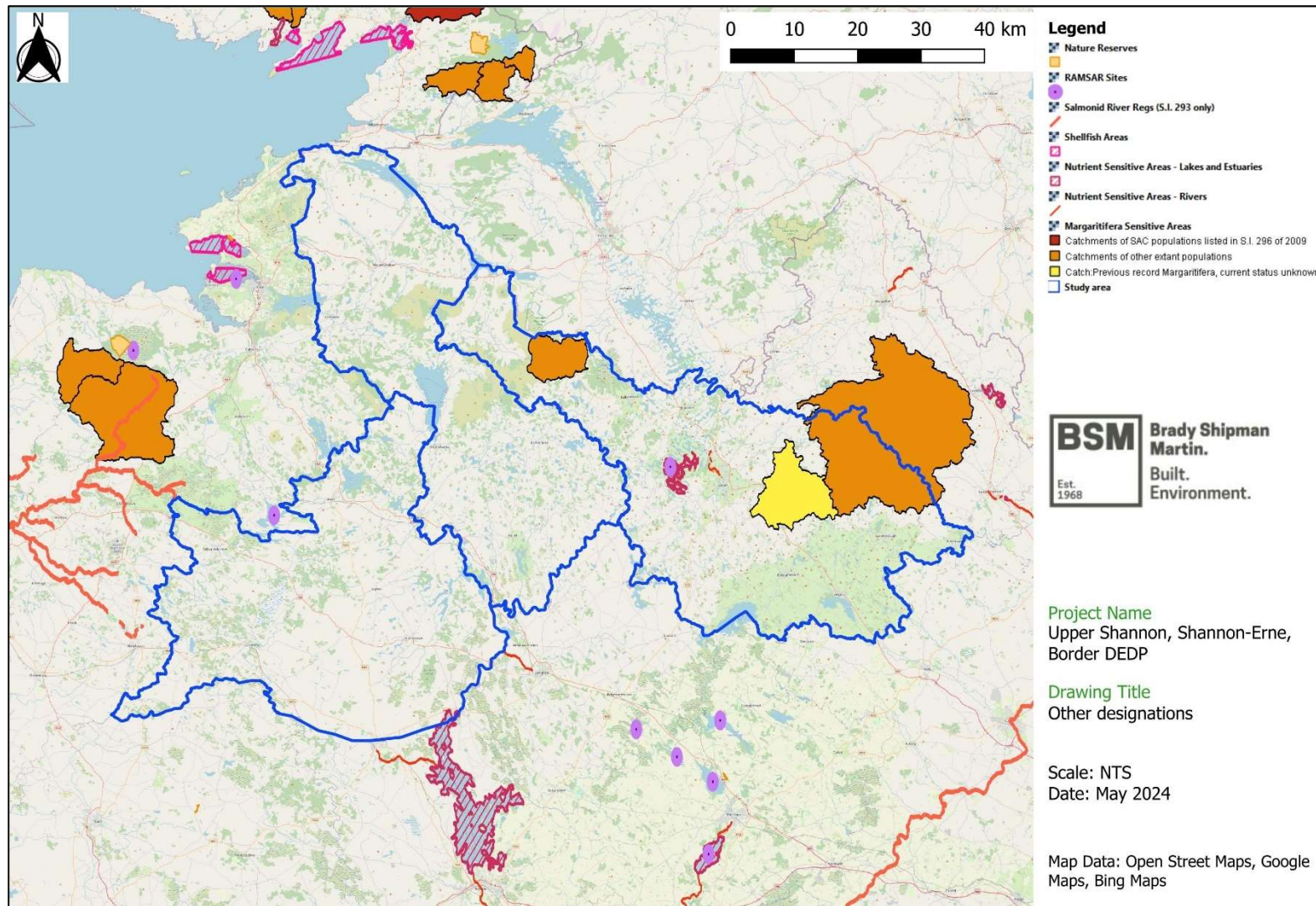


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Figure 5.3 Other Designated Sites within study area and in the surrounding area



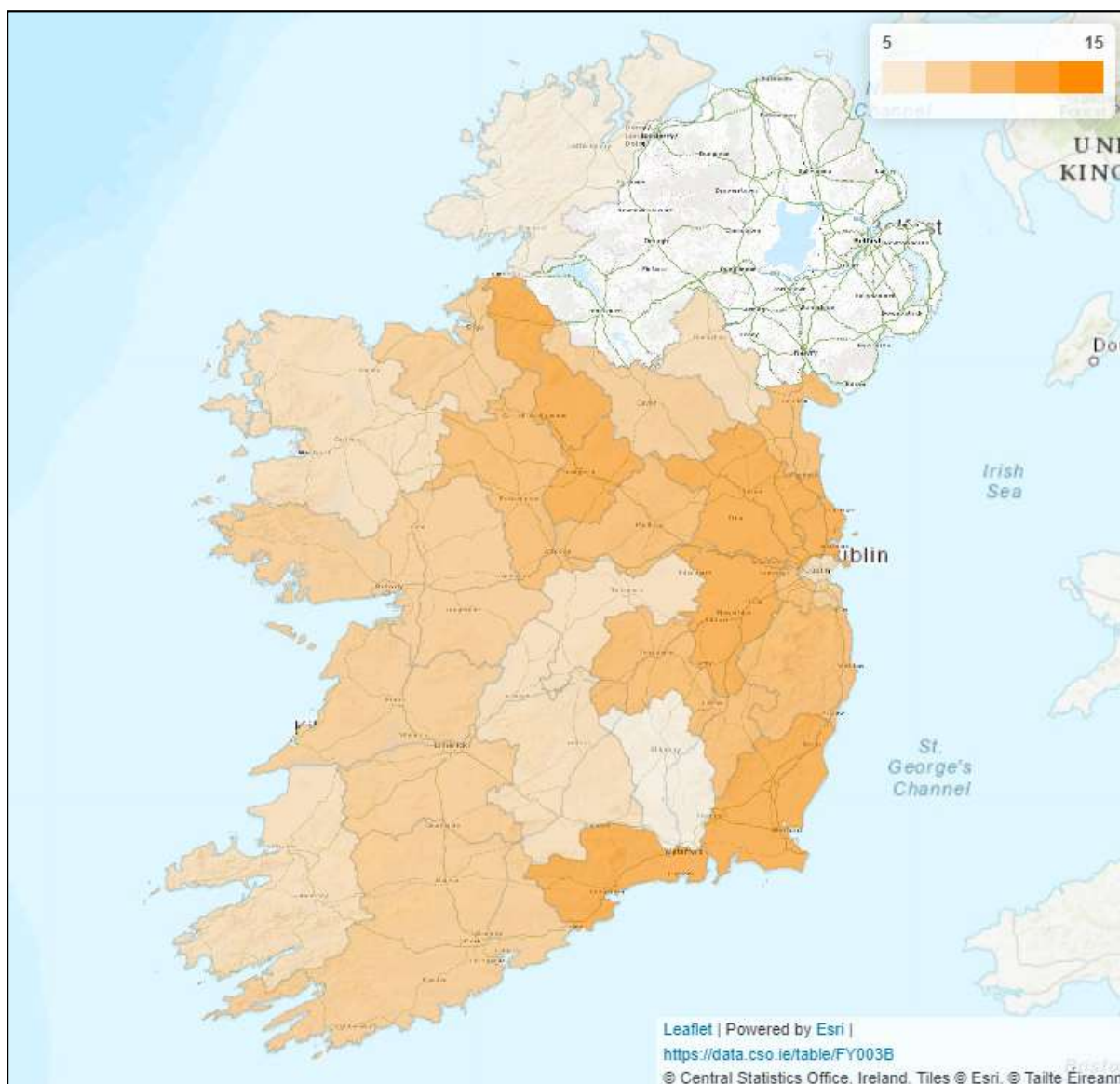
## 5.3.2 Population and Human Health

### 5.3.2.1 Population

The study area includes Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon north of, and including, Roscommon Town. The study area is surrounded by Northern Ireland on the north, Monaghan on north-east, Meath to the east, Longford and Westmeath to the south, Sligo to the north-west, Mayo to the west and Galway to the south-west. The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) outlines that by 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in Ireland.

The 2022 Census results showed that the percentage in population change for County Cavan was 7.3%, Leitrim was 9.8% and Roscommon was 8.9%. There has been an increase in the population of the Counties from 2016 to 2022. Refer to **Figure 5.4** below for the overall population change for the Counties between 2016 and 2022.

Figure 5.4 Percentage change of population since the previous census by county and city, 2022<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpsr/censusofpopulation2022-summaryresults/populationchanges/>



### 5.3.2.2 Socio-Economic Trends

#### Tourism

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of the State. Tourism is particularly important in that it can assist in providing business and employment opportunities across regions and leads to jobs across the spectrum of skills requirements. The quality and diversity of tourism in the study area is particularly strong in relation to its rich heritage, quality rural landscape and many towns and villages, meaning the study area has a lot to offer as a tourist destination. The development plan for Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon promote the development and strengthening of the overall value of tourism in this region as previously stated. The counties have an objective to enhance the potential for economic development in the tourism sector.

### 5.3.2.3 Human Health

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. The impact of development on human health is also influenced by the extent to which new development is accompanied by appropriate infrastructure and the maintenance of the quality of water, air and soil.

#### Infrastructure / Amenity and Human Health

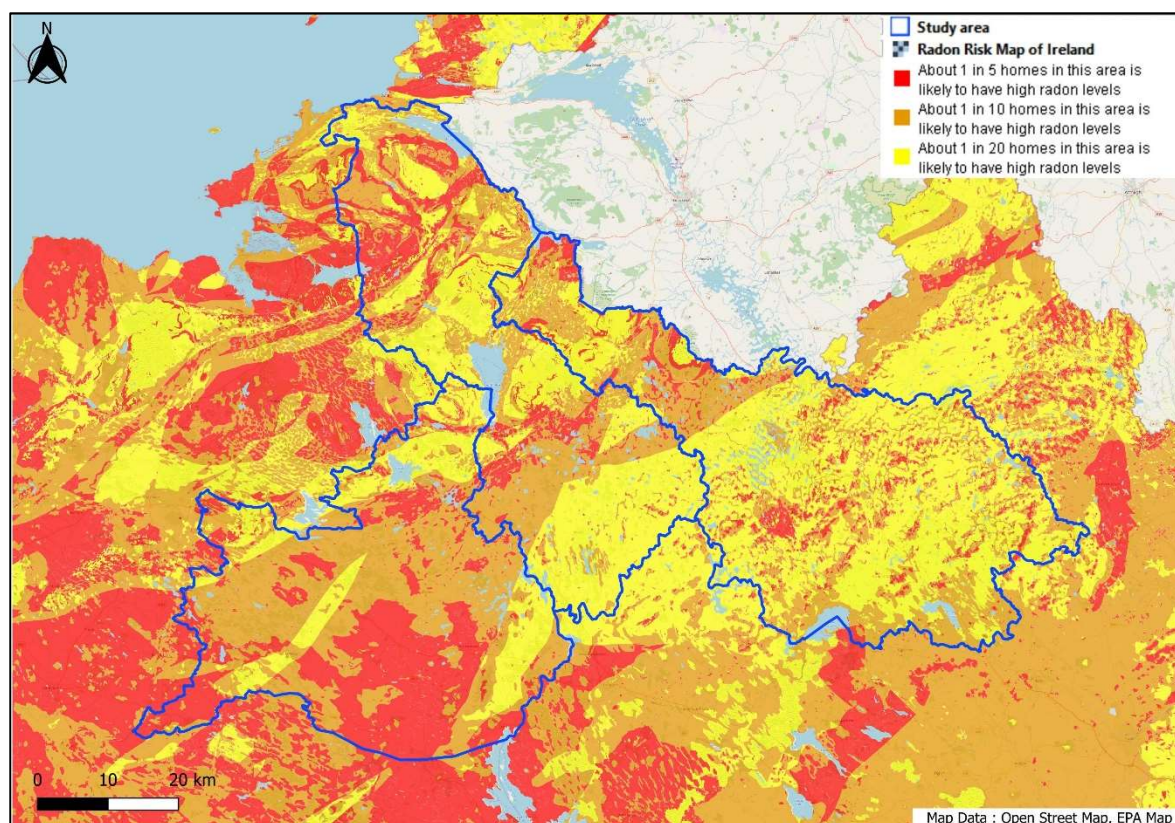
Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being. Nationally there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally.

There are a large number of built recreation and sporting facilities provided throughout the study area through a mix of public, private, schools, community facilities and voluntary organisations. Water sports cover a wide range of activities from tranquil uses such as angling, sailing, canoeing, rowing and sail boarding to powered activities such as jet skis, water-skiing and powerboat uses.

#### Radon and Human Health

Radon is a radioactive gas, which is naturally produced in the ground from the uranium present in small quantities in all rocks and soils. Tiny radioactive particles are produced by the gas which when inhaled can cause lung cancer. The risk of contracting lung cancer as a result of Radon depends on how much Radon a person has been exposed to over a period of time. Radon risk map levels in the study area have been collated from the EPA *Radon Risk Map of Ireland* and are shown in **Figure 5.5** below. Areas in red are most at risk from radon and are called High Radon Areas, the areas of the map in orange and yellow are areas of medium and low risk respectively. However, a high radon level can be found in any home in any part of the country.

Figure 5.5 Radon Risk Map for the study area



#### 5.3.2.4 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of the study area, include:

- Health and Well-being - continue the development of recreation and leisure facilities.
- Support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the study area.
- Radon - Radon risk map levels in the study area have been collated from the EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland, refer to **Figure 5.6**.
- Flooding - Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the study area causing damage to homes and businesses. Refer to Section 5.3.4.
- Information on the status of drinking water, wastewater and climate change are provided in other sections of this Report.

#### 5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Soil is composed of mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Land degradation is a global problem, often caused by a combination of factors such as poor land management and unsustainable development. Land degradation may exacerbate the impacts of natural disasters.

##### 5.3.3.1 Land

##### Forestry and Woodlands



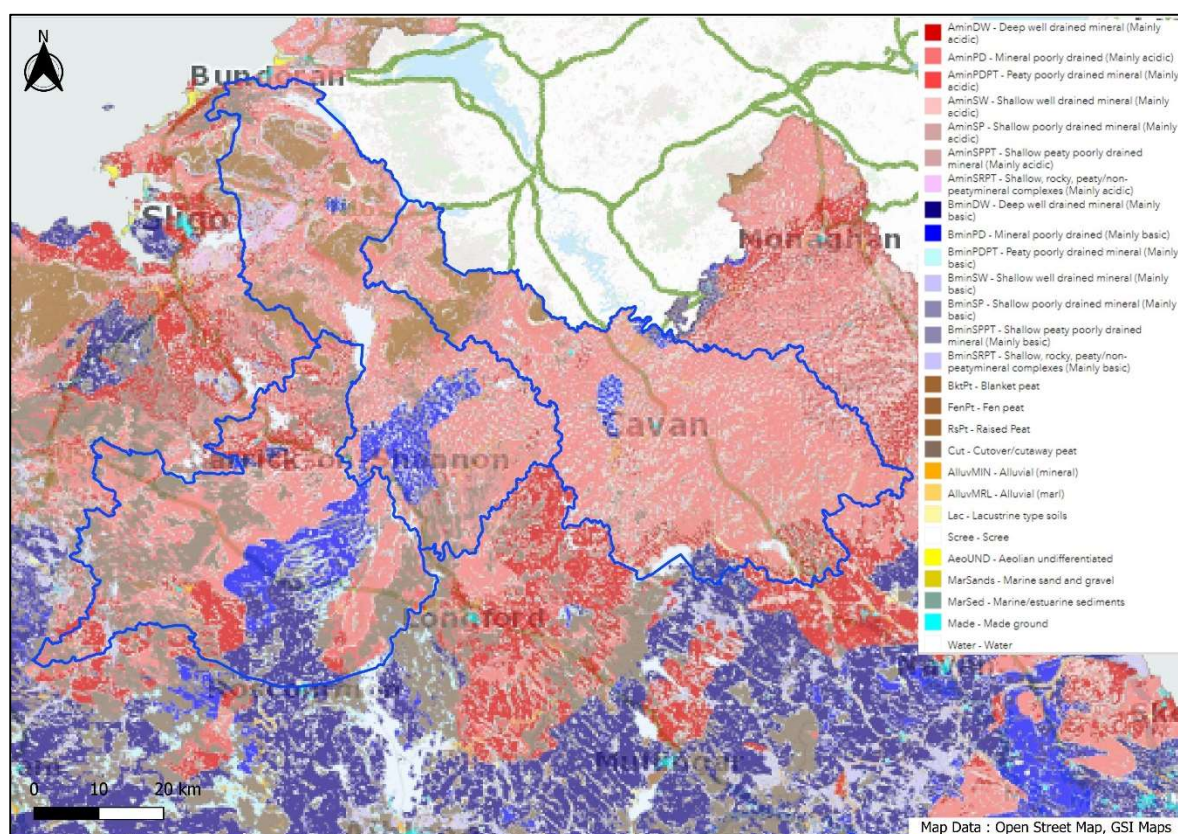
Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are also important as links in the green infrastructure network. Coillte<sup>20</sup> have provided access to many of their forests and support the use of the forests for recreational uses, and provide access to the following forests in the study area – Glenfarne Wood, Bawnboy, Killykeen Forest Park, Cavan Burren Park, Deerpark Virginia, Knockranny, Bailieborough, Dún an Rí Forest Park, Derryvunny, Lough Key Forest Park, Oakport/Bluebell Wood.

### 5.3.3.2 Soils

Soil is a non-renewable resource that performs many vital functions: food, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. The *Irish Soil Information System (SIS)* concludes a 5 year programme, supported by the EPA and Teagasc, to develop a 1:250,000 scale national soil map. The Irish Soil Information System adopted a unique methodology combining digital soil mapping techniques with traditional soil survey application.

The study area contains a range of soils that support various habitats and land uses and provide valuable mineral resource potential. Fertile soils also provide the basis for a thriving agricultural and food sector. The study area comprises a mix of soil types, see **Figure 5.6** below. These soils can be impacted upon by development, land use changes and water quality.

Figure 5.6 Teagasc Subsoils Map for the study area<sup>21</sup>



<sup>20</sup> <https://www.coillte.ie/our-forests/recreation-map/>

<sup>21</sup> EPA Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

### Seveso Sites

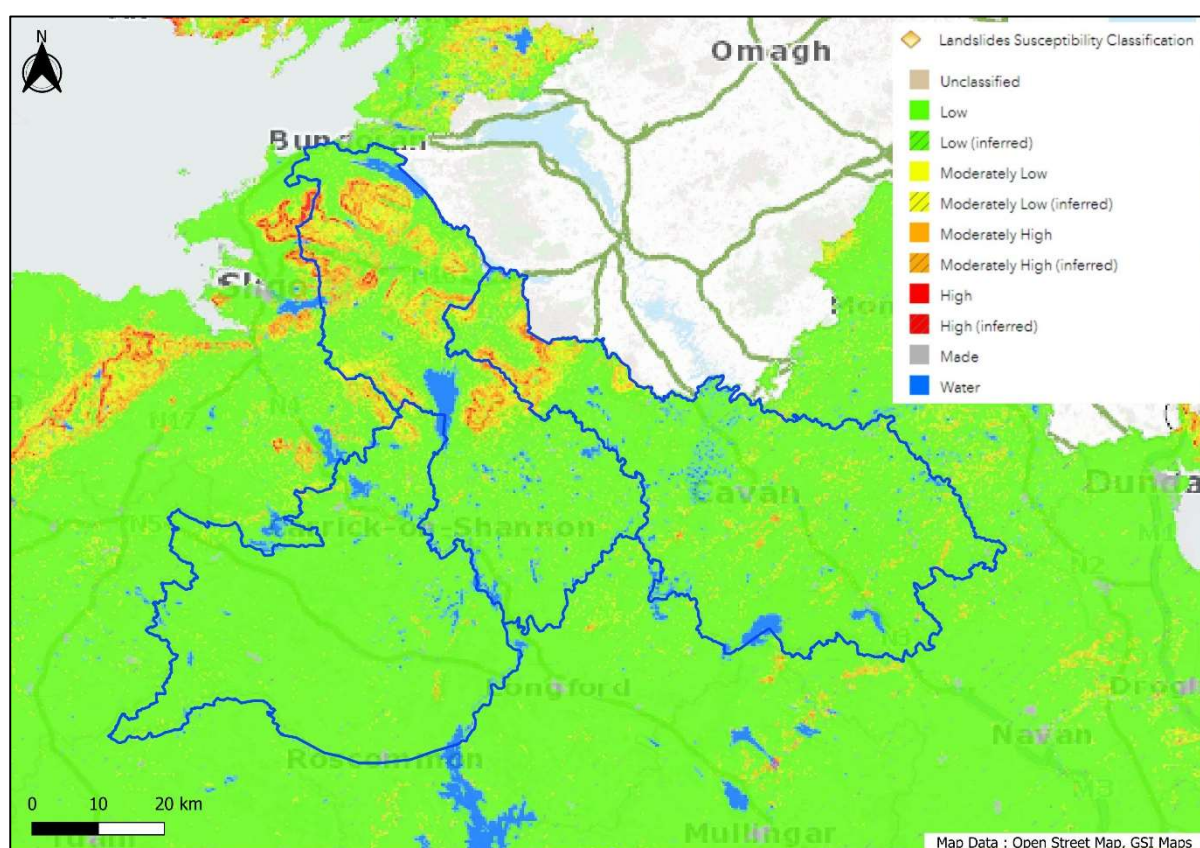
The *Seveso III Directive* (European Directive 2012/18/EU) and the *European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000* (S.I. No. 476 of 2000) apply to companies where dangerous substances are present in quantities equal to or above specified thresholds. There are two thresholds, a lower one of 50 tonnes ('lower tier sites') and a higher one of 200 tonnes ('upper tier sites'). Lower tier sites are required to have a *Major Accidents Prevention Policy* and a *Safe Work Systems Plan*. Upper tier sites are required to carry out, in conjunction with the local competent authority (which includes the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Local Authority and An Garda Síochána) a *Major Accidents External Emergency Plan*.

Emergency Plans must take full account of objectives established for nearby waters in river basin plans. The legislation deals with the prevention of major accidents. At present there are no Seveso sites within the study area.

