IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

REGIONAL

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023 – 2027

APPENDICES

Fáilte Ireland

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST®
Wander Through Time

FI-43153-IAEA4-APNDXCVR-CW-0922

Contents of this Appendix:

- A2: Site Maintenance Guidelines (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- A3: Visitor Management Guidelines (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- A4: Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- A5: Environmental Damage Resolution (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- A6: Greenway Visitor Experience & Interpretation Toolkit (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- A7: Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion & Campaign Statement (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy); and
- A8: Blueway Management & Development Guide (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy).

WILD ATLANTIC WAY

SLÍ FHIÁIN AN ATLANTAIGH

Site Maintenance Guidelines

for launching the

Wild Atlantic Way

Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

thepaulhogarthcompany

BRADY SHIPMAN MARTIN

INTRODUCTION

The *Wild Atlantic Way* will be the longest coastal driving attraction in the world, inviting greater tourism numbers to the west coast of Ireland from overseas tourist markets to explore this unique and varied, but wild landscape and seascape.

The Vision for the *Wild Atlantic Way* is to build on the existing international reputation of the West Coast of Ireland, and to develop an all encompassing World Class tourism product that will invite visitors to experience the unique wild and natural seascape and landscape of the Atlantic Coast.

It will be at once wild, natural, vibrant and authentic; unspoilt, intriguing, exciting and memorable. It will showcase the wild landscapes and seascapes, and the heritage and history of the places along it.

What does it look like?

The *Wild Atlantic Way* is a route along the Atlantic coast from Kinsale in County Cork to the Inishowen Peninsula in County Donegal, and will be fully developed over a period of 10 years.

Along the **Route** there are **159 Discovery Points**, large and small, each chosen for their potential to offer visitors an authentic and intimate experience of the natural and wild landscape and seascape. The majority of these Discovery Points are alongside or accesses by rural roads, with others being located within village and harbour settings. Additionally, there are **22 Embarkation Points** to island Discovery Points.

Each Discovery Point already has a parking facility in the