### Landslides

According to Geological Survey, Ireland landslide susceptibility mapping, the vast majority of the study area has been rated as having 'low' landslide susceptibility, with the risk rising to 'moderately low' to 'moderately high' in isolated patches throughout the study area especially in County Leitrim. Refer to Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 GSI Landslide Susceptibility for the study area<sup>22</sup>



<sup>22</sup> GSI Spatial Resources - <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>



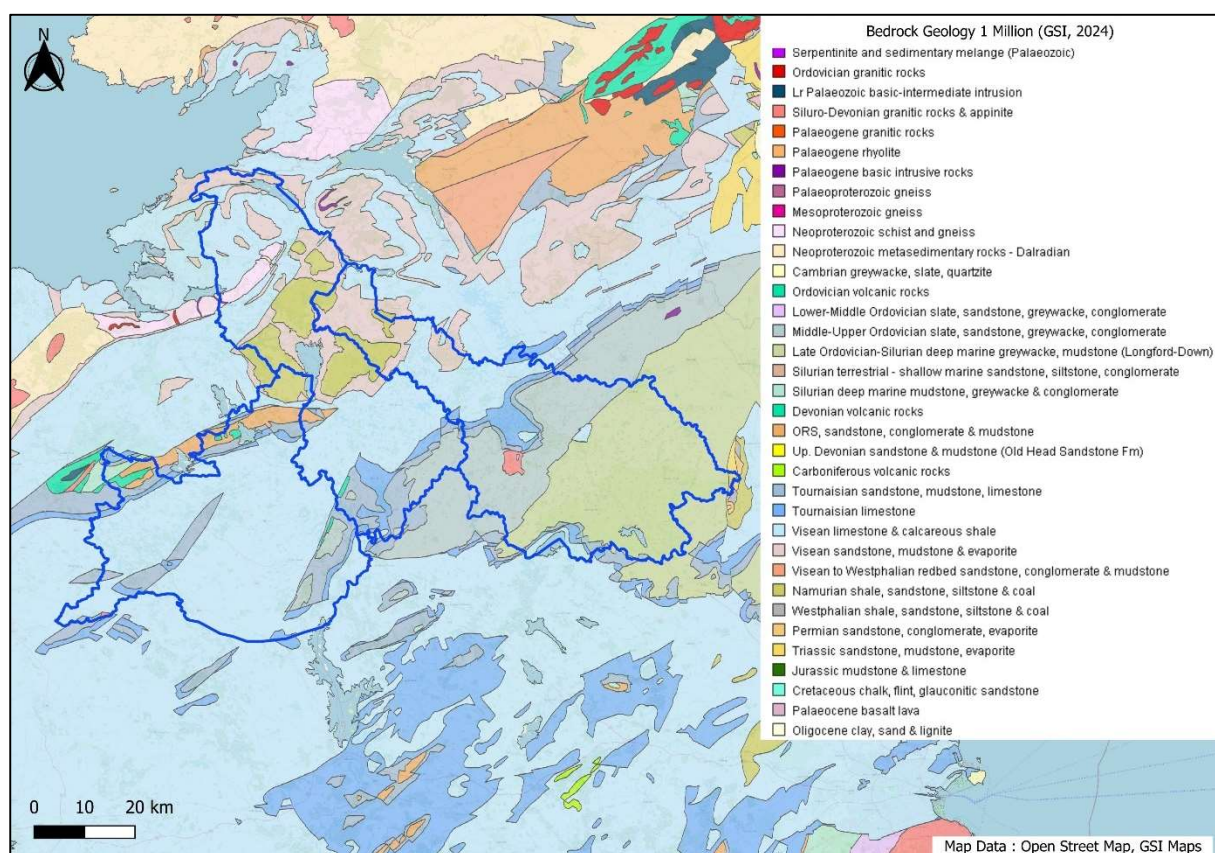
### 5.3.3.3 Geology

#### Geological Heritage

The *Geological Survey of Ireland* (GSI) provides information available on bedrock, subsoil, aquifer classifications and vulnerability. GSI has assessed the geological heritage of the study area and identified sites of geological and geomorphological importance. The bedrock foundation, with hundreds of millions of years in the formation and shaping, and the more recent history of geomorphological processes involving river channels and glaciers are what have created the underlying geological diversity, or geodiversity. The study area has a range of such natural and man-made sites.

The study area is underlain by several different rock formations<sup>23</sup> as shown in **Figure 5.8** below.

**Figure 5.8 GSI Bedrock Geology (1 Million) for the study area<sup>24</sup>**

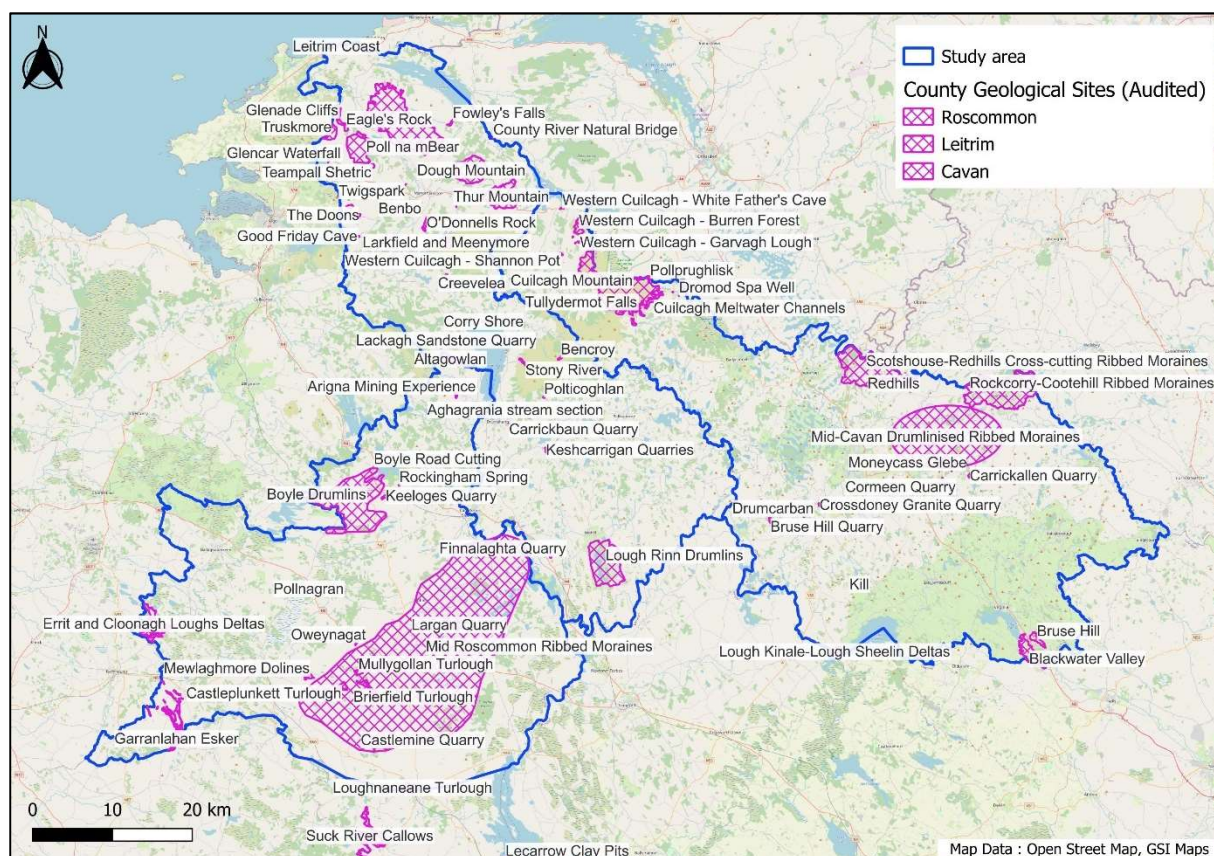


The identified geological sites within the study area which are important Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites are shown below in **Figure 5.9**. Geological Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system.

<sup>23</sup> GSI Bedrock Geology - <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/publications/Pages/Bedrock-Geology-of-Ireland-Map-Scale-1-to-1-Million.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> GSI Spatial Resources - <https://dcnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>

Figure 5.9 Geological Heritage Sites in the study area<sup>25</sup>



## UNESCO Global Geopark

UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing natural hazard-related risks.

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, formerly Marble Arch Caves UGGp, became the world's first cross-border Global Geopark when it expanded from County Fermanagh into County Cavan in 2008 and is located within the study area. The site includes show caves in Carboniferous limestone, the Geopark has a great geological diversity from the oldest (Dalradian) rocks in Northern Ireland, to impressive glacial erratics.

### 5.3.3.4 Existing Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology Issues

Existing land, soil and geology issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Soil - the loss / damage of soil from the construction of greenfield sites for development.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites can release CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.

<sup>25</sup> GSI – The Geological Heritage of the study area -

<https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>



- Land - management of woodlands for recreational purposes.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the study area, see Figure 5.9.

### 5.3.4 Water Quality (including Flooding)

Water is fundamental to all life; for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, power generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring continued protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition flooding is also dealt with in this section.

Wastewater treatment and drinking water are discussed under Material Assets in **Section 5.3.6** below.

#### 5.3.4.1 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface water and groundwater waterbodies. Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the WFD 2000/60/EC, which was transposed into Irish law under the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). This legislation requires governments to take a holistic approach to managing all their water resources based on natural geographic boundaries, *i.e.* the river catchment or basin. The WFD establishes a common framework for the sustainable and integrated management of all waters covering groundwater, inland surface waters, transitional waters and coastal waters. The WFD requires Member States to manage all of their waters and ensure that they achieve at least 'good status' by 2015 and beyond. The ultimate deadline for Member States for achievement of 'good' status is 2027 at the latest.

#### 5.3.4.2 Surface Waterbodies

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland was divided into eight River Basin Districts (RBDs) or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The first cycle of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ran from 2009-2015, where the eight RBDs devised separate plans with the objective of achieving at least 'good' status for all waters by 2015.

The second cycle of the RBMP 2018-2021 merged all eight RBDs to form one national RBD. The RBMP sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. The third cycle of the RBMP 2022-2027 is currently being prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in line with the *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC).

Water quality data is also collected by the EPA to provide an overall status of water quality. The monitoring programme, as part of the WFD, assesses water quality but also water trends of rivers in relation to ecological and physio-chemical quality. The WFD status of rivers ranges from 'high' to 'bad'. The EPA also undertakes water quality surveys for transitional and coastal waterbodies.

Water quality in Ireland has deteriorated over the past two decades. Overall, the water quality is declining and the number of water bodies in satisfactory condition (high or good status) across rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters has decreased under the last WFD monitoring cycle 2016-2021 as compared to the previous assessment which covered the period 2013-2018.

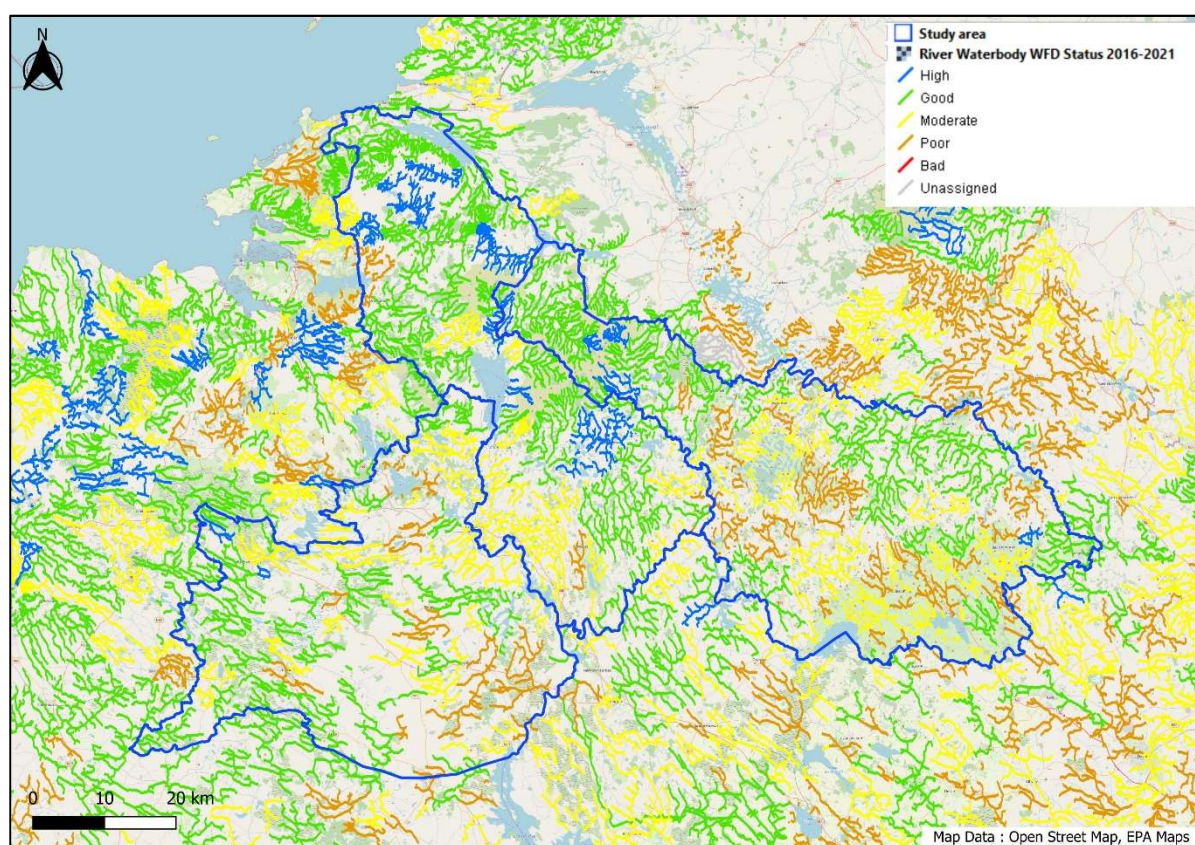
The study area covers the following WFD catchments - Erne Catchment (36), Sligo Bay (35), Upper Shannon (26A), Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee (06), Boyne (07), Upper Shannon (26F), Upper Shannon (26C), Upper Shannon (26E), Upper Shannon (26D), Corrib (30), Upper Shannon (26B) and Moy & Killala Bay (34).

#### 5.3.4.3 Surface Water Quality

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The status of the **river waterbodies** within the study area ranges from 'poor' to 'high'. The WFD water quality status of the river waterbodies in the study area is shown in **Figure 5.10** below.

**Figure 5.10 WFD River Waterbody Status 2016-2021**<sup>26</sup>



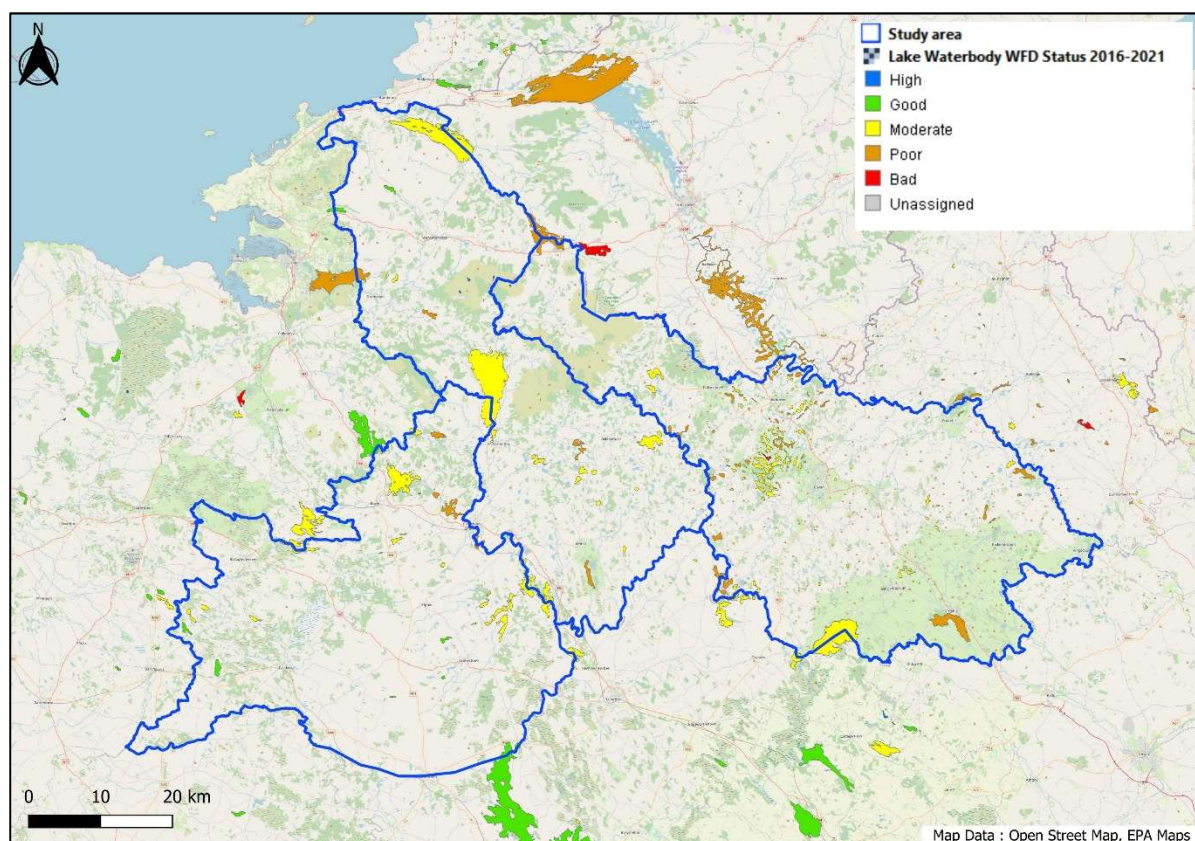
The status of the **lake waterbodies** within the study area ranges from 'bad' to 'high'. The WFD water quality status of the lake waterbodies in the study area is shown in **Figure 5.11** below.

There are no transitional or coastal waterbodies within the study area. The Donegal Bay Southern (IE\_WE\_430\_0000) waterbody is immediately to the north of the study area and has 'High' WFD status.

<sup>26</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>



Figure 5.11 WFD Lake Waterbody Status 2016-2021<sup>27</sup>



#### 5.3.4.4 Groundwater and Aquifer Vulnerability

The *EU Groundwater Directive* (2006/118/EC) uses a holistic approach to groundwater by addressing the relationships between groundwater, surface water and ecological receptors.

Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally ‘good’<sup>28</sup> across the groundwater bodies within the study area as shown in **Figure 5.12** below.

The groundwater vulnerability of study area ranges from ‘low’ to ‘extreme’. The groundwater vulnerability of study area is shown in **Figure 5.13** below.

The GSI rates aquifers according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. Aquifer vulnerability is the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. The study area is underlain with both regionally important and locally important bedrock. There are no gravel aquifers within the study area. Refer to **Figure 5.14**.

<sup>27</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

<sup>28</sup> EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>



Figure 5.12 WFD Groundwater Waterbody Status 2016-2021<sup>29</sup>

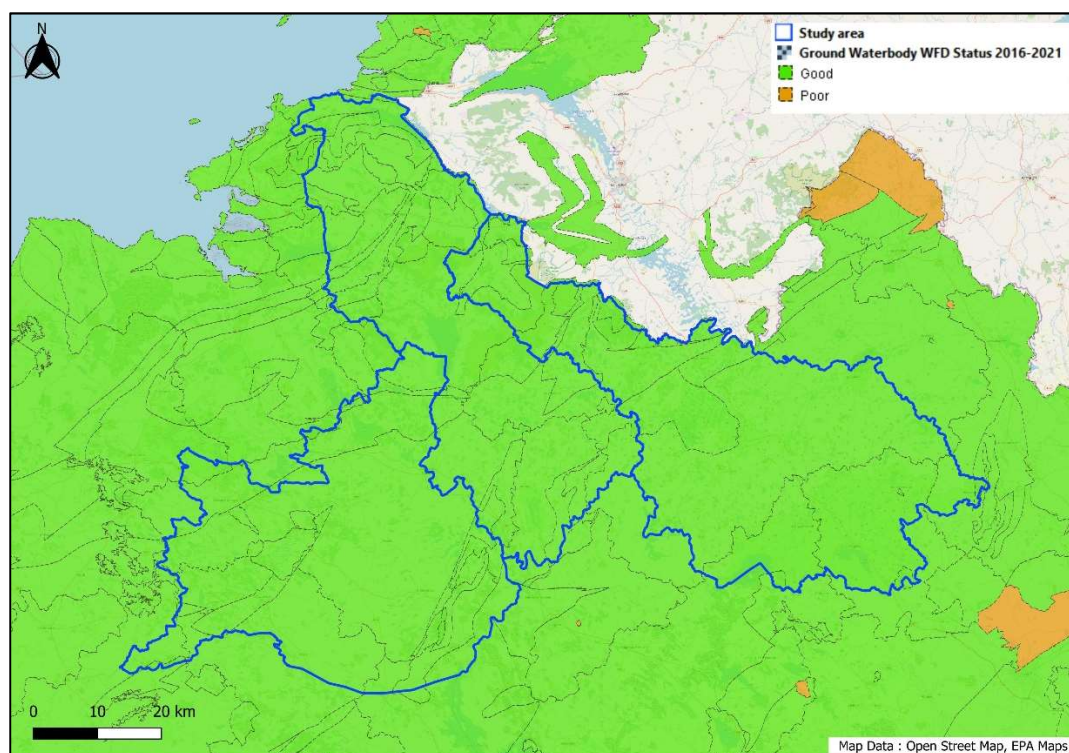
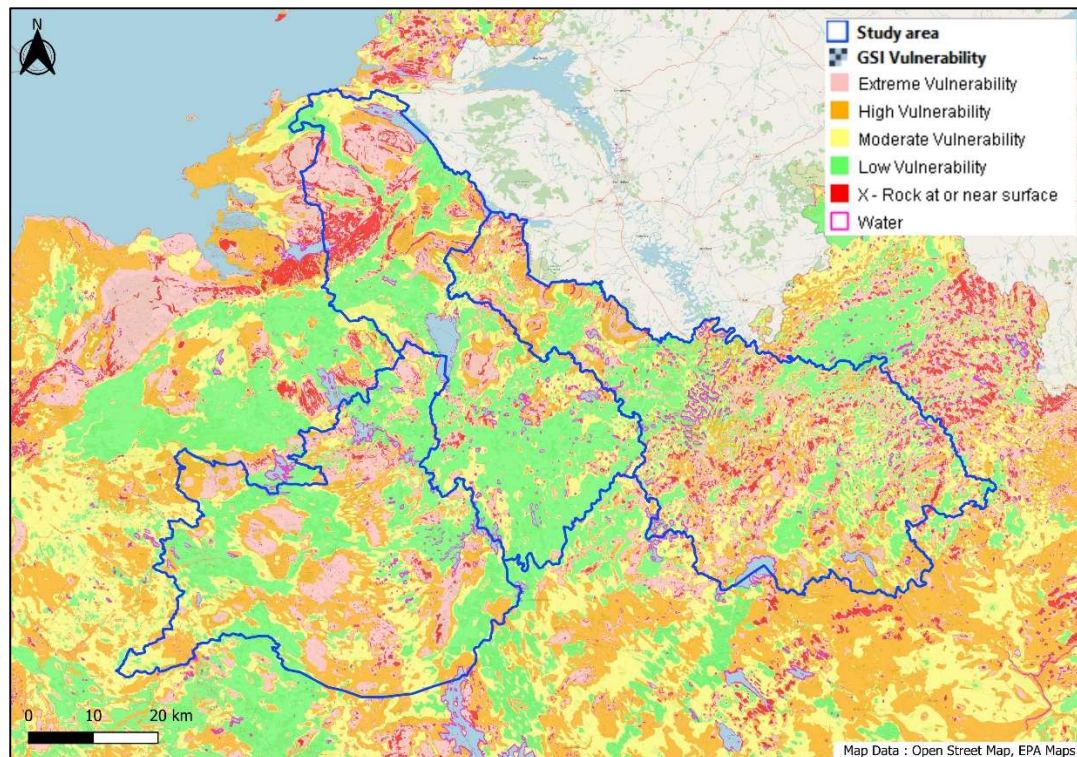


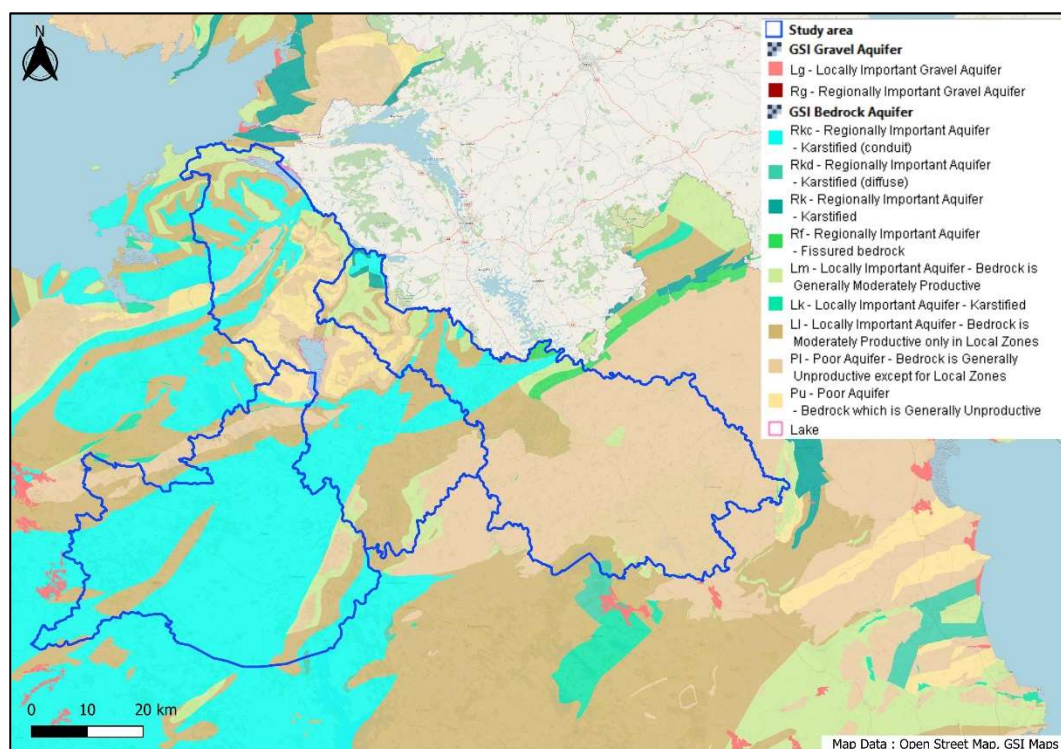
Figure 5.13 Groundwater Vulnerability within the study area<sup>30</sup>



<sup>29</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

<sup>30</sup> GSI Spatial Resources- <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>

Figure 5.14 Bedrock Aquifer within the study area<sup>31</sup>



#### 5.3.4.5 Flooding and Flood Risk

The underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels are, essentially uncontrollable. Floods are usually caused by a combination of events including overflowing river banks, heavy rains, coastal storms or blocked or overloaded drainage systems and an increase in development and impermeable surfacing.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body for flood risk management. As part of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) have been prepared.

In addition to this there is modelled Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Risk and Hazard mapping available from the OPW including through the National Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme. These mapping sources identify flood risk from various sources, including fluvial, pluvial, coastal and groundwater.

Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle shall demonstrate the use of the sequential approach in terms of the site layout and design and, in satisfying the Justification Test (where required), the proposal will demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and management measures are put in place.

#### 5.3.4.6 Bathing Waters

The EPA works with the HSE and local authorities to ensure that designated beaches and lakes in Ireland are safe to swim in. Designated beaches and lakes are known as identified bathing waters. This is done under a law called the EU Bathing Water Directive, which is implemented in Ireland by the Bathing

<sup>31</sup> GSI Spatial Resources- <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>



Water Regulations. There is one designated bathing water within the study area - Keeldra Lough which has 'Excellent Water Quality' under the 2023 monitoring results.

#### 5.3.4.7 Existing Hydrogeology and Water Quality Issues

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Water - the surface waterbodies within the study area need to be improved to achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies by 2027.
- Water - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication;
- Water - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, water-based recreational sports, erosion, industry and urbanisation.
- Sustainable management of waterways and water-based recreation activities to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural resources and heritage areas.
- Water - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- Surface, ground & transitional waters - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages. There is growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- Flooding - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criteria.

#### 5.3.5 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

##### 5.3.5.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation<sup>32</sup> in Ireland highlights the need '*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*'. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate '*shall preserve through appropriate measures the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development*'.

EU legislation on air quality requires that Member States divide their territory into zones for the assessment and management of air quality. The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication '*2022 Annual Report on Air Quality in Ireland*' which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. Four national air quality zones have been designated in Ireland, these are:

- Zone A is the Dublin conurbation;
- Zone B is the Cork conurbation;
- Zone C comprises of 23 large towns in Ireland with a population of >15,000; and
- Zone D is the remaining area of Ireland.

<sup>32</sup> S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print>

The study area is located within Zone D, within the 'Rural Ireland' zone. The designated zones have been defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as defined in the aforementioned regulations. The air quality monitoring sites within the study area are located in Cavan Town (CN1), Carrick-on-Shannon (LM1) and Roscommon Town (RN01).

The air quality index for health (AQIH) regions are calculated on an hourly basis at various locations around Ireland. The AQIH is based on measurements of air pollutants which can harm health. The five pollutants are:

- Ozone gas;
- Nitrogen dioxide gas;
- Sulphur dioxide gas;
- PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles; and
- PM<sub>10</sub> particles.

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' in each region. The current air quality across the study area is 'good'. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in the study area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

#### 5.3.5.2 Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is '*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*', and this includes noise nuisance. The Noise Directive - Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing community policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

- draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; and
- draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.

The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.

During the implementation of the USSEB DEDP, consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country.

#### 5.3.5.3 Climate

Climate Change is a phenomenon that has widespread economic, health and safety, food production, security, and other dimensions. Climate change refers to a long term, large scale change in global or regional climate patterns. In recent years, global temperatures have been rising. Urgent action is needed to address climate change and to move Ireland towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.

The ever increasing rate of carbon dioxide combustion, and the emission of other greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution, has resulted in the

‘greenhouse affect’. Most greenhouse gases emissions are related to the energy generation, transport, agriculture, and industry sectors.

In Ireland, the expected effects of Climate Change are increased frequency of extreme weather events within the next century. This will include a 20%-30% increase in precipitation, greater rainfall intensity coupled with flash floods and an average annual temperature increase of ~2°C. The potential impacts of Climate Change could have serious consequences for both people and infrastructure along Ireland’s coastal areas as well as its rivers<sup>33</sup>.

The recent *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland’s *Climate Action Plan 2024* builds on national and sectoral targets by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings in this regard. The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is to lay out a roadmap of actions which will ultimately lead us to meeting our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022.<sup>34</sup>

The IPCC Working Group II Report, published in February 2022, assesses the impacts of climate change, looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels, and is more relevant to reviewing vulnerabilities, and the capacities and limits of the natural world and human societies to adapt to climate change. The report states that economic damage from climate change has been detected in climate-exposed sectors, with regional effects on agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, and tourism<sup>38</sup>.

The Action Plan supports the further development of sustainable tourism and sustainable destination management and provides for various measures that will contribute to climate mitigation, such as those relating to sustainable mobility, carbon pricing, electricity, agriculture and the built environment.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the *Regional Planning Guidelines* are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland. The OPW has undertaken a number of *Flood Risk Management Studies* for different River Basin Districts (RBDs) in Ireland. These studies have identified the areas which are most at risk and future management plans have been advised; these are adopted by the OPW. In some cases, mitigation measures will involve the construction of physical flood defences.

The *Climate Action Plan* identifies actions to decarbonise electricity generation, the built environment and transport and to move towards carbon neutrality for agriculture, forest and land use sectors.

#### 5.3.5.4 Existing Issues

In urban areas, concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these

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<sup>33</sup> GOI (2019).

<sup>34</sup> Climate Action Plan 2024- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/79659-climate-action-plan-2024/>

pollutants are NO<sub>2</sub>, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible.

Tourists contribute to greenhouse gas emissions across the same sources/sectors as local and national populations, e.g. transport, heating and electricity, agriculture/food production and waste generation.

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or without snowfall could adversely impact upon towns and people in the study area leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

### 5.3.6 Material Assets

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal including recycling, transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications and utilities infrastructure. The sustainable growth of the study area is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

#### 5.3.6.1 Water Services and Water Supply

There have been significant changes in responsibilities for water supply and wastewater treatment services. As of January 2014 Uisce Éireann (formerly known as Irish Water) replaced local authorities as a single provider of water supply and wastewater services. Uisce Éireann have prepared the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP), '*A Plan for the Future of Water Services*' and it provides for the first time at national level an opportunity to consider the way water services are delivered in Ireland. The WSSP sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services up to 2040.

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and developing public water services; and ensuring drinking water quality meets the standards in the Drinking Water Regulations. The EPA is the drinking water quality regulator, responsible for enforcing the Drinking Water Regulations. Private bored wells used as a source of water supply to single dwellings are the responsibility of the householder, and are therefore not regulated and Uisce Éireann has no regulatory function in this regard.

The latest *Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2023*<sup>35</sup> was published by the EPA in 2024. The report provides a summary of assessment of drinking water quality in public supplies and public group water schemes in Ireland during 2023.

Practical water conservation measures including active leakage detection, demand management and pressure management played and will continue to play a major role in reducing the demand for potable water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the study area through the existing watermain networks.

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<sup>35</sup> EPA Drinking Water Quality - <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/>

#### 5.3.6.2 Wastewater Services

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) aims to protect the environment from the adverse effects of wastewater discharges by ensuring that wastewater is appropriately treated before it is discharged to the environment. Such treatment is essential in order to meet the requirements of the WFD.

There are currently 34 public wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in the study area<sup>36</sup>. Uisce Éireann and County Councils are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities, etc, and the Councils will continue to work with Uisce Éireann to monitor the performance of the networks and to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the study area.

In un-serviced areas and outside the main settlements, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The requirements for these systems are set out in the EPA *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses*<sup>37</sup>.

#### 5.3.6.3 Waste Management

Waste management in Ireland is regulated by the Waste Management Acts 1996 (as amended), which require Local Authorities to prepare detailed plans for the management of waste. Under the Waste Management Acts, a Development Plan is deemed to include the objectives of the Waste Management Plan (WMP) for its area.

EU and National waste management policy can be summarised by the waste hierarchy of prevention, recycling, energy recovery and disposal. For the purposes of waste management planning, Ireland is now divided into three regions: Southern, Eastern-Midlands and Connacht-Ulster. The study area is located within the Connacht-Ulster region. The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices have issued the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPCE) 2024 - 2030 in March 2024, which supersedes the Southern Region waste management plan and the two other regional waste management plans. The NWMPCE does not however dissolve the three regional waste areas. The NWMPCE sets the ambition of the plan to have a 0% total waste growth per person over the life of the Plan with an emphasis on non-household wastes including waste from commercial activities and the construction and demolition sector.

The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner More Competitive Europe, March 2020, forms one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal. A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy<sup>38</sup> was published in 2020 and outlines Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.

The Council will continue to promote awareness of and promote an increase in the amount of waste that is re-used and recycled to reflect the objectives of the waste hierarchy.

#### 5.3.6.4 Transport

The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of the

<sup>36</sup> UWW Plant Locations - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

<sup>37</sup> EPA, 2010: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/water/wastewater/code%20of%20practice%20for%20single%20houses/>

<sup>38</sup> DCCA (2020).



study area. Land-use planning and transport planning are inextricably linked and their proper integration is a key determinant to sustainable development.

‘National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022-2025’ is a national document which seeks to achieve a shift to more sustainable means of transport by setting actions and timeline for Modal Change. This policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions.

The Policy aims to improve the delivery of sustainable mobility by –

- *Implementing the accompanying action plan to 2025 and a reviewed and updated action plan for 2026 to 2030.*
- *Establishing a Leadership Group to oversee and drive implementation of the Policy and delivery of the action plan, and agree a programme of “pathfinder” projects at local level.*
- *Introducing a new annual National Household Travel Survey to measure progress against the Policy’s targets.*
- *Convening a new National Sustainable Mobility Forum to provide a platform for collaborative engagement with national, regional and local stakeholders.*
- *Increasing public engagement around the benefits of sustainable mobility and raising awareness of the availability of alternative options to the private car.*
- *Establishing a new National Transport Authority Advisory Council to engage with the NTA around the discharge of its functions.*
- *Developing a transport research network to support existing research programmes and draw on the sustainable mobility expertise available across academia and industry, both in Ireland and internationally.*

The area to which the Strategy relates is served by rail, bus, cycle network, regional and strategic roads. Public transport to Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands from Dublin and Galway Cities is strong with regular train and bus services operating. Public transport to facilitate circulation within the region, however, is weaker with relatively poor linkages between towns and the principal visitor attractions. It is very difficult for a visitor to tour the region by public transport. Some Local Link services are currently expanding their routes during the summer months to provide access to key visitor attractions from some towns.

The improved provision of alternatives to the private car should bring about a reduction in demand for private car journeys and a commensurate increase in public transport, walking and cycling. Providing public transport and a network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths and cycleways within local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage walking and cycling.

The development of public transport is critical in achieving more sustainable travel patterns and a reduced reliance on the car. Bus Éireann and a number of private operators operate services throughout the study area.

It is Council policy to support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the study area as detailed in the CDPs.

#### **5.3.6.5 Telecommunications**

High-speed broadband and telecommunications is core to competitiveness. The National Broadband Plan 2019<sup>39</sup> (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. Ireland has

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<sup>39</sup> DCCAE, 2019: <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Delivering%20the%20National%20Broadband%20Plan.pdf>

made significant progress in recent years in terms of broadband connectivity at all levels: international connectivity, backhaul networks, Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and local access networks. Since its publication, significant investment has been made in upgrading and modernising networks which support the provision of broadband and telecommunications services, with significant additional investment expected over the coming years. The *'Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework'* (2022) is intended to assist Ireland in maximising the socio-economic benefits from the digitisation trend.

#### 5.3.6.6 Utilities

Gas and electricity are the energy utilities which have traditionally supported homes and businesses across the Country.

ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. EirGrid manages the higher capacity electricity network which supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of energy and electricity, whilst the ESB manages and operates the distribution network supplying electricity to homes, businesses, schools and institutions.

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) are the utility provider responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas.

Public lighting is an important component of placemaking and is essential for the operation of the city. While the city is generally an illuminated area, excessive light pollution can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed. Insensitive lighting can cause light pollution. Light pollution can have a negative impact on biodiversity by affecting the normal diurnal patterns of plants and animals.

#### 5.3.6.7 Existing Material Asset Issues

The increased tourism at the Country level will result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services.

Existing material assets issues / pressures within the study area, include:

- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - increased tourist numbers will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- Energy - there is a need to phase out the reliance on fossil fuels, with a shift to renewable energy resources. Identifying and enabling indigenous renewable energy will also support Ireland's energy security. New developments require excellent energy and power services which create direct and indirect emissions, particularly CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and dioxins.
- Transport - the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to development. Sustainable development of blueways and greenways is essential to promote recreation and tourism.
- Waste - increased tourist numbers will pose challenge in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure and will put pressure on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.
- Light Pollution - can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed which can in turn lead to inappropriate or excessive light spillage.

- Utilities - provide, protect and maintain adequate utilities to support existing and envisaged development.

### 5.3.7 Cultural Heritage

The physical traces left in the landscape by previous generations in archaeological monuments and sites and in historic buildings, townscapes and vernacular structures forms part of the tangible cultural heritage linking the past and present. The study area has a rich and varied built and cultural heritage resource. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures such as houses, shops, churches, bridges and mills are features of the study area's built heritage.

The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other types as well as their context, whether situated on or under land or water.

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2014* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The *Record of Monuments and Places* (RMP) was established under *Section 12* of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994* and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments.

An archaeological landscape is a natural landscape that has been deliberately modified by a group (or groups) of people during a particular archaeological period (or periods).

The term architectural heritage is defined in the *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments Act 1999* as meaning all structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings; groups of structures and buildings; and, sites which are of technical, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.

In 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published the *Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan* (Prepared under the National Adaptation Framework). The adaptation strategy and accompanying action plan presented in the document aim to:

- Build adaptive capacity within the sector
- Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change
- Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector

A *Protected Structure*, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes:

- the interior of the structure;
- the land lying within its curtilage;
- any other structures within the curtilage, and their interiors; and
- all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

Owners or occupiers of a protected structure may request the Council to issue a declaration as to the type of works, which may or may not be permitted in their structure. The record of protected structures within the study area are presented in **Figure 5.12** and **Figure 5.13** below. There are now approximately 1,400 (City and County) buildings, structures and features listed in the RPS.

An architectural conservation area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve. The ACA's located within the study area are as follows:

■ Co. Leitrim

- ☐ Ballinamore
- ☐ Carrick-on-Shannon
- ☐ Dromahair
- ☐ Drumshanbo
- ☐ Drumkeeran
- ☐ Jamestown
- ☐ Manorhamilton
- ☐ Mohill

■ Co. Cavan

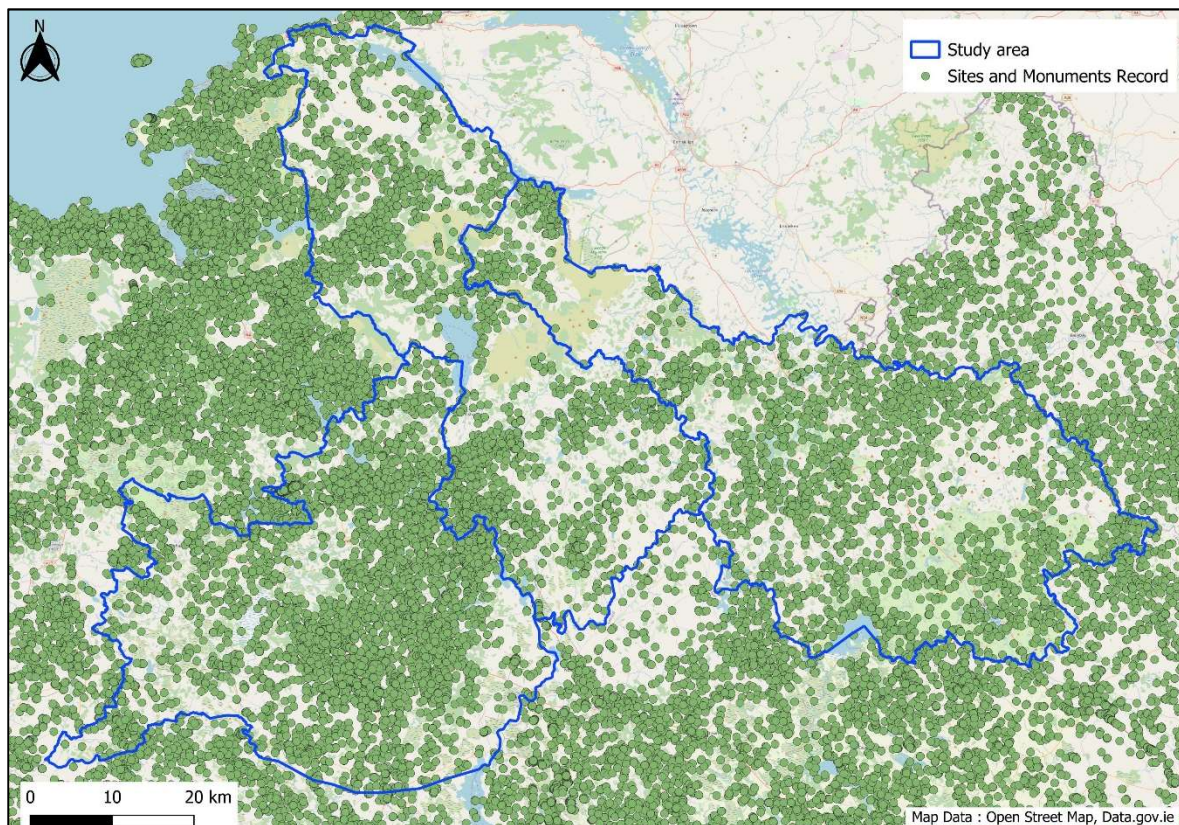
- ☐ Farnham Street
- ☐ Bridge Street
- ☐ Lurgan Quarter (Virginia)
- ☐ Lower Market Street, Cootehill
- ☐ Kingscourt
- ☐ Mullagh
- ☐ Redhills
- ☐ The Diamond (Belturbet)
- ☐ Bawnboy
- ☐ The Lawn (Belturbet)
- ☐ Dowra
- ☐ Blacklion
- ☐ Kilnaleck
- ☐ Mountnugent
- ☐ Bailieborough
- ☐ Butlersbridge

■ Co. Roscommon

- ☐ Ballaghaderreen
- ☐ Boyle
- ☐ Castlerea
- ☐ Roscommon
- ☐ Elphin
- ☐ Strokestown

A positive approach to heritage management enhances quality of life and environmental sustainability and ensures that the cultural and natural heritage is a resource that helps the study area to compete as a cultural tourism destination.

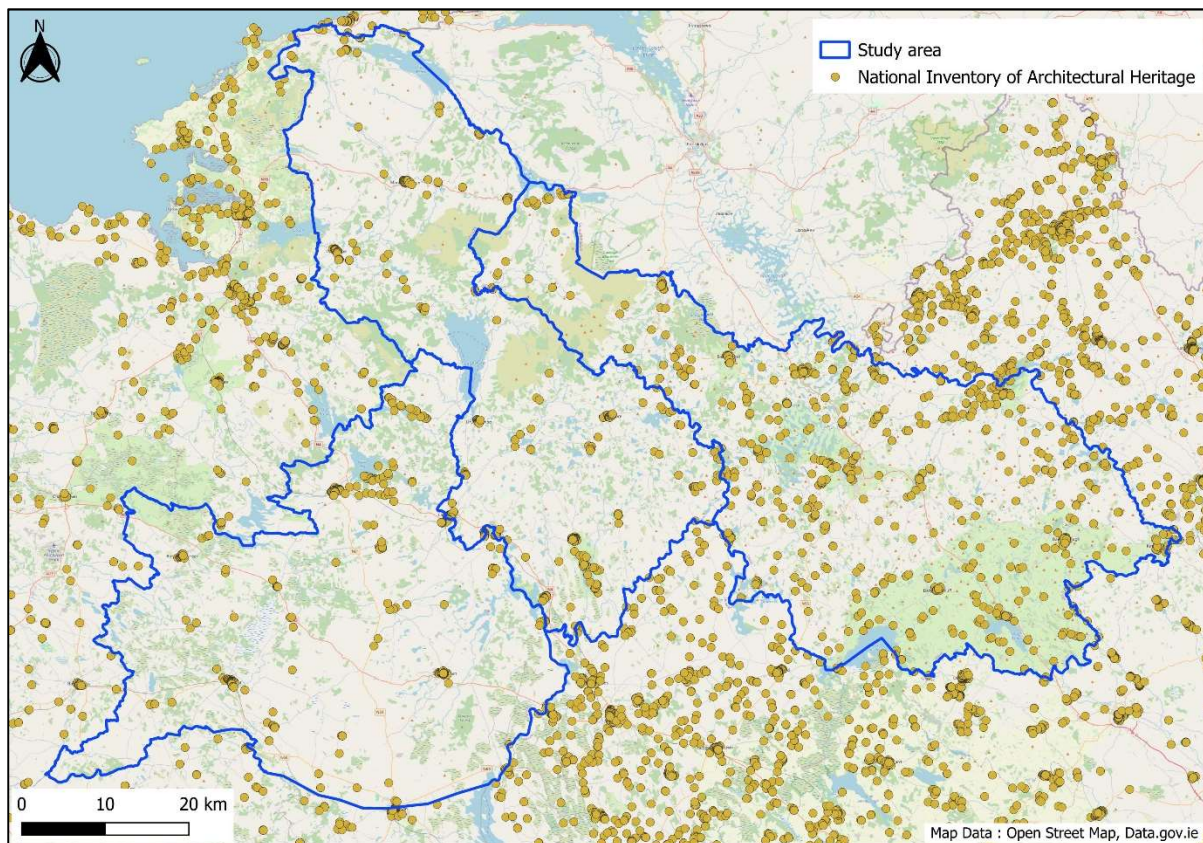
Figure 5.15 Map of the Sites and Monuments Record in the study area<sup>40</sup>



<sup>40</sup> National Monuments Service – Archaeological Survey of Ireland - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-monuments-service-archaeological-survey-of-ireland>



Figure 5.16 Map of the Architectural Heritage Sites in the study area<sup>41</sup>



#### 5.3.7.1 Cultural Heritage Issues

Increased tourist activities have the potential for direct negative impacts on heritage features and their setting. Development of infrastructure, in addition to development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features of architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest. This could directly impact upon the cultural amenity resource and tourism potential of the study area.

Existing cultural heritage issues / pressures include:

- Development of infrastructure -increased visitor numbers can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features and their views to / from architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest.
- Development in close proximity to sites and areas of cultural heritage may adversely impact upon the cultural landscape setting.
- Development has the potential to impact archaeological heritage which is sub-surface. This includes the insertion of services (e.g. cycleways), landscaping works, ground levelling and tree planting.
- Architecture - impact on heritage streetscapes of regional and local importance.
- Archaeology - impact on archaeological monuments and their settings including undiscovered sites / features.
- Risk - protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk.

<sup>41</sup> National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) National Dataset - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-inventory-of-architectural-heritage-niah-national-dataset>

### 5.3.8 Landscape & Visual

Landscapes provide a sense of place and characterises the counties for local residents and visitors alike both in terms of a place to live and also for recreational and tourism purposes.

A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025<sup>42</sup> was published, in line with Ireland's obligations under the European Landscape Convention. The key objectives of this Strategy are the recognition of landscape in law and the provision of a policy framework to put measures in place for the management and protection of landscape, the production of a national Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) through data gathering and an evidence-based description of character assessment, raising awareness and public consultation.

#### 5.3.8.1 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process that describes maps and classifies landscapes. Landscape character is defined as '*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*'. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future. The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be divorced from its physical and visual characteristics, so all of these elements are considered.

#### 5.3.8.2 Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types (LCT) are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the country. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, *e.g.* Hills and Upland Areas.

Landscape Character Areas are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, landuse, cultural, historical and ecological features.

#### 5.3.8.3 Landscape Character Values

Landscape values can be described as the environmental or cultural benefits (including services and functions) derived from various landscape attributes. The Landscape Character Assessment highlights the special landscape value of several of the Landscape Character Areas.

The landscape character areas and values are shown in **Figures 5.17, 5.18 and 5.19** below.

#### 5.3.8.4 Landscape Character Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from 'High' to 'Low' and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and / or tolerant of change.

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<sup>42</sup> National Landscape Strategy: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf>

### 5.3.8.5 Protected Views & Prospects

There is a need to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads and river valleys throughout the study area where these views are of high amenity value. Landscape objectives of the current Development Plan aims to preserve the views and prospects and to protect views from development which would interfere unduly with the visual amenity and character of the landscape, so far as practically possible.

Many of these views are associated with heritage and tourism sites and provide vantage points over high quality landscapes. These scenic views are of an amenity and tourism value and contribute to our quality of life.

The protected views and prospects with the study area are shown below in Figures 5.20, 5.21 and 5.22.

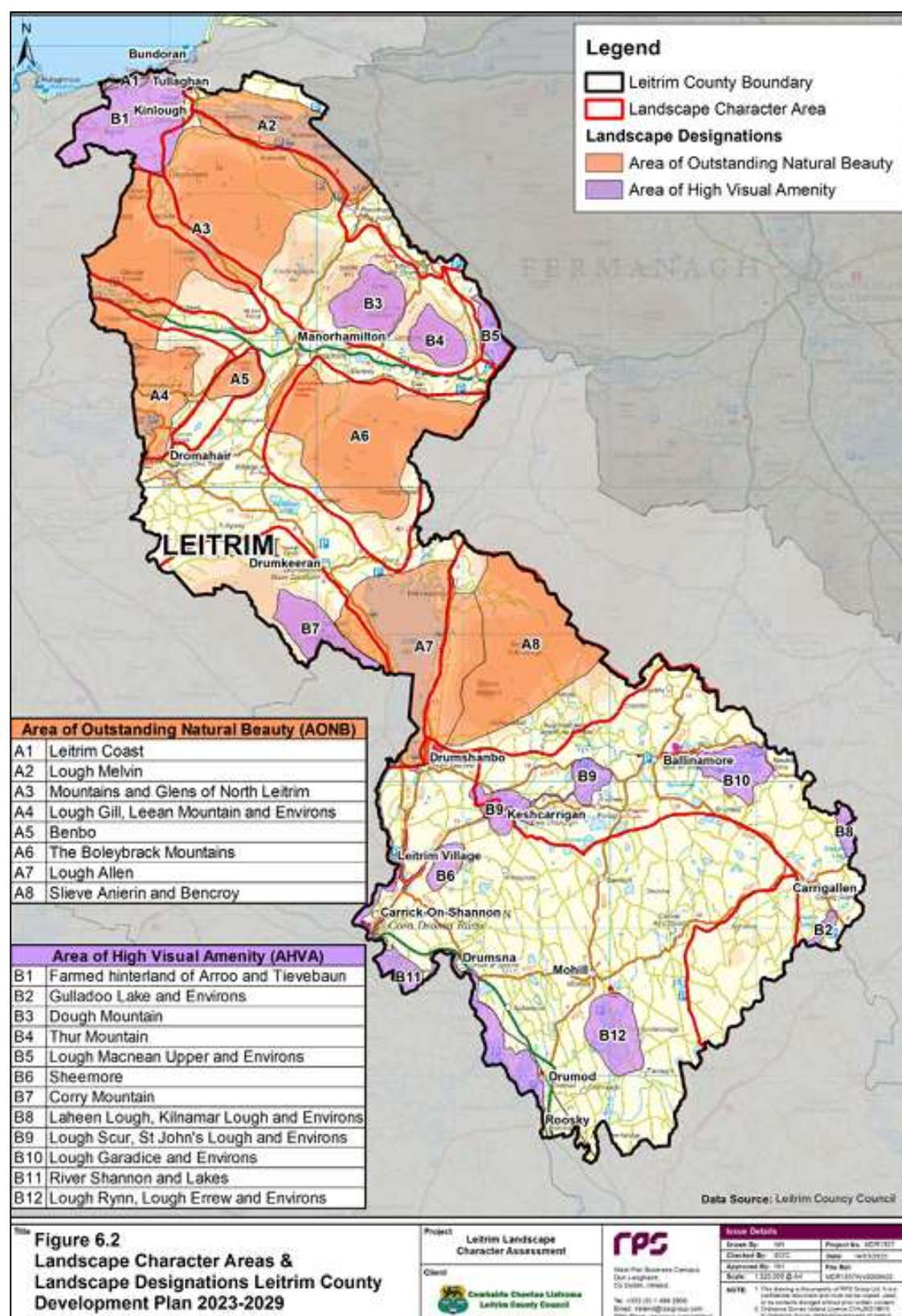
Figure 5.17 High Landscape Areas and Major Lakes - County Cavan<sup>43</sup>



<sup>43</sup>Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 <https://www.cavancoco.ie/file-library/planning/development-plans/development-plan-2022-2028/development-plan-22-28-appendices/>



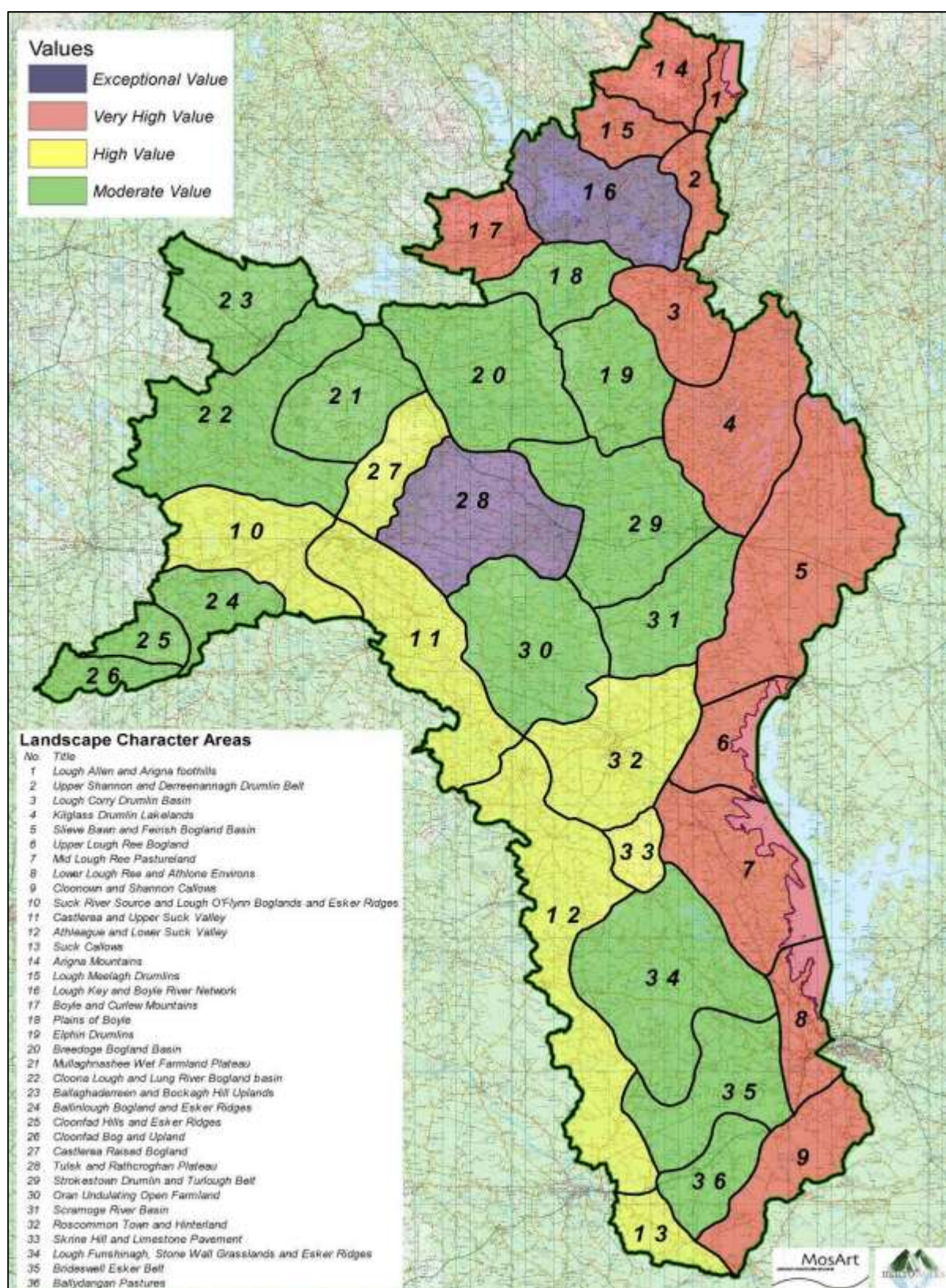
Figure 5.18 Landscape Character Areas and Value for County Leitrim<sup>44</sup>



<sup>44</sup> Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 [https://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/services\\_a-z/planning-and-development/development-plans/leitrim-county-development-plan-2023-2029/](https://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/services_a-z/planning-and-development/development-plans/leitrim-county-development-plan-2023-2029/)



Figure 5.19 Landscape Character Areas and Value for County Roscommon<sup>45</sup>



<sup>45</sup> Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Landscape Character Assessment - <file:///C:/Users/namratakaile/Downloads/RCC-Dev-Plan-Landscape-Character-Assessment.pdf>

Figure 5.20 Scenic Views and Routes for County Cavan<sup>46</sup>



<sup>46</sup> Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 <https://www.cavancoco.ie/file-library/planning/development-plans/development-plan-2022-2028/development-plan-22-28-appendices/>

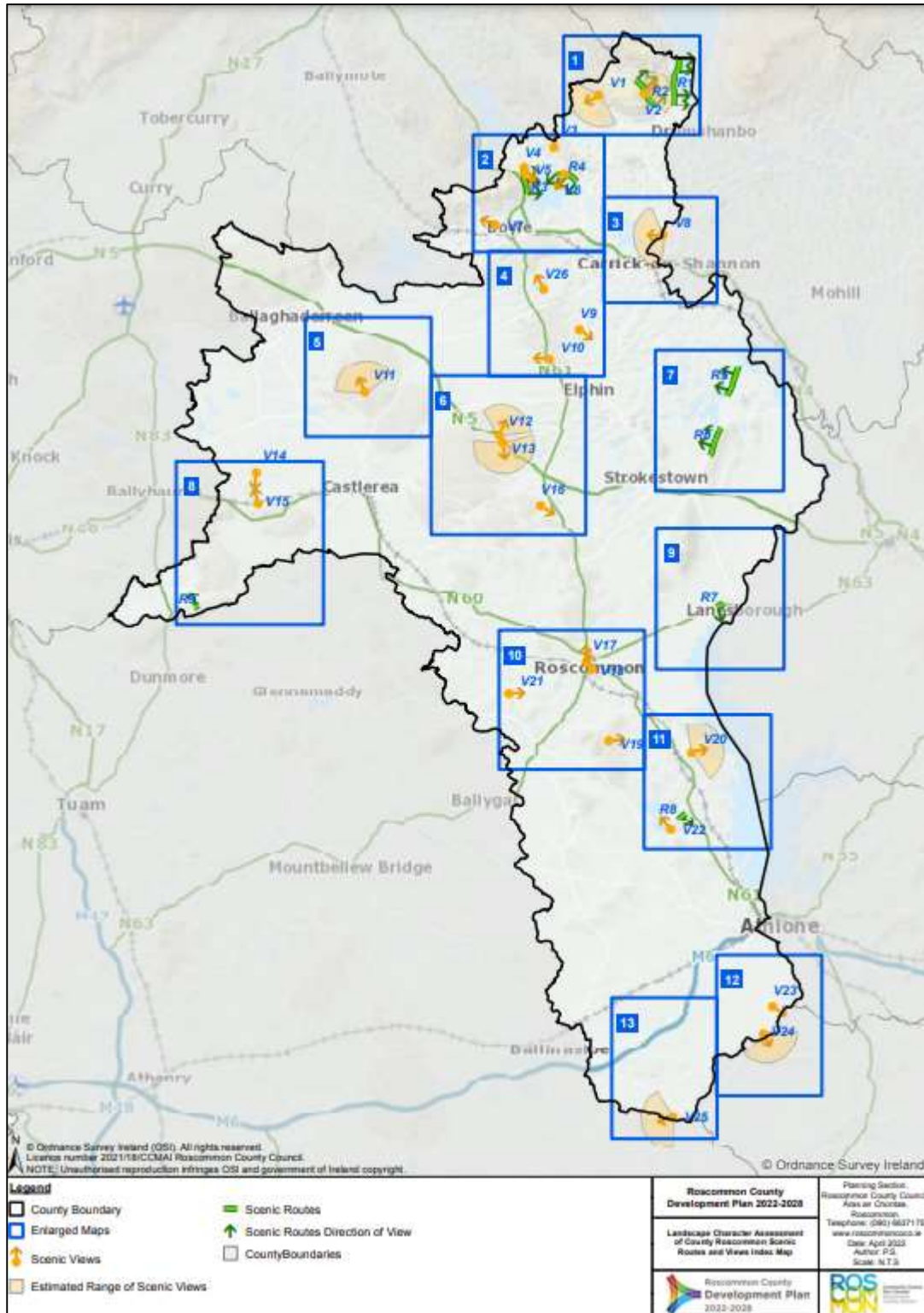


Figure 5.21 Protected Views and Prospects for County Leitrim<sup>47</sup>



<sup>47</sup> Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 [https://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/services\\_a-z/planning-and-development/development-plans/leitrim-county-development-plan-2023-2029/](https://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/services_a-z/planning-and-development/development-plans/leitrim-county-development-plan-2023-2029/)

Figure 5.22 Scenic Views and Routes for County Roscommon <sup>48</sup>



### 5.3.8.6 Existing Problems

Landscape can be considered a dynamic rather than static asset. It is constantly changing, and its changes are driven by nature itself, by direct human intervention, and indirectly through the

<sup>48</sup> Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Landscape Character Assessment - <file:///C:/Users/namratakaile/Downloads/RCC-Dev-Plan-Landscape-Character-Assessment.pdf>



consequences of human activity, notably Climate Change. All physical development undertaken by human impacts on the landscape.

Areas of a highly sensitive landscape have a low capacity to absorb new development and this can be a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive.

Existing landscape and visual issues / pressures include:

- New development having adverse and visual impacts on the landscape.
- Green Infrastructure - protecting the existing green infrastructure network from fragmentation and loss due to pressures of urban development within and adjoining the network.
- Ecosystem Services - recognising and promoting the value of ecosystem services that the green infrastructure network provides to the study area.
- Protected views – development has potential to obstruct protected views and scenic routes

## 6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’ Given the position of the USSEB DEDP beneath the *Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028*, *Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029* and *Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028* in the land use planning hierarchy, the measures identified in the SEA for the Development Plans have also been considered in this assessment, with some modification where appropriate.

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the USSEB DEDP (refer to **Table 6.1**). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the USSEB DEDP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the USSEB DEDP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the strategic objectives within the USSEB DEDP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators (see **Section 10** of this Report).

**Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for USSEB DEDP**

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites (and transboundary National Site Network) and Annex habitats and species <sup>49</sup> and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B_2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.
	B_3	Ensure USSEB DEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the <i>Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028</i> , <i>Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029</i> and <i>Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028</i>
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH_2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.

<sup>49</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.

Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne, Border Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan  
SEA Environmental Report

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC_1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC_2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the <i>Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028</i> , <i>Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029</i> and <i>Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028</i> .

## 7 Assessment of Alternatives

### 7.1 Introduction

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the plan will be implemented within the national planning hierarchy. As preparation of the USSEB DEDP is a non-statutory plan, the 'do-nothing' or 'do-minimum' scenarios are viable alternatives, as is the 'do-something' scenario.

### 7.2 Alternative 1: Do-nothing / Do-Minimum

Tourism operations in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan, whose objective is to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders involved in tourism activities and interest.

### 7.3 Do-something (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Plan)

The do-something scenario sees the preparation of a Plan that seeks to better manage tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon. The Plan will facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment.

While the Plan would co-ordinate activities and stakeholders in the tourism area, it 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). Therefore, any projects arising from the Plan would be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

In essence the Plan would present a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon. The key opportunities to consider for the Plan would be:

- *Raise awareness of the Destination by leading out with the signature experiences that make it distinctive.*
- *Build on destination leadership in eco-tourism activity and Slow Adventure by embracing sustainability and eco-tourism as the platform for experience innovation and new levels of collaboration.*
- *Expand the appeal of tourism hubs and gateways into the Destination such as Carrick on Shannon, Cavan and Roscommon Towns and other key towns and villages.*
- *Development of a signature water-based experience trail, rural and immersed in nature, that builds on work to date in linking water and community experiences and works together with centres of excellence for Slow Adventure to create a new level and scale of product.*
- *Encourage tours operators that are already programming the Destination to extend their dwell time by at least one night.*
- *Grow the appeal of cruising on the Shannon and the Shannon-Erne beyond the German-speaking and domestic markets, into southern Europe and other parts of northern Europe.*

- *Development of cross border experiences linking heritage, culture and the outdoors to stimulate new levels of visitor flows across the Destination.*
- *Grow international recognition of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark and using it as the platform for eco-tourism excellence and community tourism experience development.*
- *Develop the Beara Breifne Way as a long-distance trail of international stature and the basis for immediate community engagement.*
- *Complete and connect greenways and blueways across the Destination to create integrated clusters of accredited trails.*
- *Expanding destination accommodation stock to include building on niche 'in nature' style accommodation already associated with the Destination.*
- *The opportunity to respond to the emerging tourism trends of off-the-beaten-track / in nature experiences through responsible tourism and new forms of wellbeing.*
- *Grow the multi-generational destination appeal due to the diversity of activities and attractions, particularly for the family market.*
- *Create niche destination festivals and events linked to the outdoors, in-nature activity and Slow Adventure.*
- *Strengthen the profile of local food provenance through food networks and link food tourism experiences with agri- and regenerative farming experiences.*
- *Create additional cruise boat hubs and facilities.*

There are two separate alternatives under the 'do-something' (prepare a Plan) scenario.

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

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for 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, Alternative 2A would require stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the relevant Fáilte Ireland published guidance and documents.

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.

## **7.4 Assessment of Alternatives**

Three reasonable alternatives for the USSEB DEDP have been identified and assessed as set out in **Table 7.1**. The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')



- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

## 7.5 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Whilst unlikely to have negative environmental effects, Alternative 1 does not deliver positive benefits for tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon.

Alternative 2A will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon, whilst at the same providing for sustainable development and environmental protection.

Alternative 2B will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon, but without ensuring environmental protection.

Given the tourism and environmental benefits, Alternative 2A is selected as the preferred approach.

Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for the USSEB DEDP

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
<b>Alternative 1</b> Do-nothing / Do-Minimum	Tourism operations in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan, whose objective is to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders involved in tourism activities and interest.	All SEOs	+/-	<p>In comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to potential uncertain or unplanned environmental effects across all environmental factors.</p> <p>It is likely that this alternative will not realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach.</p> <p>In comparison to other alternatives, this approach may generate uncertain or negative environmental effects, which would not be counterbalanced by the positive environmental effects associated with other alternatives.</p>
<b>Alternative 2A</b> Do-something Prepare a Plan with Environmental Considerations	Tourism operations in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon would be facilitated, promoted, supported and coordinated through the preparation of a Plan, with environmental considerations, that seeks to better manage tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon.	All SEOs	+	<p>In comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to protection of the environment across all environmental factors.</p> <p>At the same time this alternative will also realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach.</p> <p>In comparison to other alternatives, this approach would generate positive environmental effects.</p>
<b>Alternative 2B</b> Do-something Prepare a Plan without Environmental Considerations	Tourism operations in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon would be facilitated, promoted, supported and coordinated through the preparation of a Plan, without environmental considerations, that seeks to better manage tourism in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon.	All SEOs	+/- or -	<p>While it is likely that this alternative will realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach, in comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to potential uncertain, unplanned or negative environmental effects across all environmental factors.</p> <p>In comparison to other alternatives, this approach would generate negative environmental effects.</p>

## 8 Assessment of Effects of the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan

### 8.1 Introduction

The USSEB DEDP has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in **Section 5** of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the USSEB DEDP. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are detailed in **Section 6** of this Report.

*Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028<sup>50</sup>, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029<sup>51</sup> and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028<sup>52</sup>* all support the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland. It is noted that during its preparation the aforementioned development plans, were subject to full SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

The environmental assessment of the ‘Strategic Objectives’ and of the ‘destination catalyst’ and ‘destination enabling’ initiatives of the USSEB DEDP are set out separately in the following sections of this Report. The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

### 8.2 Environmental Assessment of the Strategic Objectives of the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision, Strategic Objectives of the USSEB DEDP is presented in **Table 8.1**.

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.cavancoco.ie/file-library/planning/development-plans/development-plan-2022-2028/>

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/services\\_a-z/planning-and-development/development-plans/leitrim-county-development-plan-2023-2029/](https://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/services_a-z/planning-and-development/development-plans/leitrim-county-development-plan-2023-2029/)

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.rosdevplan.ie/>

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**Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Strategic Objectives of the USSEB DEDP**

(SEO Key: B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, ANC – Air Quality, Noise & Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
<b>Vision</b>  The vision for the USSEB DEDP states that:  <i>“Nature is at the heart of an inspiring sustainable tourism destination, where tourism delivers net positive outcomes to communities and the environment. Ecotourism and slow adventure are the hallmarks of the destination delivered through best in class on and off the water experiences. The visitor hubs of Carrick-on-Shannon, Cavan and Roscommon Town have developed a year round appeal for tourism. Signature attractions such as the Beara Breifne Way, Shannon Erne Blueway, National Famine Way, Forests Parks and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark inspire new levels of community and visitor engagement with slow tourism. Best in class water activities from Cruising on the Shannon to</i>	This vision statement sets an overall context for destination experience and tourism in USSEB. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, industry and associated workers. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	No



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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
<i>exploring our heritage through on water experiences provide inspiring visitor moments. A growing network of accredited Greenways, Blueways and trails have become the catalysts for regenerative tourism and the platform for visitors to connect with our local community delivering a year round economic impact."</i>						
<b>Strategic Objective 1 : Development of a Regenerative Tourism Destination</b>  <i>Establish the Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne and Border region as a leading regenerative tourism destination with high standards in sustainable tourism development and a reduced carbon footprint.</i>						
1.1 Maximise the potential of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark to grow community-based tourism opportunities and demonstrate how visitors can engage with place-based eco-tourism experiences.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. The development of eco-tourism has the potential to contribute to better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH1, CH2), B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), MA (MA1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	heritage, land, soils, geology and biodiversity. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.					
1.2 Develop the capability of the tourism industry and community tourism groups to develop new regenerative and ecotourism experiences for visitors, profiling the Destination's commitment to sustainability and embracing the principle of regeneration as a platform for innovation.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. The development of eco-tourism has the potential to contribute to better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, land, soils, geology and biodiversity. Increased tourism</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH1, CH2), B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA 1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.					
1.3 Enable responsible visitor engagement with nature through sustainable in nature amenities such as the boardwalk at Acres Lake and developing viewing points and other appropriate interventions that highlight water and nature assets and the unique geology of Leitrim, Cavan and Roscommon.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new interventions could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, land, soils, geology, hydrology and biodiversity. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	CH (CH1, CH2), B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1)	ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA2, MA3)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
1.4 Optimise the opportunities presented by the Just Transition Fund and, in particular, the Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme 2023-2027, to deliver new sustainable visitor experiences within communities in Roscommon.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of sustainable visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new visitor experiences could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, land, soils, geology, hydrology, biodiversity, landscape and visual. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	CH (CH1, CH2), B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1)	ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA2, MA3)		Yes
1.5 Collectively achieve a reduction in carbon emissions in line with the targets set out in the National Climate Action Plan.	<p>This objective will result in overall positive effects on the environment.</p> <p>However, any new development or infrastructure upgrade in line with the targets set out in the National Climate Action Plan presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such</p>	PHH (PHH1), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA2, MA3)		PHH (PHH2), B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1), CH (CH1, CH2),		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
1.6 Seek opportunities to support the development of a national EV charging infrastructure, especially at visitor attractions and activity provider sites across the Destination.	This objective will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effect on climate. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in provision of new infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils, water quality, cultural heritage, material assets and landscape.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA2, MA3)		<b>PHH</b> (PHH2), <b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>MA</b> (MA1), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2),		<b>Yes</b>
1.7 Align with the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 in ensuring that the tourism activity in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon 'acts for nature' in the development of awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and in the implementation of measures to enhance biosecurity measures throughout the Destination.	This objective will have overall positive effects on the environment. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)				<b>No</b>
1.8 Grow national and international recognition for how the Destination	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the counties and	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1,	<b>No</b>



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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
facilitates the protection and enhancement of the environment as the fundamental asset of the visitor experience in counties Leitrim, Cavan and Roscommon.	have positive effect on population and human health.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.				WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	
<b>Strategic Objective 2 : Growth in Destination Awareness</b>  <i>Grow the profile of the Destination through collectively growing awareness, locally and in the domestic and international markets of Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon as great places to visit, where the visitor is assured of an authentic, place-based experience and which also delivers net positive benefits for the community, the environment, and the tourism industry.</i>						
2.1 Grow the demand generation capabilities of the tourism industry based on understanding visitor needs and motivations, and how to attract domestic and international visitors on a year-round basis aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Brand Toolkit.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the counties and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of any new infrastructure could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, land, soils, geology, hydrology, biodiversity, landscape and visual. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>MA</b> (MA1) <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA2, MA3)		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
2.2 Employ a visitor-centric approach to the development of interpretation and orientation throughout the Destination that is aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Brand Toolkit.	<p>This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism opportunities throughout the Destination.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	No
2.3 Develop and strengthen the capacity and capability of tourism industry networks and tourism clusters to establish new ways of working together and collectively grow local awareness of existing and newly developed products and experiences.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the study area and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		Yes
2.4 Increase the tourism industry's engagement with the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand to collectively grow awareness and recognition of the regional experience brand to increase the	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism opportunities and promote collaboration for effective working.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1,	No

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
share of the domestic and international market.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.				MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	
2.5 Elevate the profile of the Destination as a regenerative tourism destination characterised by a) visitors' ability to access quality and diverse eco-tourism and slow adventure tourism experiences and b) community pride in, and stewardship of, their cultural and natural environment and c) industry /stakeholders' respect for the environment as fundamental to the destination offering.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the counties and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>The development of new and existing experiences might give rise to uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
2.6 Grow the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to collectively grow destination visibility and sustained marketing of new experiences and motivational itineraries to encourage visitor dispersion into and across the area.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
2.7 Increase the destination profile as a family and multi-generational holiday destination.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for families and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
2.8 Grow awareness within the domestic market of signature destination experiences such as cruising.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by growing awareness.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, this objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, land, soils, geology and biodiversity due to increased visitor numbers. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	facilities, wastewater and waste management.					
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Connection and integration of land and water-based trails</b>  <i>Deliver new levels of connectivity between new and existing trails, both land-based and water-based, across the Destination to create an enhanced and integrated scale of outdoor activity provision and development of best-in-class slow tourism hubs.</i>						
3.1 Deliver the Beara Breifne Way to become an internationally recognised way-marked walking trail and focal point for communities in the Destination to engage with the emerging tourism opportunities.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
3.2 Develop the network of nationally accredited greenways, blueways and trails within the Destination and, where feasible and viable, connect with trails that facilitate and encourage visitor flow within the wider Hidden Heartlands	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health and on material assets by promoting sustainable transportation.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>MA</b> (MA3)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>



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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
region, and to and from adjoining destinations; e.g. Ulster Way, Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway.	and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially negative or uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.					
3.3 Integrate signature trails with other outdoor activities featured within the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon; e.g. development, extension and accreditation of the Shannon and Shannon-Erne Blueways.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health and on material assets by promoting sustainable transportation.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially negative or uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>MA</b> (MA3)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2)	<b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. This would result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.					
3.4 Develop links between trails, attractions and activities to facilitate new ways for visitors to access and interact with local experiences; e.g. the National Famine Way and the National Famine Museum   Strokestown Park, Arigna Mining Experience and the Miners' Way, Lough Key Forest and Activity Park and the Boyle – Carrick-on-Shannon Greenway, The Shed Distillery and Electric Bike Trails, Dún an Rí Forest Park and the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway, and to and through the Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, e.g. Killykeen Forest Park and the Killykeen Way.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
3.5 Identify means and on-water routes that facilitate slow exploration of the Destination by	This objective will enhance connectivity and have positive effect to population and human health.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV		Yes

## Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne, Border Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

### SEA Environmental Report

Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
water; e.g. through day-boat hire, small e-powered vessels, and/or water taxis.	<p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing transport route, presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas.</p>			(LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		
3.6 Link existing and new land- and water-based trails to build a new scale of integrated trails and opportunities to enable visitors to engage with mix of eco-tourism and 'off the beaten track' opportunities that tap into the heritage and living culture of the local area.	<p>This objective will enhance connectivity and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing trails, presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would</p>	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>

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	<p>also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.</p>					
<p>3.7 Revitalise existing trails to become more place-based and experiential, based on their capacity to orientate the visitor to established or emerging destination experiences e.g. Táin Trail, Lough Allen Drive, Miners Way, Ulster Way.</p>	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)</p>		Yes

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3.8 Create a best-in-class approach to developing walking trail heads to grow the Destination profile as a centre of excellence for outdoor activity. This will be supported by a commitment to maintaining the quality of trails and maintenance plan to ensure the sustainable management of the trails experience.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Development of Place-based, Ecotourism Experiences</b> <i>Develop the range and quality of visitor experiences across the Destination drawing on the natural, community and cultural heritage, with a focus on ecotourism.</i>						
4.1 Develop new visitor experiences linked to eco-tourism and slow adventure leveraging the core destination assets such as the River Shannon, Cuilcagh Lakelands	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health and by promoting eco-tourism and slow tourism.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2,		Yes



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UNESCO Geopark, Shannon Erne Waterway, established and emerging national trails, forest parks and water amenities, whose core objective is the protection of the natural and/or cultural heritage.	<p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. This would result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>			MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		
4.2 Create compelling in nature visitor experience moments blended with local heritage, culture and activities that utilise the on land and water trail network of greenways and blueways.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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	both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. This would result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.					
4.3 Expand the opportunities for community tourism groups to enable visitors to immerse themselves in local culture through the development of new experiences linking agri-tourism, local heritage, food, and culture.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>No</b>
4.4 Develop eco-tourism experiences linked to water across, e.g. paddling, cruising, cycling, angling, identified through the Lough Tapestry plan (see section 4.2.7 of the DEDP).	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by promoting eco-tourism.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially negative or uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2),	<b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>

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	and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.					
4.5 Create new cross-border and cross regional experiences to introduce new visitor flows into the Destination, e.g. from/to the Wild Atlantic Way, Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins VEDP, and Ireland's Ancient East.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
4.6 Maximise the opportunity provided by the National Famine Museum and the National Famine Way to connect businesses and	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV	No

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communities with the diaspora market.					(LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
4.7 Build the capability of existing visitor attractions, cultural hubs (e.g. The Dock Art Gallery, Carrick on Shannon; King House, Boyle; Ramor Theatre, Virginia among others) and activity providers to develop innovative visitor experiences to grow the range of things to do in the day and evening time.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the development of new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2), B (B1, B2, B3), MA (MA1, MA2), WQ (WQ1, WQ2),	LSG (LSG1), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA3)	Yes
4.8 Develop a number of signature climate neutral and sustainable destination experiences linked to the natural and cultural heritage and showcase the role of water in shaping the landscape and communities.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health and climate.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2),		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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4.9 Develop the capability of the tourism industry to deliver new forms of nature-based wellbeing experiences and work with strategic partners to develop nature-based wellness opportunities in forest parks, on trails and on and beside water access points.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		Yes
4.10 Develop angling across the Destination given its potential to support both geographic and seasonal dispersal.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		Yes



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	arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
4.11 Capitalise on the growing momentum signified by the development of the Hidden Heartlands' Golf Association and the existing high-quality (e.g. Slieve Russell PGA status) and extensive offering to develop the Destination's profile for international golfers.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Growth in Sustainable Economic Impact</b> <i>Grow the economic impact of tourism and create high quality jobs in the Destination by supporting the industry to enhance its capacity and capability and by developing and enhancing the visitor services' provision.</i>						
5.1 Support tourism businesses to improve their capacity and capability through a range of support programmes, such as the Digital that Delivers Programme and the Employer Excellence	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism and also provide economic benefits to the study area population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No

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Programme, as well as other more tailored training supports.						
5.2 Develop the opportunity identified in the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon and Discovery Zones to grow the ability of the main visitor hubs and towns such as Carrick on Shannon, Cavan and Roscommon Towns to disperse visitors across the wider Destination.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
5.3 Build the profile of the Destination as a host for niche business tourism activity linking the tourism hubs of Carrick-on-Shannon, and Cavan and Roscommon Towns, as sustainable business tourism host venues.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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	developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
5.4 Develop smaller towns across the Destination such as Manorhamilton, Drumshanbo, Boyle, Bailieborough, and Virginia as key service hubs from a daytime and evening-time visitor economy perspective and enhance their ability to act as gateways to and from neighbouring regions.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
5.5 Grow the level of available accommodation stock in our rural and urban areas to include hotel accommodation with alternative forms of accommodation linked to the outdoors. New accommodation development should strive for net-zero status.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the study area and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>The development of new and existing accommodations might result in uncertain environmental effects on the environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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	developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
5.6 Support the industry in developing saleable experiences for individual experience providers as well as bundled saleable experiences for clusters of experience providers where appropriate.	<p>This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
5.7 Deliver a range of developmental and promotional initiatives that are aimed at lengthening the visitor season by growing revenue during the shoulder season; e.g. targeted cruise-hire promotion during the shoulder season and the development of new festivals and events across the Destination during the shoulder season.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new festivals and events across the Destination presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from the provision of ancillary infrastructure for the events. There is also potential for uncertain environmental effect on air quality &amp; noise, biodiversity and human health due to elevated levels of noise &amp; congestion.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
5.8 Deliver on the recommendations arising from the	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the study area and	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ		Yes

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recently published <i>Feasibility Study for the Sustainable Development and Greening of the Cruise Hire Sector</i> , to ensure that the sector grows its capacity and diversifies its offering in a sustainable manner.	have positive effect on population and human health.  However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also increase visitor numbers in sensitive areas.			(WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		
5.9 Work with education and training agencies in Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon to align investment in building capabilities and capacity with existing and new tourism enterprises.	This objective will promote collaboration with education and training agencies, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of sites and have positive effect on population and human health.  No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
5.10 Develop a community tourism training programme to build the capabilities of the community tourism enterprise sector to realise	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism and also provide economic benefits to the study area population. No	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1,	<b>No</b>



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the social and economic potential of tourism for their locality.	negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
5.11 Establish new sustainable transport options working with existing providers such as Local Link to enhance visitor access to local attractions, communities and activities, and support the night-time economy in key locations.	<p>The development of new sustainable transport options has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), MA (MA3)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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5.12 Maximise the visibility of the Destination, and access routes to the Destination at ferry ports, airports, in particular regional airports such as Ireland West (Knock) and Shannon Airports. Chart the visitor journey from the point of access to the Destination, in terms of all forms of transport, but particularly all the sustainable forms of transport, including 'the last mile'.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No
5.13 Improve the signage to attract visitors off bypasses (e.g., the new N5 bypass currently under construction) and Motorways, in order to grow the visitor footfall in the smaller towns.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)	No
<b>Strategic Objective 6: Development of New Levels of Collaboration</b> <i>Build new levels of tourism industry and stakeholder collaboration through the strengthening of existing and the creation of new tourism networks and clusters.</i>						
6.1 Develop a network of geographic and themed clusters of	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the study area and	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
visitor experiences rooted in regenerative tourism principles across the Destination to facilitate collaboration between the industry.	have positive effect on population and human health.  However, any new development or upgrade to existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also increase visitor numbers in sensitive areas.			(LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		
6.2 Engender a pan-agency focus on tourism clusters and networks for tourism investment and collectively grow local community and business engagement to stimulate new tourism opportunities; e.g. the Geopark Sustainable Business network. Support networks which foster community level engagement in order to share learnings, mentoring opportunities and develop new community tourism experiences- e.g. Community Wetlands Forum.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>No</b>

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
6.3 Grow the capabilities of the Destination's visitor attractions and cultural hubs to work together, cross promote and collaborate, and with those in the neighbouring regional experience brands of the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
6.4 Deliver on the sustainable tourism objectives of the <i>Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030</i> in partnership with all agencies and stakeholders.	<p>This objective will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.</p>	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1, PHH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3),			LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2)	No
6.5 Grow cross border destination collaboration by working on collective initiatives such as Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Geopark, and Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins VEDP.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
6.6 Ensure tourism is integrated as a key element of future placemaking activity; e.g. public realm projects, town and village enhancements.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and have positive effect on population and human health.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
6.7 Develop a collective tourism impact measurement system for the DEDP adopting a current situation baseline model to align stakeholder activity, programming and investment with the target outcomes of the plan underwritten by the VICE model as the basis for how success is measured.	This objective would result in positive effects for promoting tourism and investment and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
6.8 Leverage partnering initiatives as collaborative platforms to drive regenerative tourism and the adoption of appropriate accreditation systems.	This objective will promote collaboration, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of sites and have	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b>	<b>No</b>



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Strategic Objectives	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	<p>positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>				(LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	

### 8.3 Environmental Assessment of the ‘Destination Catalyst’ and ‘Destination Enabling’ Initiatives listed within the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan

The USSEB DEDP includes a list of destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives which will be delivered to support the above strategic objectives of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

There are 8no. destination catalysts initiatives and 8no. destination enabling initiatives in total. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Refer to **Table 8.1A** in **Appendix 1** for the detailed assessment of effects of the catalyst projects and destination enablers.

Mitigation measures are presented further in Section 9.

### 8.4 The Interrelationship between Environmental Factors

An overview of the key and minor / no interaction between environmental factors with potential for effects arising from the USSEB DEDP are set out in the matrix in **Table 8.2**.

Actions within the Plan that give rise to positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component also have the potential to generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components – e.g. negative effect on soils can have a negative effect on biodiversity, water, and / or landscape. Likewise, actions supporting the delivery of SuDS will improve water quality, which in turn can have a positive effect on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is already embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that has been carried out in this environmental report. This ensures that there is adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of plan actions. In addition, the mitigation measures set out in **Section 9.0** of this Report.

**Table 8.2 Significant Interrelationships between Environmental Factors**

Component Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Biodiversity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Population & Human Health	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land, Soils & Geology	✓	✓		✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Water Quality	✓	✓	✓		✗	✓	✗	✓
Air Quality, Noise and Climate	✓	✓	✗	✗		✓	✓	✗
Material Assets	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓		✗	✗

Component Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Cultural Heritage	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓		✓
Landscape & Visual	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Legend:</b> Key Interaction ✓ Minor/No Interaction ✗								

## 8.5 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are 2 types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. The interrelationships between environmental factors that help determine these potential effects are identified on **Table 8.2**.
- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, projects, etc.

The USSEB DEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also be subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. **Table 8.3** lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the USSEB DEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the USSEB DEDP.

The Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, and management, cultural heritage, climate change, etc. for the counties. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the County Development Plans and have been assessed as such. The USSEB DEDP will comply with the provisions set within the aforementioned County Development Plans which themselves have been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the USSEB DEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed, the implementation of the USSEB DEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher level plans in relation to increased economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

Table 8.3 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040  National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 ( <i>As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030</i> )	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National CFRAMS Programme  Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National 4 <sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	No

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
County Development Plans (Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027, Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023, Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030, Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028,	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. Each of the CDP with Zone of Influence of the study area has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Transboundary County Development Plan (Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Local Development Plan 2030: Plan Strategy)	The Plan Strategy is the first of two development plan documents which will comprise the Local Development Plan. A Habitat Regulations Assessment Report (HRA) and a Sustainability Appraisal which incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been prepared for the Plan Strategy to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No

## 8.6 Overview

The environmental assessment of the provisions of the USSEB DEDP (**Section 8**) identifies potential uncertain effects on the environment as set out in **Table 8.1**. Much of this relates to uncertainty in the likely outcome of objectives and the potential nature and scope of any development, which may or may not, derive from the implementation of catalyst projects and the Plan. Therefore, measures are detailed in the following which will set the context for the avoidance and / or reduction of any such potential environmental effects.

In working with the SEA process, the Plan acknowledges the requirement for any development to adhere to best practice in terms of environmental governance. Indeed, protection and enhancement of the environment is a critical pillar underpinning the core objectives and success of the USSEB DEDP.



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In this context any proposals for development arising from the USSEB DEDP must meet the proper planning and sustainable development policies, objectives and development management provisions of the statutory *Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028*, *Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029* and *Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028*.

## 9 Mitigation Measures

### 9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in **Section 8.0** of this Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the USSEB DEDP have potential for uncertain or negative effects on aspects of the environment. These potential negative and / or uncertain effects, which derive from potential works resulting from the relevant action, focus primarily on biodiversity, water, cultural heritage, material assets and landscape. This section of the Environmental Report identifies measures for the mitigation and avoidance of potential uncertain or negative environmental effects.

### 9.2 Mitigation Measures

This Plan sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of 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 this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the *Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027* especially the *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027*. As stated in the USSEB DEDP these include:

- **Infrastructure Management** - *With respect to infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, surface water, waste and transport) consideration must be given to the available capacity and the potential impact on existing infrastructure, as well as the potential environmental effects arising from the provision of new infrastructure and / or from a likely increase in tourism-related pressures. Any such environmental effects will be appropriately mitigated. The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required is encouraged.*
- **Visitor Management** - *Those receiving funding will be requested to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new projects are located at a suitable setback from ecological sensitivities.*  
*Research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas operating appropriate visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.*
- **Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services** - *Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; the enhancement, protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of landscape sensitivities.*

*Consideration and implementation for all environmental mitigation measures as set out in Irelands Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy will also be considered a requirement as appropriate.*

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028. The Development Plans provides for sustainable planning and management control of all development in the study area– including the delivery of Destination & Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Proposals for development within the USSEB DEDP area must comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions included within the *Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028*. Given that the USSEB DEDP sits within and at a lower level in the planning hierarchy, the measures contained within the Development Plans, and in their Natura Impact Report (NIR), SEA Environmental Report / SEA Statement and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) are applicable to the USSEB DEDP.

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the ***Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028***, provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the USSEB DEDP. These measures include the following selected policies / objectives:

Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
Protective Objectives / Policies		
<b>Biodiversity</b>		
<b>CSD 05</b> - In the assessment of development proposals, to take account of transport corridors, environmental carrying capacity, availability and/or capacity to provide waste water and water supply services, potential to conflict with Water Framework Directive objectives, potential to impact on the integrity of European sites and Annexed Habitats and species, features of biodiversity value including ecological networks, impact on landscape and visual characteristics, education and other socioeconomic objectives. Development proposals may require screening for Appropriate Assessment and there shall be no net loss in Biodiversity from development proposals in the lifetime of the plan.	<b>TOUR POL 5</b> Appropriate Assessments for lower-tier recreation projects shall demonstrate that potential direct, indirect and cumulative effects including in relation to the following issues, have been adequately mitigated, where they exist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard infrastructure in riparian zones;</li> <li>• Increased recreational access;</li> <li>• Species and populations of conservation concern where relevant; and</li> <li>• Water quality.</li> </ul>	<b>CAEE 8.25</b> - Protect and enhance the biodiversity and ecological value of wetlands and other landscape features such as semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams and turloughs which support the ecological network throughout County Roscommon.
<b>CTH 01</b> - Protect, enhance, create and connect natural heritage, green spaces and high quality amenity spaces throughout Cavan for biodiversity and recreation whilst ensuring the design and operation of routes respond to the ecological protection and needs of each site.	<b>TOUR POL 6</b> To seek to sustainably manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as blueways and greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.	<b>CAEE 8.27</b> - Ensure that peatland areas, including those designated or proposed for designation (including NHA, pNHA or Natura 2000 sites), are protected so as to allow their continued role as carbon sinks, which contribute towards reducing CO <sub>2</sub> emissions.
<b>STH 05</b> - Prohibit any development that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats	<b>TOUR POL 7</b> Where relevant, the Council and those receiving consent for development shall seek to sustainably manage any increase in visitor numbers	<b>NH 10.1</b> - Ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the county.

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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
<i>and or disturbance of species in any SPA, SAC, NHA.</i>	<i>and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects to sensitive habitats, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</i>	
<b>GR 08</b> - Development of road projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive.	<b>PL POL 1</b> - To support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.	<b>NH 10.4</b> - Proposals where woodland, tree or hedgerow removal is proposed will be required to demonstrate a sufficient level of protection to Annex IV species, such as Bats and Otter, in accordance with the Habitats Directive.
<b>LP 03</b> - Ornamental lighting of public buildings, bridges, monuments and public spaces must not fall beyond the area intended or directed skywards. Architecturally sensitive tones such as passive, warm coloured lights should be considered before blue or rich white lights and only used where necessary in accordance with Eurobats and Darksky Circular.	<b>NH POL 1</b> - To retain and protect significant stands / lengths of existing trees/hedgerows/woodlands, and seek increased planting of native trees, where appropriate, in new developments.	<b>NH 10.5</b> - Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) will be required for proposed developments likely to significantly impact on natural habitats and/or species, and which are not subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.
<b>NH 1</b> - Conserve, protect and manage the County's natural heritage assets for future generations while encouraging appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the amenity value for the present generation.	<b>NH POL 2</b> - To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects with the potential to impact European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments	<b>NH 10.7</b> - Implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be



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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
	<i>must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, and the Planning &amp; Development Act 2000, as amended as relevant.</i>	<i>in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.</i>
<b>NH 6</b> - <i>Ensure the protection of species of flora and fauna afforded legal protection under Irish and European Legislation.</i>	<b>NH POL 3</b> - <i>To protect designated Natural Heritage Area (NHA) sites, including proposed Natural Heritage Area sites (pNHA) and seek to develop linkages between designated sites and other non-designated sites of ecological importance, where feasible and as resources permit.</i>	<b>NH 10.8</b> - <i>Ensure that no plans, programmes, etc. or projects are permitted that give rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of European Sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects, (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects).</i>
<b>NH 8</b> - <i>Promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, including features such as wetlands, woodlands, hedgerows and uplands.</i>	<b>NH POL 5</b> - <i>To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact on plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law, subject to satisfactory mitigation measures.</i>	<b>NH 10.10</b> - <i>Actively promote the conservation and protection of areas designated as an NHA (including proposed sites) and to only consider proposals for development within or affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the NHA or pNHA.</i>
<b>NHDS 1</b> - <i>Protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.</i>	<b>NH OBJ 1</b> - <i>To ensure that no project or programme giving rise to significant adverse, direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site(s), having regard to their qualifying interests and conservation objectives, arising from their size, scale, area or land take,</i>	<b>NH 10.13</b> - <i>Encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment</i>

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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
	<i>proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).</i>	<i>is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.</i>
<b>NHDS2</b> - <i>Ensure an Appropriate Assessment is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European Site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.</i>	<b>NH OBJ 2</b> - <i>To protect and conserve those sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) during the lifetime of this Plan.</i>	<b>NH 10.16</b> - <i>Protect and enhance the valuable peatland resource in County Roscommon whilst protecting the heritage and environmental value of these peatland areas. The aims of the National Peatlands Strategy and the implementation of the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 and the Enhanced Decommissioning Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme will be supported.</i>
<b>NHDS3</b> - <i>Ensure that any plan or project that could have an adverse impact on a NHA, pNHA, SAC, SPA (either by themselves or in combination with other plans and projects) or upon the conservation objectives of the site or would result in the deterioration of any habitat or any species reliant on that habitat will be subject to the requirements of Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.</i>	<b>NH OBJ 3</b> - <i>To protect and conserve those sites designated as Special Protection Areas during the lifetime of this Plan.</i>	<b>NH 10.18</b> - <i>Manage, enhance and protect the wetlands of the county having regard to the County Roscommon Wetland Survey (2017) and ensure that there is an appropriate level of assessment in relation to proposals which would involve draining, reclaiming or infilling of wetland habitats. The Council shall be available to engage with the NPWS with the objective of facilitating the monitoring and surveying of wetland sites in Roscommon.</i>
<b>NHDS4</b> - <i>Ensure an Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and</i>	<b>NH OBJ 4</b> - <i>To protect and conserve Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) that become designated</i>	<b>NH 10.19</b> - <i>Ensure that the county's watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the County's</i>

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<i>Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any Plan or Project likely to have significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination.</i>	<i>and notified to the Local Authority during the lifetime of this Plan.</i>	<i>rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county. The Council shall be available to engage with the NPWS with the objective of facilitating the monitoring and surveying of wetland sites in Roscommon.</i>
<b>NHDS 5</b> - <i>Require an ecological appraisal for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of Natura Sites, or a proposed Natura Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.</i>	<b>NH OBJ 5</b> - <i>To protect the character, appearance and quality of the habitats and semi-natural features in Co. Leitrim such as woodlands, hedgerows, peatlands, wetlands and artificial waterways of historic or ecological importance.</i>	<b>NH 10.20</b> - <i>Protect waterbodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. To this effect, consideration should be given to Inland Fisheries Ireland's guidance document Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (2020).</i>
<b>NHDS 7</b> - <i>Promote the maintenance and as appropriate, achievement of favourable conservation status of habitats and species and to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, by maintaining and where appropriate, developing features in the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora.</i>	<b>NH POL 6</b> - <i>To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands and trees) which are not within designated sites.</i>	<b>NH 10.24</b> - <i>Ensure, where the presence of invasive species is identified on any proposed development site, that robust treatment measures are detailed to demonstrate how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled.</i>
<b>NHDS 14</b> - <i>Contribute towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones.</i>	<b>NH POL 8</b> - <i>To protect ecological networks linking protected and designated important sites within the county, in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</i>	

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<b>NHND1</b> - Support the protection of non-designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve biological diversity.	<b>NH POL 9</b> - To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and 'Green Infrastructure' networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development.	
<b>NHND2</b> - Conserve the existing wide range of flora, fauna and wildlife habitats in the county through the preservation of ecological corridors and networks vital to the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. To designate County Biodiversity Sites within the lifetime of this plan and to protect the ecological integrity of these sites.	<b>NH POL 10</b> - To ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the county.	
<b>NHND5</b> - Require an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) for any proposed development which have a significant impact on rare, threatened and or protected species and non-designated habitats of biodiversity value.	<b>NH OBJ 9</b> - To support the implementation of the relevant recommendations contained in the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.	
<b>IN 3</b> - Prevent the spread of invasive species within the plan area, including requiring landowners and developers to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species.	<b>WET POL 1</b> - To have regard to the Co. Leitrim Wetlands Survey 2019 and subsequent wetland surveys that may be published during the lifetime of this Plan in assessing individual development management proposals. This will include the protection of surveyed wetland sites that have been rated as A (International), B (National) and C+ (County) importance.	

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<b>WL 4</b> - <i>Protect wetlands, floodplains and watercourses for biodiversity and flood protection value.</i>	<b>IS POL 1</b> - <i>To require relevant development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 and the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species 1143/2014.</i>	
<b>WTHS2</b> - <i>Promote awareness, understanding and best practice in the management of Cavan's woodland, tree, hedgerow and stone wall resource.</i>	<b>NBGI POL 1</b> - <i>To actively promote and encourage nature-based approaches and 'Green Infrastructure' solutions as viable mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce GHG emissions, increase the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and optimise the multifaceted benefits through:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Conservation, promotion, and restoration of the natural environment;</i></li> <li><i>• Integrating an ecosystem services approach and promote healthy living environments through enhanced connection with nature and recreation/amenity;</i></li> <li><i>• Enhancing biodiversity in urban and rural settings;</i></li> <li><i>• Assist with water and flood risk management; and</i></li> </ul>	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon storage or sequestration.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>WTHS 7</b> - Encourage the retention of hedgerows and stonewalls and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where possible. Where removal of a hedgerow or stone wall is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required and where removal is proposed which may affect bat species it shall be subject to regime of protection under the EC (Birds and Habitats) Regulations, 2011, as amended.</p>		
<b>Population and Human Health</b>		
<p><b>CTT 08</b> - Develop activity-based tourism and use the marketing momentum behind Irelands Hidden Heartlands to integrate its tourism services into a strong and coherent offer that will build growing visitor numbers.</p>	<p><b>ADV TOUR OBJ 4</b> - To prepare Habitat and Visitor Management Plans for the protection of areas which are particularly sensitive to visitors subject to the availability of funding. The first such plan will be developed for Sheemore.</p>	
<b>Land, Soils and Geology</b>		
<p><b>GH 1</b> - Protect and enhance the County Geological Heritage Audit of Cavan.</p>	<p><b>AGI POL 1</b> - To recognise the need to identify sites of geological interest in the county and to protect these sites in the interest of protecting our geological heritage.</p>	<p><b>NH 10.11</b> - Preserve and protect sites of county geological importance from inappropriate development where they comprise designated sites or national heritage areas.</p>
<p><b>GH 5</b> - Continue to promote the unique geological heritage of the Cuilcagh Lakelands Global Geopark (UNESCO Geopark). Individual notable</p>		<p><b>NH 10.12</b> - Promote and facilitate the development of geo-tourism in County Roscommon where it does</p>

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<i>sites within the Cuilcagh Lakelands Global Geopark include Cuilcagh Mountain and Mid-Cavan Drumlinised Ribbed Moraines. These sites should be valued for their scientific and educational value to the community.</i>		<i>not have a detrimental impact on designated sites or features of geological interest.</i>
<i>GH 6 - Have regard to the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Cavan geological heritage sites and to avoid inappropriate development, through consultation with the Geological Survey Ireland.</i>		
<i>GP 1- Conserve and manage the geological resources of a discrete area to develop sustainable tourism, enterprise and community life.</i>		
<i>GP 6 - Enhance the geodiversity, biodiversity and natural environments of the region including additional measures to conserve geosites and natural habitats where appropriate.</i>		
Water Quality		
<i>CSD 02 - Restrict development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG/OPW 2009).</i>	<i>ADV TOUR POL 3 - To maintain water quality and develop shared facilities at designated water bathing sites.</i>	<i>ITC 7.36 - Protect both ground and surface water resources including taking account of the impacts of climate change, support the implementation of the Rural Water Programme and to support Irish Water in the development and implementation of Drinking Water Safety Plans and the National Water Resources Plan.</i>

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<p><b>GW 01</b> - Ensure that groundwater is protected by ensuring compliance with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The appropriate control of development in areas of high groundwater vulnerability.</li> <li>■ Implementation of the Programme of Measures as required in the River Basin Management Plans</li> <li>■ Licensing of discharges of effluent to groundwater, having particular regard to the requirements of the EC Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)</li> <li>■ Implementation of the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations (S.I. No. 610 OF 2010, which give effect to several EU Directives including in relation to protection of waters against pollution from agricultural sources ('the Nitrates Directive'), dangerous substances in water and protection of groundwater.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WI POL 5</b> - To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment. Water abstractions should ensure appropriate levels of environmental management and protection, including ensuring compliance with the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive.</p>	<p><b>ITC 7.37</b> - Ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.</p>
<p><b>GW 03</b> - Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of the plan. Development proposals shall not have an unacceptable impact on water quality, the water</p>	<p><b>WI OBJ 3</b> - To protect both ground and surface water resources including taking account of the impacts of climate change, and to support Irish Water in the development and implementation of Drinking Water Safety Plans and the National Water Resources Plan.</p>	<p><b>ITC 7.51</b> - Have regard to the EU Flood Risk Directive, the Flood Risk Regulations (S.I. No. 122 of 2010) and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management and Circular PL2/2014, through the use of the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests in Development Management.</p>

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<i>environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands, species and wetlands, in County Cavan and in any areas that are hydrologically or hydro geologically linked, including areas in Northern Ireland.</i>		
<b>GW 04</b> - <i>Contribute towards, as appropriate, the protection of existing and potential water resources, and their use by humans and wildlife, including rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater and associated habitat and species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC). The European Union (Water policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended), the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations 2010 (as amended) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same, to have cognisance of, where relevant, the EUs Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and No. 36 which provide guidance on exceptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive).</i>	<b>WQ POL 1</b> - <i>To protect existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and to manage development in a manner consistent with the protection of these resources</i>	<b>ITC 7.53</b> - <i>Protect and enhance the county's turloughs, lake/river floodplains and wetlands as strategically important green infrastructure which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater and enables flood risk to be more effectively managed, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria</i>

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<b>FDW 02</b> - Ensure that development will only be permitted in instances where there is sufficient capacity for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) of wastewater.	<b>WQ POL 4</b> - To ensure that the delivery and phasing of water services are subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and avoid impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.	
<b>W03</b> - Ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.	<b>WQ POL 9</b> - To permit new development only in instances where it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of Irish Water that there is sufficient capacity (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal of waste water to cater for the anticipated loading arising from the proposed development.	
<b>FRM 02</b> - Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Chapter.	<b>WQ POL 10</b> - To assess proposals for development in terms of their impact on human health to include, inter alia, the potential impact on existing adjacent developments, on existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, mitigation measures shall be introduced in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level.	



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<p><b>FRM 07</b> - <i>Protect water bodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include buffers in riverine and wetland areas as appropriate. Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto. In addition, promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid culverting or realignment of these features.</i></p>	<p><b>WQ OBJ 1</b> - <i>To promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect surface water, coastal and transitional waters and groundwater bodies from inappropriate and damaging development.</i></p>	
	<p><b>WQ OBJ 2</b> - <i>To achieve our targets of attaining and maintaining a minimum of 'good status' in all water bodies in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and to co-operate with the implementation of the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and subsequent replacement plans. This includes contributing towards the protection of Blue Dot catchments and drinking water resources whilst having cognisance of the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Documents No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</i></p>	

Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
	<p><b>FRM POL 1</b> - <i>To adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk. In accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, the avoidance of development in areas where flood risk has been identified shall be the primary response.</i></p> <p><b>FRM POL 4</b> - <i>To protect and enhance the county's floodplains and wetlands as 'Green Infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.</i></p> <p><b>SWM OBJ 1</b> - <i>To protect and enhance the county's floodplains and wetlands as 'Green Infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.</i></p>	
<b>Air Quality, Noise and Climate</b>		
<b>CTH 08</b> - <i>Protect environmental quality in Cavan through the implementation of European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions,</i>	<b>TOUR CLIM OBJ 1</b> <i>To encourage and support tourism providers, festival and event organisers to incorporate green initiatives and principles.</i>	<b>CAEE 8.1</b> - <i>Support European and national objectives for climate action, adaptation and mitigation which address land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk</i>

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<i>climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</i>		<i>management and drainage as detailed in the Climate Action Plan (2019), the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018) and The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) and any subsequent versions of any of the aforementioned.</i>
<b>STH 06</b> - <i>Support the development of low carbon neighbourhood plans to mitigate against climate change and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.</i>	<b>AQ POL 1</b> - <i>To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 201) (or any updated/superseding documents).</i>	<b>CAEE 8.16</b> - <i>Support the ongoing preservation, maintenance and enhancement of green areas and green infrastructure within the built environment, to reduce carbon dioxide and mitigate against the risk of flooding.</i>
<b>CCP 01</b> - <i>Support the implementation and achievement of European, national, regional and local objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation.</i>	<b>NP POL 1</b> - <i>To support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.</i>	
<b>CC 01</b> - <i>Support the implementation and achievement of European, national, regional and local objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage) and having regard to</i>		

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<p><i>the Climate mitigation and adaptation measures which have been outlined through the policy objectives in this Development Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions.</i></li> <li>■ <i>National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions).</i></li> <li>■ <i>Any Regional Decarbonisation Plan prepared on foot of commitments included in the NWRA RSES;</i></li> <li>■ <i>Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and</i></li> <li>■ <i>Cavan County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024</i></li> </ul>		
<p><b>AQ01</b> - <i>Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air</i></p>		

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<i>emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards, as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 201) (or any updated/superseding documents).</i>		
<b>N 01</b> - Support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and all associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.		
<b>N 02</b> - Require all developments to be designed and operated in a manner that will minimise and contain noise levels having regard to relevant national guidelines and in the absence of national guidelines, to relevant international standards, where appropriate. Seek identification and implementation of noise mitigation measures, where warranted, for developments proposed in the vicinity of existing or proposed national roads.		
<b>Material Assets</b>		
<b>LUR 06</b> - Integrate the County's transport and tourism strategies to promote increasingly sustainable travel patterns and improved linkages between the towns and villages within the County, with the aim of developing a coherent network dedicated to sustainable transport modes across the County and to the wider region.	<b>TOUR POL 8</b> - To consider and mitigate, as appropriate, the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations and/or along particular routes in the assessment of development proposals. Such consideration shall include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.	<b>ITC 7.58</b> - Encourage and support waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste.

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<b>GR 01</b> - <i>Planning for significant development proposals should be accompanied with a 'Traffic and Transport Assessment' (TTA) and a 'Road Safety Audit' (RSA) carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines and which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with other existing and committed developments on the road network.</i>	<b>TOUR POL 9</b> - <i>To protect, harness and develop the natural heritage assets of the town including the River Shannon, wetlands and other 'Green Infrastructure' for tourism and recreational purposes and to promote sustainable mobility.</i>	<b>ITC 7.60</b> - <i>Promote the principles of the circular economy in minimising waste going to landfill and maximise waste as a resource, with prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling and recovery prioritised in that order, over the disposal of waste.</i>
<b>GE 04</b> - <i>Ensure that energy transmissions infrastructure follows best practice with regard to siting, design and environmental impact and landscape protection.</i>	<b>ILU POL 2</b> <i>To support the development of a low carbon transport system by continuing to promote modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport in circumstances where alternative options are available.</i>	
<b>EDO 01</b> - <i>Promote energy conservation, increased efficiency and growth of locally based renewable energy alternatives, in an environmentally and socially acceptable and sustainable manner and having particular regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.</i>	<b>ILU POL 6</b> - <i>New transport infrastructure projects, including blueways and greenways, that are not already provided for by existing plans/programmes, which have been subject to environmental assessment, or are not already permitted, will be subject to feasibility assessment, considering need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report, and objectives relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, a Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken, where appropriate, in two stages: Stage 1 – Route</i>	



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	<i>Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection. This Corridor and Route Selection Process will not be applicable to national roads schemes which are required to be progressed in accordance with statutory processes and TII Publications, including the Project Management Guidelines and Project Appraisal Guidelines.</i>	
<b>WM 02</b> - Implement EU and national waste and related environmental policy, legislation, guidance and codes of practice to improve management of material resources and wastes.	<b>MSSM POL 1</b> To support sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and connectivity within Co. Leitrim in accordance with the National Policy Outcomes of the National Planning Framework 2040 and the National Development Plan.	
<b>WM 05</b> - Promote sustainable waste management treatment in keeping with the waste hierarchy and the move towards a circular economy and greater self sufficiency.	<b>MSMM POL 2</b> To promote the transition to a low carbon integrated transport system through the use of design solutions and innovative approaches with regards to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the complementary publication 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' by Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and subsequently to shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport.	
<b>WM 06</b> - Encourage and support waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste.	<b>WM POL 2</b> - To encourage and support waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste.	

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<p><b>EWC 01</b> - Require in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's 'Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (2006), the submission of a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan (CDWMP) for any project in excess of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ aggregate floor area in excess of 1250 sq. m;</li> <li>■ demolition or refurbishment of 100 m<sup>3</sup> of Construction or Demolition waste; or</li> <li>■ civil engineering projects in excess of 500 m<sup>3</sup> of waste.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WM POL 3</b> - To facilitate the transition from a waste management economy to a green circular economy to increase the value recovery and recirculation of resources.</p>	
<p><b>TC 07</b> - Support, implement and require best-practice environmental management and climate proofing of tourism related developments and activities, such as accommodation, restaurants, activity providers, festivals and events and tourism enterprises, to include zero climate impact, energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling.</p>		
Cultural Heritage		
<p><b>CTH 09</b> - Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of Cavan including all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Bridge Street ACA and Farnham Street ACA, Records of</p>	<p><b>BH POL 1</b> - To protect the quality, character and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the county.</p>	<p><b>BH 9.1</b> - Ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Roscommon through the compilation of a Record of Protected Structures, the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, the safeguarding of historic gardens, and</p>

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<i>Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.</i>		<i>the recognition of structures and elements that contribute positively to the vernacular and industrial heritage of the county.</i>
<b>CTH 13</b> - <i>Ensure heritage assets which are the focus for heritage development in Cavan are appropriately managed and their special interest is conserved from potential adverse effects from visitors or development in general and that best practice in relation to the environmental management of tourism enterprises is adhered to.</i>	<b>BH POL 2</b> - <i>To promote best conservation principles and practice with regard to protecting Leitrim's considerable architectural heritage.</i>	<b>BH 9.2</b> - <i>Protect all structures included on the Record of Protected Structures and their settings, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.</i>
<b>STH 08</b> - <i>Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of our towns including all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, ACA's, Records of Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.</i>	<b>BH POL 5</b> - <i>To have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (October 2011) or replacement Section 28 Guidelines as may be issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage when assessing proposals for development affecting a Protected Structure and buildings listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.</i>	<b>BH 9.6</b> - <i>Protect existing buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and features such as street furniture, which are considered to be intrinsic elements of the special character of the ACA, from demolition or removal and non-sympathetic alterations.</i>
<b>VDO 17</b> - <i>Protect and enhance the heritage and tourism offer in the villages throughout the County.</i>	<b>BH POL 6</b> - <i>To require the preparation of an Architectural Impact Assessment undertaken by an architect or other suitably qualified professional with conservation expertise, where appropriate, for developments which include or relate to a Protected Structure or their curtilage and attendant grounds.</i>	<b>BH 9.12</b> - <i>Encourage the protection and enhancement of heritage gardens and demesne landscapes, and to support, in consultation with the owners, the provision of public access to these sites as appropriate.</i>

Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
<p><b>BCHPO 01</b> - Undertake to preserve, conserve, enhance and promote understanding of the cultural heritage of County Cavan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making heritage more accessible to all citizens of Cavan</li> <li>• Promoting heritage learning and its value as an educational resource</li> <li>• Developing heritage-based tourism products by facilitating the development of infrastructure both hard and soft, heritage events and festivals</li> <li>• Supporting the development and implementation of the forthcoming Cavan Heritage Plan (currently in development).</li> </ul> <p>The Built and Cultural Heritage of County Cavan namely our architectural and archaeological heritage assets form an intrinsic part of the county's heritage. This heritage has shaped our identity as a county as it is passed from one generation to another, our sense of belonging and essentially what makes Cavan unique as a county. This tangible cultural heritage refers to archaeological sites, monuments, historic buildings and vernacular features. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the Irish Language, folklore, oral history, placenames, music, dance etc. Together, this tangible and intangible cultural heritage contribute to the</p>	<p><b>BH OBJ 1</b> - To seek the protection of all structures within the county that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest as contained in the Record of Protected Structures.</p>	<p><b>BH 9.13</b> - Secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally. In securing such preservation Roscommon County Council will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>

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<i>distinctiveness of our county and its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit</i>		
<b>RPS 1</b> - Protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of County Cavan and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations.	<b>ACA POL 1</b> - To ensure the preservation of the special character of each Architectural Conservation Area listed in this Plan (See Table 11.9) by exercising specific design control with particular regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, fenestration, signage, and other appendages such as electrical wiring, building materials, historic street furniture, paving and shop fronts.	
<b>ACA 3</b> - Ensure that Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), including any associated public realm area, are protected and ensure that any new development or alteration of a building within or adjoining an ACA positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of plot size, proposed design, including: scale, mass, height, proportions, density, layout, materials, plot ratio and building lines. Planning permission will not normally be approved for developments that are not consistent with and complementary to the character of the ACA.	<b>ACA POL 3</b> – To ensure the retention, repair and the regular maintenance, rather than replacement, of original/early features in buildings which contribute to the character of an Architectural Conservation Area such as chimney stacks, roof coverings, roof profiles, external wall treatments, doors and windows, shop fronts and pub fronts, while ensuring appropriate materials and repair techniques are used when repairs are being carried out.	
<b>AH 2</b> - Protect and enhance archaeological sites and monuments, their settings and zones of archaeological potential that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the	<b>ACA POL 7</b> - To retain historic items of street furniture where they contribute to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area, such as, post	

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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
ownership/ guardianship of the State, or that are the subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Ensure the protection of sites which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.	boxes, benchmarks, gates, plaques, milestones, railings, etc.	
	<p><b>ARCH POL 4</b> - To protect, preserve and promote the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and objects in rivers, lakes, intertidal and subtidal environments. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of the archaeological potential of rivers, lakes, intertidal and sub-tidal environments. Where flood relief schemes are being undertaken, the Council will have regard to the 'Archaeological Guidelines for Flood Relief Schemes' (DHLGH and OPW 2021).</p> <p><b>ARCH OBJ 2</b> - To ensure that any development (above or below ground or underwater), within the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest or protected wreck or area of underwater archaeological heritage shall not be detrimental to the archaeological remains, character of the site or its setting.</p> <p><b>ARCH OBJ 4</b> - To protect the zones of archaeological potential, as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, protected wrecks and underwater archaeological heritage.</p>	



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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
	<b>ARCH OBJ 5</b> - <i>To protect archaeological sites, protected wrecks and underwater archaeological heritage discovered since the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places, which are recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record.</i>	
<b>Landscape and Visual</b>		
<b>CTH 05</b> - <i>Seek to preserve, protect and maintain trees of special amenity, conservation or landscape value in Cavan.</i>	<b>TREE POL 2</b> - <i>To retain and protect significant stands / lengths of existing trees/hedgerows/woodlands, and seek increased planting of native trees, where appropriate, in new developments.</i>	<b>NH 10.25</b> - <i>Minimise visual impacts on areas categorised within the County Roscommon Landscape Character Assessment including “moderate value”, “high value”, “very high value” and with special emphasis on areas classified as “exceptional value” and where deemed necessary, require the use of Visual Impact Assessment where proposed development may have significant effect on such designated areas.</i>
<b>NHP 01</b> - <i>Protect conserve and enhance biodiversity, natural heritage, amenity and landscape in order to provide economic, social and well-being benefits for current and future generations of Cavan’s citizens and its visitors.</i>	<b>PEAT POL 1</b> – <i>To conserve peatlands and protect peatland landscapes within the county.</i>	<b>NH 10.26</b> - <i>Protect important views and prospects in the rural landscape and visual linkage between established landmarks, landscape features and views in urban areas.</i>
<b>LC 1</b> - <i>Ensure the preservation of the unique landscape character type by having regard to the character, value and sensitivity of a landscape when determining a planning application.</i>	<b>TWH POL 4</b> - <i>To protect and preserve existing hedgerows and minimise their removal. Where their removal is necessary, to seek their replacement with new hedgerow material native to the area.</i>	
<b>LC 4</b> - <i>Ensure that new development does not impinge in any significant way on the character,</i>	<b>LCA POL 1</b> - <i>To conserve and enhance the high nature conservation value of the Landscape</i>	

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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
<i>integrity and distinctiveness of highly sensitive areas and does not detract from the scenic value of the area such as visual harm, not in keeping elements of the landscape, causes loss or disturbance of the landscape elements contributing to the local distinctiveness, historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality, vegetation which is characteristic of a particular landscape and visual conditions of a landscape.</i>	<i>Character Areas in order to create/protect ecologically resilient and varied landscapes.</i>	
<b>SLPA 1</b> - <i>Maintain the scenic and recreation value of these areas by restricting all adverse uses and negative visual impacts.</i>	<b>LCA POL 2</b> - <i>To protect, enhance and contribute to the physical, visual and scenic character of Co. Leitrim and to preserve its unique landscape character.</i>	
<b>SR 2</b> - <i>Maintain and protect the natural landscapes visual character which is recognised to be of an exceptional high amenity value.</i>	<b>LCA POL 4</b> - <i>To seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development</i>	
<b>IW 1</b> - <i>Protect and enhance the natural heritage and landscape character of the County's Waterways and maintain them free from inappropriate development and provide for public access, where feasible, acknowledging the existence of contiguous Natura 2000 sites.</i>	<b>LCA OBJ 1</b> - <i>To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the physical, visual and scenic character of landscapes of the county in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Leitrim Landscape</i>	

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Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028	Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028
	<i>Character Assessment (2020) which forms Appendix VI of this Plan.</i>	
	<b>LD POL 2</b> - <i>To protect Areas of Outstanding Beauty and Areas of High Visual Amenity from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place.</i>	
	<b>LD POL 5</b> - <i>To ensure that development proposals have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment, the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change.</i>	
	<b>LD OBJ 1</b> - <i>To protect the quality, character and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the county.</i>	
	<b>LD OBJ 4</b> - <i>To protect Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of High Visual Amenity from inappropriate forms of development.</i>	

## 10 Monitoring

### 10.1 Introduction

Monitoring of the USSEB DEDP and its implications on the environment is important to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. In accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”*

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (**Section 6**) used in the assessment. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the targets. The monitoring programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for monitoring and the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action. It is recommended that the monitoring for the USSEB DEDP and review is undertaken in parallel with monitoring and review of the *Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028* for efficiency and given that similar data sets will be used to measure the progress of each plan.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive / neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive / neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the objectives of the USSEB DEDP are well-defined with regard to the environment. Conversely where the objectives of the USSEB DEDP have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the objectives of the USSEB DEDP or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective is having a significant adverse impact, an amendment may be considered during the lifetime of the USSEB DEDP.

Refer to **Table 10.1** below for the monitoring programme set for the SEA which includes details on the indicators, targets and data sources to monitor the progress of the USSEB DEDP.

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Table 10.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>Biodiversity (Flora &amp; Fauna) (B)</b>				
<b>B1</b>	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites (and transboundary National Site Network) and Annex habitats and species <sup>53</sup> and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under European and International legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for habitats and species protected under European and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	<p>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years)</p> <p>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)</p> <p>Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) data.</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p> <p>Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.</p>
<b>B2</b>	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under International and National legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under International and National legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	<p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>

<sup>53</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.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>B3</b>	Ensure USSEB DEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	Cavan /Leitrim/ Roscommon County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDPs.
<b>Population &amp; Human Health (PHH)</b>				
<b>PHH1</b>	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.	To comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	No contravention of the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	Central Statistics Office (CSO) census data.  Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>PHH2</b>	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.	Occurrence of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the USSEB DEDP, as identified by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and / or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of the USSEB DEDP.	Publicly available data from HSE and EPA to be reviewed.  EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Land, Soils &amp; Geology (LSG)</b>				



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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>LSG1</b>	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.	Extent of conversion of land cover / green field to developed / artificial surfaces.	Contribute towards the target of the SEA for the National Planning Framework's (2018) to " <i>Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%.</i> "	CORINE mapping surveys (every 5 years).  EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Water Quality (WQ)</b>				
<b>WQ1</b>	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	<p>Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009).</p> <p>Groundwater compliance 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>Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies reported.</p>	No deterioration in the status of any groundwater or surface water, or adverse effect upon the ability of any groundwater or surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the USSEB DEDP.	<p>Information issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).</p> <p>Review of WFD status of Bathing Waters, green flag / blue flag for beaches.</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
<b>WQ2</b>	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines	Flood-related incidences related to the USSEB DEDP.	Compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that any new	Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
	to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.		developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands.	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.  Review of planning applications for any new infrastructure to be accompanied by standalone flood risk assessment report in sensitive areas.
<b>Air Quality, Noise &amp; Climate (ANC)</b>				
<b>ANC1</b>	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.	Demonstration of compliance with air quality and noise provisions.  Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the study area, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.	To maximise the amount of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented.	EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.  Review of Air Quality Dashboard for air quality monitoring data results and EPA data for air quality monitoring.
<b>ANC2</b>	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation.	To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented.	EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Material Assets (MA)</b>				
<b>MA1</b>	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	Review of Annual Environmental Reports prepared by Uisce Éireann.  Review of publicly available data from EPA monitoring.  EPA State of the Environment reporting.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
	transport) that does not present a danger to human health.	management, energy and transport infrastructure.		Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>MA2</b>	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	<p>Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p>	<p>Increase waste recycling in the Counties.</p> <p>Reduce waste generation in the Counties.</p>	<p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>
<b>MA3</b>	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	<p>% change in modal split.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network.</p> <p>Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the study area.</p> <p>Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the study area.</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the study area. Increase Total Area</p>	<p>Review delivery of sustainable transport projects via Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon County Councils / NTA.</p> <p>Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
			of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives	
<b>Cultural Heritage (CH)</b>				
<b>CH1</b>	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on archaeological or cultural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	Review of data available from National Monuments Section of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>CH2</b>	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	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.	No adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.
<b>Landscape &amp; Visual (LV)</b>				
<b>LV1</b>	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.	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.	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.	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>LV2</b>	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Leitrim County Development Plan	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
	2023-2029 and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028.	Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the CDPs. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.

## 11 References

- Council Directive Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.*
- Environment Director General of the European Commission (2003). *Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment.*
- EPA (2024). *Spatial Information Resources Inventory.*
- EPA (2022). *SEA Pack.*
- EPA (2023a). *Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector.*
- EPA (2023b). *SEA of Local Authority Land-Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources.*
- EPA (2020). *Ireland’s Environment – An Integrated Assessment.*
- EPA (2015). *Strategic Environmental Assessment Resource Manual for Planning Authorities – Integration of SEA Legislation with Procedures for Land Use Plans.*
- EPA (2013). *Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment – Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner’s Manual.*
- EPA (2008). *SEA Process Checklist* [Consultation Draft 18 January 2008].
- EPA (2003). *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland – Synthesis Report.*
- Fossitt, J.A. (2000). *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland.*
- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200/2011).*
- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435/2004).*
- European Parliament and Council Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.*
- Government of Ireland (2018). *Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework.*
- Government of Ireland (2004). *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities.*
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (2020) *Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment.*
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (2016) *Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during construction works in and adjacent to Waters.*
- Cavan County Council (2022). *Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, including environment reports*
- Leitrim County Council (2023). *Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029, including environment reports*
- Roscommon County (2022). *Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, including environment reports*
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (2023). *Local Development Plan 2030: Plan Strategy, including environment reports*
- OPW (2009). *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*
- Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.*
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.*



## 12 Appendices

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Detailed Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border (USSEB) Destination & Experience Development Plan Action Plan**

## Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne, Border Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

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**Table 8.1A Environmental Assessment of the USSEB DEDP Action Plan**

(SEO Key: B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, ANC – Air Quality, Noise & Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
<b>Strategic Objective 1 - Establish the Upper Shannon, Shannon Erne and Border region as a leading regenerative tourism destination with high standards in sustainable tourism development and a reduced carbon footprint.</b>							
<b>1</b>	<b>Catalyst Initiatives</b>		<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
1.1	<b>Catalyst Initiative 1:</b> <b>Embed Regenerative Tourism as fundamental principle</b>						
1.1.1	<b>Immersed in Nature / Destination Stewardship</b>	Undertake a scoping and feasibility study (including innovation screener) of developing high quality, compelling free and paid for visitor experiences at suitable locations that focus on 'Immersed in Nature' / 'Nature Stewardship', informed by principles of best practice and current guidance.  This will underpin the regenerative ethos of the DEDP Vision as regards nature and the environment through showcasing how tourism can play a positive role in the protection and appreciation of the natural environment.					
1.1.2	<b>Regenerative Tourism Experience Development</b>	Deliver an annual visitor experience development programme based on a defined and agreed set of regenerative tourism principles as relevant to Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and aligned to DEDP Vision. This will a) build the tourism industry's understanding of regenerative tourism as an opportunity for development b) build on and enhance the Destination's status and credentials as a regenerative tourism destination by increasing the number of regenerative tourism saleable experiences, relating for example to regenerative and social farming, local culture, heritage, in-nature and Slow Adventure experiences					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		c) underpin the authenticity of the visitor offer by enhancing the place-based resonance of the visitor experience					
1.1.3	<b>Alignment of existing Visitor Experiences with regenerative tourism principles</b>	Augment the scope of Fáilte Ireland audits of the existing onsite visitor experience at visitor attractions and activity providers on a case by case basis to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluation of financial sustainability and development of a structured commercial framework</li> <li>• evaluation of their alignment with the place-based, in-nature approach as set out in the USSEB DEDP Vision</li> <li>• identification and evaluation of regenerative tourism outcomes</li> </ul>					
1.1.4	<b>Rathcroghan Place Partnership</b>	Develop the Rathcroghan Place Partnership, embracing a regenerative approach to tourism development.					
1.1.5	<b>DEDP Monitoring Programme</b>	Develop a DEDP Monitoring Programme to ensure effective management of the environment, including natural, cultural and heritage assets and incorporating measurement of regenerative tourism outcomes					
1.2	<b>Climate Action and Sustainable Tourism Development</b>						
1.2.1	<b>Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme</b>	Promote participation in Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme by hotels and visitor attractions as relevant, in order to collectively align with the national Climate Action Plan.					
1.2.2	<b>Sustainable Tourism Certification</b>	Encourage businesses to pursue sustainable tourism certification.					
1.2.3	<b>Business Sustainability Training</b>	Deliver annual sustainability training to grow the number and capability of tourism businesses within the Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark to become more sustainable and act as regenerative tourism ambassadors within and for the Destination.					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
1.2.4	Carbon Emissions Reduction	Link to Fáilte Ireland carbon emissions baseline data to measure the reduction in carbon emissions from the tourism sector over the period of the DEDP.					
Destination Enabling Initiatives							
1.3	Just Transition Fund Roscommon	Deliver and support the development of Just Transition-funded regenerative tourism projects in Roscommon.					
1.4	Strokestown Park Sustainability Project	Undertake a scoping study and associated feasibility assessment for a sustainability project of scale to be developed at Strokestown Park.					
1.5	Biodiversity Programme	Work collectively to implement the National Biodiversity Plan, and provide biosecurity facilities at Designated Entry Points for craft entering the Shannon, lakes and rivers, and at key angling locations throughout the Destination.					
1.6	Sustainable Transport						
1.6.1	USSEB Sustainable Transport Network	Seek opportunities to maximise the tourism potential of TII's national sustainable travel development plans across the Destination so that they will serve the visitor, communities, industry and the environment, and help deliver the DEDP Vision.					
1.6.2	E-Charging Network	Grow the network of e-charging points for bicycles and cars so that they will serve the visitor, communities, industry and the environment.					
1.6.3	Active Travel	Harness Active Travel investment in the key gateways and visitor hubs to grow the sustainable travel connectivity across the Destination.					
1.6.4	Shannon Region Discovery Bus (SMP)	Support the recommendations of the Shannon Masterplan Shannon Region Discovery Bus Route feasibility study.					
1.6.5	Local Link	Enhance existing- and/or create new- Local Link routes and schedules from and to accommodation hubs, that enable					

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		visitors to visit key attractions and engage in a range of tourism activities during the day and in the evening.					
1.6.6	<b>Green Travel Itineraries</b>	Create and promote a range of day- and multi-day itineraries within and across the wider USSEB destination that use sustainable transport in order to maximise the tourism potential of existing sustainable transport hubs, infrastructure and services, including Active Travel hubs, Local Link services, accommodation hubs, and facilities by integrating them with the development of tourism business- and visitor experience-clusters.					
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects. The projects/actions where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p>						
<b>2.</b>	<b>Strategic Objective 2 - Grow the profile of the Destination through collectively growing awareness, locally and in the domestic and international markets of Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon as great places to visit, where the visitor is assured of an authentic, place-based experience and which also delivers net positive benefits for the community, the environment, and the tourism industry.</b>						
	<b>Destination Enabling Initiatives</b>						
2.1	<b>Brand Awareness and Adoption</b>	Deliver an Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand adoption and education programme among our tourism industry partners to ensure a collective understanding of the regional brand opportunity and how to leverage it for sustained tourism growth.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2),			No
2.2	<b>In the Community Tourism Awareness</b>	Deliver a regenerative tourism awareness programme with existing and emerging community groups to enable them to contribute to and leverage the Hidden Heartlands regional					



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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
	<b>Development Programme</b>	brand opportunity for the benefit of their communities, and their local environment. Deliver Local Experts Champions programmes at key visitor hub locations across the Destination.		<b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)			
2.3	<b>Demand Generation</b>	Grow the number of destination tourism industry participating in Fáilte Ireland's scheduled B2C training programmes. With the Fáilte Ireland Commercial Development Division, build capacity of tourism industry to implement a commercial approach to marketing and sales generation for their business and collectively grow the recognition of the Destination in the domestic market					
2.4	<b>Digital Profile of the Destination</b>	Maximise the number of local tourism industry representatives participating in the 'Digital that Delivers' programme with the goal of developing tourism businesses' digital capability to increase the visibility of local tourism experiences and the wider destination online.					
2.5	<b>International sales development</b>	Grow the number of destination stakeholders participating in Failte Ireland's annual B2B training programmes in order to enable the tourism industry to develop and implement a commercial approach to marketing and sales generation for their business and collectively grow the recognition of the Destination overseas					
2.6	<b>A Nature-First Destination</b>	Work with Marketing, International Publicity teams and Tourism Ireland on raising the profile of the Destination in how it facilitates the protection and enhancement of the environment as the fundamental asset of the visitor experience in Counties Leitrim, Cavan and Roscommon.					
2.7	<b>Marketing alignment across the Destination</b>	Hold annual marketing meetings between Fáilte Ireland and the Local Authorities to align and maximise marketing campaign investment.					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.8	Family and multi-generational itineraries	With all tourism businesses and stakeholders, collectively create and promote bundles and itineraries showcasing the range of things to do and see for family and multigenerational travel.					
2.9	Other itineraries	Collectively create a range of itineraries that illustrate the variety of experiences to be had: focusing on Music, Food, Art, Literature					
2.10	Capability building programmes and tourism industry stakeholders	Build on Fáilte Ireland partnerships with County Local Development Companies and Local Enterprise offices (LEOs) to align and maximise training programmes and opportunities for local tourism businesses.					
2.11	River cruising as signature visitor experience	Implement the marketing recommendations in the Feasibility Study for the Sustainable Development and Greening of the Cruise Hire Sector					
	SEA Evaluation: These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.						
3.	Strategic Objective 3 - Deliver new levels of connectivity between new and existing trails, both land-based and water-based, across the Destination to create an enhanced and integrated scale of outdoor activity provision and development of best-in-class slow tourism hubs.						
	Catalyst Initiatives		PHH (PHH1, PHH2), MA (MA3)		ANC (ANC1,	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA	Yes
3.1	Catalyst Initiative 3: The North Shannon, and Shannon Erne Waterway						
3.1.1	Shannon Pot Discovery Centre	Deliver the new 'Discovery Centre' at the Shannon Pot – Cavan Burren as a key tourism product under the Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth capital investment programme supported by a comprehensive commercial plan.					
3.1.2	Shannon Master Plan	Implement the actions set out in the Shannon Master plan that are relevant to the Destination (i.e. Discovery Zone DZ 1).					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
3.1.3	The 3 B's Integrated Tourism Development Plan	Enhance the appeal and profile of the Shannon Erne Waterway as a cruising sub-destination within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands by implementing the actions and projects from the '3Bs' Tourism Development Plan for Belturbet and Ballyconnell in County Cavan and Ballinamore in County Leitrim.			ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)	(MA1, MA2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	
3.2	Catalyst Initiative 4: Accredited Blueways and Greenways						
3.2.1	Greenway & Blueway Masterplan	Develop a Greenways & Blueways Master Plan for the Destination to a) identify current and planned Greenways and Blueways projects and possible linkages between them b) map schedule of completion and accreditation as currently known and agree priority projects with stakeholders c) set out future maintenance requirements in an associated Trails Management Plan					
3.2.2	Shannon and Shannon-Erne Blueways	Develop accredited blueways on the Shannon and Shannon-Erne Waterway in accordance with the blueways proposition based on user experience potential and needs					
3.2.3	Blueways Hubs and Trails Opportunity Training Programmes	Deliver a comprehensive industry and community activation programme for the accredited Blueways, including community and local enterprise training to maximise the opportunities they present.					
3.2.4	Carrick on Shannon to Battlebridge Blueway	Complete the Carrick on Shannon to Battlebridge Blueway, connecting Acres Lake and the Shannon Blueway with the Shannon Erne Blueway.					
3.2.5	Cavan Greenway and Cavan-Leitrim Railway Greenway	Progress the Cavan and Cavan Leitrim Railway Greenways, connecting the towns of Cavan, Ballyconnell, Belturbet with the Shannon-Erne Blueway and the Ulster Canal Greenway and develop a greenway hub at Ballyconnell.					
3.2.6	Lough Ree Greenway	Progress the Lough Ree Greenway					
3.2.7	Carrick on Shannon to Boyle Greenway	Progress the Boyle – Lough Key – Carrick on Shannon Greenway					

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3.2.8	Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway	Progress the Navan – Kingscourt section of the Boyle Valley to Lakelands Greenway					
3.2.9	Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Greenway (SLNCR)	Progress the SLNCR Greenway					
3.2.10	Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Greenway (SLNCR)	Undertake Naming and Proposition development for the SLNCR					
3.2.11	Greenway Hubs and Trails Activation Programmes	Deliver a comprehensive industry and community activation programme for the accredited Greenways, including community and local enterprise training to maximise the opportunities presented by investments in them.					
3.3	Catalyst Initiative 5: Beara Breifne Way						
3.3.1	Beara Breifne Way	Complete the delivery of the Beara Breifne Way Masterplan, including the development of the identified trail heads, governance and management structure and supporting services.					
3.3.2	Beara Breifne Way Activation Programme	Deliver a comprehensive industry and community activation programme for the Beara Breifne Way, including community and local enterprise training to maximise the opportunities presented by investments in the Beara Breifne Way.					
	Destination Enabling Initiatives						
3.4	Lough Allen Masterplan	Build on the Shannon Masterplan by undertaking a Lough Allen Masterplan. This will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• examination of opportunities to orientate visitors in and around Lough Allen both on land and water integrating the existing harbours, nearby towns and existing trails such as the Leitrim Way and Miners Way.</li><li>• analysis of the opportunity for Spencer Docks, Cleighan Mór Docks and Conmorgan Pier to become catalysts for water-based activities around Lough Allen.</li></ul>					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
3.5	Community Hub Dowra	Develop a community tourism hub in Dowra to facilitate better links and visitor orientation to and between Lough Allen and Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark.					
3.6	Trails around Lough Allen	Investigate the feasibility and requirements to connect Dowra to Lough Allen via a multi-use trail, providing visitor connection to the lake and enhanced opportunities to create experiences for visitors to Drumkeeran, Cleighan Mór and Drumshanbo.					
3.7	The Táin Trail	Implement the findings of the Táin Trail product analysis and the regeneration of the Táin Trail as a visitor experience linking to clusters of community experiences.					
3.8	Pilgrim Way (Shannon and Shannon-Erne)	Support the development of the emergent spiritual Pilgrim Way along the Shannon and Shannon-Erne, and align it with the regenerative tourism ethos of the Destination.					
3.9	National Famine Way Trail and Experience	Examine the potential of a compelling Famine Way experience to connect with the Irish Diaspora market, linking with the National Famine Museum at Strokestown Park.					
3.10	Community Recreational Trails – Arigna	Create a heritage trail from Arigna Mining Experience, via Arigna Village to Drumshanbo, connecting visitors with local community experiences and attractions as well as both the Miner's Way and the Beara Breifne Way (Leitrim Way).					
3.11	Green links between Geopark sites	Enhance the green links (i.e. pathways / trails) between Geopark sites in the Cavan and adjacent Fermanagh parts of the Geopark in order to grow visitor dwell time and visitor experiences across the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark.					
3.12	Columban Way	Deliver the Cavan element of the Columban Way, and align it with the regenerative tourism ethos of Destination.					
3.13	Other Destination Trails Development Training Programmes	Deliver tourism industry, community and local enterprise training to maximise the opportunities presented by the future					

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		development of trails such as the Táin Trail, Pilgrim Way, National Famine Way.					
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. blueways and greenways) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land &amp; soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air &amp; noise. The development of new and existing greenways / blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>						
4.	Strategic Objective 4 - Develop the range and quality of the visitor experiences across the Destination drawing on the natural, community and cultural heritage with a focus on ecotourism.						
4.1	Catalyst Initiative 6: Develop Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark as hero site		PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	Yes
4.1.1	Geopark-themed Visitor Experience Development Programme	Develop a series of visitor experiences based on signature aspects of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark that will contribute to growing awareness of the Geopark and attract visitors on a year-round basis.					
4.1.2	Geopark Awareness	Deliver a Geopark Community Ambassador Programme to grow awareness of the Geopark to empower individuals to act as ambassadors and champions of the Geopark, both within their local communities and with visitors.					
4.1.3	Geopark Gateway facility, Glangevlin	Develop a Geopark Gateway facility at Glangevlin					
4.1.4	Geopark Gateway facility, Blacklion	Develop a Geopark Gateway facility at Blacklion					
4.2	Catalyst Initiative 7: Loughs Tapestry						
4.2.1	Loughs Tapestry Experience Network	Create a network (tapestry) of regenerative tourism experiences drawing on the Destination’s lakeland topography and its					



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		<p>associated 'hidden' natural and cultural heritage that creates a sense of scale and connectivity, encouraging visitors to explore further and to visit and return at different times of the year.</p> <p>Key actions</p> <p>The initial step in the creation of the Loughs Tapestry is to undertake an audit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List/Map the loughs/lakes with nature designations where there is or could be public access, identify any significant seasonal phenomena and the timeframe within which they occur, and note any existing or recommended restrictions on access (e.g. during nesting season) and the implications for visitor management (e.g. carrying capacity, stakeholder engagement, experience development and nature stewardship);</li> <li>2. List/Map the loughs/lakes with sites of historical, cultural or archaeological interest where there is or could be public access and note any existing or recommended restrictions on access (e.g. flooding, livestock grazing) and the implications for visitor management (e.g. carrying capacity, stakeholder engagement, experience development and nature stewardship)</li> <li>3. List/map active community groups and landownership in the proximity of the above sites.</li> <li>4. Create a composite map, with layers illustrating the location, type of heritage, season/time-frame, type of access (restricted to open), type and focus of community groups, type/theme of potential visitor experience amongst other aspects</li> </ol> <p>The next step is to develop 'threads' of visitor experiences across the Destination</p>					

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		<p>5. Taking the map (step 3 above) work with the Local Authorities, community tourism groups, and tourism businesses to create clusters of visitor experiences (saleable and free) that are grouped spatially and/or thematically, representing ‘threads’ for visitors to follow.</p> <p>6. Facilitate and motivate visitors to uncover the Lough’s Tapestry by</p> <p>(a) developing the capabilities of local community groups and tourism enterprises and industry to render the ‘threads’ into appropriate media and itineraries</p> <p>(b) assisting in the co-creation of a series of motivating itineraries focused on Yours to Uncover experiences, Immersed in Nature / Nature Stewardship portals, Active in Nature water-activity hubs, Tranquillity Zones, Wellness in Nature</p>					
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Catalyst Initiative 8: Forest Adventure</b>						
4.3.1	Forest Based Experience	Scope and assess the feasibility of creating a (range of) linked forest-themed visitor experience(s) that draw on the outcomes of the master planning of current key forest amenities at Lough Key, Dún an Rí, Glenfarne, and Killykeen.					
4.3.2	Lough Key Forest Park Masterplan	Implement the recommendations of the Masterplan for Lough Key Forest and Activity Park.					
4.3.3	Killykeen Forest Park Masterplan	Undertake a Masterplan for Killykeen Forest Park and the wider Upper Lough Erne area (including for example Rann Point) to inform the appropriate development and enhancement of domestic and international visitor experiences that deliver on the Vision for the USSEB destination.					

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4.3.4	Dún an Rí Forest Park Masterplan	Implement the Dún an Rí Forest Park Masterplan and the priority projects that will contribute to the Destinations profile for in-nature Forest Adventure experiences.					
4.3.5	Glenfarne Wood Strategic Plan	Deliver the Glenfarne Wood Recreation and Tourism Development Strategic Plan.					
4.3.6	Loughanleagh Experience Development	Review the Loughanleagh Masterplan with a focus on sustainability, dwell-time, and commercial return following recent investment in the forest visitor facilities.					
Destination Enabling Initiatives							
4.4	Kayaking Camino	Undertake a feasibility analysis of creating a kayaking 'Camino' along the River Shannon, potentially taking visitors from the Shannon Pot to the Shannon Estuary.					
4.5	Sliabh an Iarainn National Park Feasibility	Explore the feasibility of designating Sliabh an Iarainn and its hinterland as a National Park / Recreational Area.					
4.6	River Cruising Development	Develop the cruise opportunity for the Destination by implementing the USSEB-relevant recommendations of the Feasibility Study for the Sustainable Development and Greening of the Cruise Hire Sector					
4.7	Angling Tourism	Establish a USSEB destination subgroup to identify the key actions required to develop USSEB as a sustainable Angling Tourism destination that is aligned with the USSEB Vision and Objectives. Undertake an audit of current product and market potential in line with how it can deliver under regenerative tourism principles.					
4.8	Angling Tourism	Continue to support the promotion of USSEB as a sustainable angling tourism destination and continue to build awareness within the international marketplace of local angling experiences.					

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4.9	Lough Rinn Water Sports Hub	Further develop and promote Lough Rinn as a national and international Water Sports Hub, hosting regular sport tourism events.					
4.10	Ballyconnell White Water Rafting	Scope requirements for development /enhancement of user and visitor facilities for white water kayaking and rafting along the Woodford River at Ballyconnell.					
4.11	Lough MacNea cross-border canoe trail	Develop a cross-border canoeing trail with associated leisure activities on the Arney River.					
4.12	Saleable Experience Development Programmes focusing on In-nature Wellbeing In-nature Immersion	Deliver saleable experience training programmes to grow the number of B2B and B2C saleable experiences focused on the day and evening time economies across the USSEB destination. This will include the following: a) As part of the Forest Experience theme and Loughs Tapestry, grow the number of destination experiences aligned with wellbeing and nature to develop a network of saleable wellbeing experiences and grow the profile of the Destination for wellness tourism. b) As part of the Forest Experience theme and Loughs Tapestry, grow the number of destination experiences that integrate activities with nature and heritage. Develop a network of saleable in-nature experiences and grow the profile of the Destination for immersed in nature experiences.					
4.13	Green Experience Hubs	Drawing on the Forest Experience theme and Loughs Tapestry, test the concept of developing a series of unique green visitor experiences located within a number of 'green tourism hubs'.					
4.14	Destination Cycling Trail	Map the existing off and on road cycling trails and loops, and assess the feasibility of developing a network of linked cycle trails and/or an extended USSEB cycling trail.					
4.15	Accessible Tourism Experiences	Engage tourism providers in a destination wide programme for Accessible Tourism that is					

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		a) is informed by the Failte Ireland's accessible tourism guidelines b) is linked to Active in Nature and Yours to Uncover experiences c) provides for industry development in order to maximise the accessible tourism opportunity for USSEB.					
4.16	Inter-regional Experiences and Bundling	Work across the wider Ireland's Hidden Heartlands region to develop bundling and itinerary development to influence visitor flows and create reasons to stay longer in the region as a whole					
4.17	Cross Border Experiences and Bundling	Leverage cross-border opportunities re: bundling and itinerary development to influence visitor flows and create reasons to stay longer in the USSEB and border areas.					
4.18	Fermanagh Lakelands, Omagh and the Sperrins (FLOS)	Align relevant actions and projects in the FLOS VEDP and USSEB DEDP in order to encourage visitor flow and longer dwell time in and between the two destinations					
4.19	Shared Island and Peace Plus Opportunities - Review and Project Prioritisation	Identify potential experience development opportunities under Shared Island and Peace Plus arising from existing and future plans that have the ability to attract visitors into the USSEB destination and wider North West. Existing plans include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Shared Island Cuilcagh Masterplan</li> <li>• the Castlesaunders Shared Island Masterplan.</li> </ul>					
4.20	Food Tourism Development Strategy	Develop a destination-wide Food Tourism Strategy in order to grow the number and range of food experiences (e.g. Meet the Maker), supported by a strong inter-county network(s).  Strength of food provenance, food network and opportunity to link food with agri and regenerative farming experiences. Creation of destination linked trails based on thematic					

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		opportunities e.g. Food Trail linked to the green / eco theme and food provenance.					
4.21	Music Heritage Experience Development	Assess the feasibility of creating a destination-wide network of experiences that enhance visitor engagement with the music heritage – past and current – of the Destination					
4.22	Golf Tourism	Support the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Golf Association in their experience development and promotional activities					
4.23	National Famine Museum / Strokestown House: Experience development	Implement the saleable experience-related actions set out in the Commercial Plan. Continue to develop Strokestown Park and The National Famine Museum, creating new immersive visitors experience in the surrounding woodlands, meadows and walled gardens that emphasise biodiversity and natural heritage. Restore the original connection between Strokestown Park and the town to enhance and open up and deepen the connection between the property and the community and create greater connectivity between The National Famine Museum and The National Famine Way. Focus on development of an external learning zone, to complement the existing built heritage on site, developing immersive educational and visitor experiences, with a focus on the diaspora. Grow the range of onsite visitor experience options, emphasising conservation and sustainability projects across the site and encourage the development of authentic experiences, and sharing of our heritage stories, using the Trust's locally based volunteers.					
4.24	Visitor Attraction at Arigna Mining Experience	Enhance the overall tourism offer • Scope the requirements, and undertake a feasibility study, for an enhanced, future-proofed visitor experience at Arigna Mining Experience, e.g. through the development of an A.I.					



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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		miner guided tour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record and curate miner memorabilia</li> <li>Further develop the Arigna Mountain Walking trails</li> <li>Assess the feasibility of reinstating the Arigna Cable Car to transport people from AME to Arigna Village.</li> </ul>					
4.25	OPW Heritage Attractions	Work with the regional managers of the OPW Heritage Ireland attractions to enhance their role in developing the Destination offer and appeal.					
4.26	Castle Saunderson Visitor Experience	Review the visitor experience development requirements to maximise the potential of the Castle Saunderson site as regards the onsite experience and how it links to existing and potential trails on land and on water.					
4.27	Big Houses	Develop a network of Big House visitor experiences across the Destination.					
4.28	County Museums Experience Development	Undertake a pilot programme for County Museum development at Cavan County Museum, scoping development requirements and assessing feasibility of an enhanced visitor experience proposition, including a review of the proposal to establish it as the National Story Telling Centre.					
4.29	Small Scale Attractions and Heritage Centres	Develop a programme to enable small scale and community-run attractions and heritage centres to review the sustainability of their commercial approach and governance, their potential to deliver regenerative tourism experiences and their role in visitor orientation to and within the USSEB Destination. Potential participating attractions include the following, among others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belturbet Heritage Railway Complex</li> <li>John McGahern Museum at The Barracks Cootehall</li> <li>The Rainbow Ballroom of Romance</li> <li>Glenview Folk Museum</li> <li>Roscommon County Museum</li> </ul>					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margaret of New Orleans Birthplace</li> <li>• St George's Heritage Centre</li> <li>• St Kilian's Heritage Centre, Mullagh</li> <li>• The Markethouse, Blacklion</li> </ul>					
4.30	Bailieborough Community Hub	Support the visitor experience element of the Bailieborough Courthouse and Community Hub development project.					
4.31	Ballyjamesduff Community and Tourism Hub	Support the visitor experience development requirements in the conversion of the old Percy French Hotel in Ballyjamesduff into a community and tourism hub.					
4.32	Rathcroghan Visitor Experience Development	Support the visitor experience development at Rathcroghan with respect to the Táin Trail.					
4.33	Rathcroghan World Heritage Site Designation	Progress the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation of Rathcroghan as one of the six Royal Sites in Ireland					
4.34	Rathcroghan Archaeology Trail	Develop the Rathcroghan Archaeological Looped Trails ORIS project					
4.35	John McGahern Museum, Ballinamore	Explore the options of developing a centre dedicated to the writer John McGahern in the existing courthouse building in Ballinamore					
	<p><b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain.</p>						

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
5.	<b>Strategic Objective 5 - Grow the economic impact of tourism and create high quality jobs in the Destination by supporting the industry to enhance its capacity and capability and by developing and enhancing the visitor services' provision.</b>						
	<b>Destination Enabling Initiatives</b>						
5.1	Gateway Towns and visitor service hubs	Complete the key projects outlined by the Shannon Tourism Masterplan to strengthen year-round appeal of the main visitor hubs of Cavan and Carrick on Shannon. Undertake the same for the Gateway Town of Roscommon.  Review the requirements to develop towns such as of Boyle, Blacklion, Drumshanbo, Manorhamilton, Ballyconnell and Virginia as key service hubs from a daytime and evening time visitor economy perspective, and to enhance their ability to act as gateways to and from neighbouring regions of the Wild Atlantic Way / Ireland's Ancient East / Fermanagh Lakelands, Omagh and the Sperrins.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)		Yes
5.2	Evening Economy Experience development	Develop a number of evening time activity pilot programmes at and around the key accommodation hubs of Cavan Town, Carrick on Shannon and Roscommon Town. Support the activities such as Open House and Culture Night and the innovative use of cultural/heritage buildings for evening time provision. Build the capability of existing visitor attractions, cultural hubs (e.g. The Dock Art Gallery, Carrick on Shannon; King House, Boyle; Ramor Theatre, Virginia, among others) and activity providers to innovate in how they develop new visitor experiences to grow the range of things to do in the day and evening time.					
5.3	Campervan/RV Audit	Identify suitable sites across the USSEB to provide infrastructure for campervans and recreational vehicles that will enable local communities benefit economically and complement existing facilities. The audit should include sites					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		and types of facilities under consideration by Waterways Ireland.					
5.4	Community Tourism Enterprises Experience Development	Draw on the Community Tourism Toolkit to deliver a community tourism programme with existing and emerging community tourism groups as the basis for developing future community tourism training. This will a) Deliver a regenerative approach among local community groups interested in pursuing tourism opportunities. b) Ensure that new and existing community tourism enterprises are equipped with knowledge and capabilities around commerciality, effective governance and succession planning.					
5.5	Capability building programmes and tourism industry stakeholders	Build on Fáilte Ireland partnerships with Local Development Companies and Local Enterprise offices (LEOs) to align and maximise training programmes and opportunities for local tourism businesses.					
5.6	Festivals and events strategy	Undertake a USSEB wide analysis of festivals and events to establish current gaps and where growth potential exists, place particular focus on programming in the outdoors, community and relevant themed opportunities along the lines of: a) Active in Nature experiences, b) Link in with/leverage county and regional diaspora initiatives.					
5.7	Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Walking Festival Series	Ensure that all walking festivals are aware of and included in the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Walking Festivals series					
5.8	Capacity of the Cruise Hire sector	Work across the relevant agencies and bodies to grow the capacity and capabilities of the cruise hire sector in line with the Feasibility Study for the Sustainable Development and Greening of the Cruise Hire Sector as it relates to the Destination					

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
5.9	Marketing strategy	Collaborate with businesses and marketing partners in the USSEB area to develop a marketing strategy to extend the season.					
5.10	Tourism signage	Undertake a cross county, destination-wide audit of existing signage in terms of effective visitor orientation and highlighting local attractions, in order to inform any future signage projects in the Destination.  Work with relevant bodies on improving the visibility of the Destination and its attractions through appropriate signage. Pay particular attention to signage that functions to attract visitors off bypasses and National Routes (e.g., the new N5 bypass currently under construction), in order to grow the visitor footfall in the smaller towns.					
5.11	Regional Airports and Ports	Seek ways to grow the potential for regional ferry ports and airports to act as access portals to the Destination.					
5.12	Visitor journey	Work with the relevant agencies and existing sources of information to develop a better understanding of the visitor journey, from the point of entry to the Destination, including ‘the last mile’. Include all forms of transport, including sustainable forms of transport. Use this as a starting point to inform relevant actions that are focused on maximising visitor access to the Destination.					
	<b>SEA Evaluation:</b> The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain.						

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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
6.	Strategic Objective 6 - Build new levels of tourism industry and stakeholder collaboration by strengthening of existing tourism networks and clusters and creating new ones where necessary.						
6.1	Catalyst Initiative #1 ctd: Embed Regenerative Tourism through collaboration		PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)			No
6.1.1	USSEB Regenerative Tourism Experience Clusters	Motivate collaboration and innovation between the industry, communities and agencies on regenerative tourism outcomes through the development of a number of thematic and geographically-focused clusters of visitor experiences that are firmly rooted in regenerative tourism principles					
6.1.2	Annual Regenerative Tourism Conference - Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands and the Upper Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Border DEDP area.	Host/organise a yearly USSEB regenerative tourism seminar/conference/workshop for businesses and agencies to share experiences and learning, and inspire more businesses to implement, showcase and collaborate on regenerative tourism practices and outcomes across a range of aspects of their tourism enterprises.					
	Destination Enabling Initiatives						
6.2	Agency Training & Investment Alignment	Implement a strategic cross-agency approach to tourism-related training and enterprise development that ensures alignment with the Vision for the USSEB Destination.					
6.3	Cross-border collaboration	Identify and develop shared approaches and projects that facilitate and grow cross-border tourism activity aligned with regenerative and sustainable tourism.					
6.4	Collaboration across regional experience brands WAW and IAE	Collaborate with colleagues in the Wild Atlantic Way, and Ireland’s Ancient East teams to develop and implement a cross-regional approach to networking and tourism development					



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No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
6.5	Collaborate across IHH	Collaborate with colleagues within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands to develop and implement an inter-regional approach to networking and tourism development					
6.6	Implementation Partnerships	Form the required project implementation partnerships between the Local Authorities and all other strategic partners to effect the delivery of the projects within the DEDP.					
6.7	Place-making and public realm	Work with relevant agencies to ensure that tourism is considered in all elements of place-making / public realm projects in the Destination					
6.8	DEDP Communications Strategy	Develop a communications plan for disseminating progress on the Plan to communities, industry and stakeholder agencies.					
	<b>SEA Evaluation:</b> These action will enhance tourism opportunities for the Destination, raise awareness and have positive effect on population and human health. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.						

## Appendix 2: SEA Screening Determination

**Screening Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC  
as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as amended**

**Concerning the proposed Upper Shannon Destination and Experience Development Plan**

Fáilte Ireland as the Competent Authority for the proposed Upper Shannon Destination and Experience Development Plan has undertaken screening for SEA under Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

The screening assessment was carried out using the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended and having regard to Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>1</sup>, which directs that:

*“In any case where, following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting a precautionary approach-*

*- an appropriate assessment of the plan must be carried out and*

*- in any case where a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out.”*

Following assessment of the criteria and having regard to the nature of the Plan and the potential for likely significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, including on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, Fáilte Ireland has determined that the Plan will require SEA.

This determination has been made following consideration of the information contained in the SEA Screening Report, the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to S.I. 435/2004, as amended, the conclusion of the AA Screening Report, and following consultation with the statutory Environmental Authorities for SEA, from whom responses were received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI).

The principal reason the Plan does require SEA is as follows:

- As directed under Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: because the potential for likely significant environmental effects on 12no. European sites could not be ruled at Appropriate Assessment screening stage.

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:



**Dated: October 2024**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

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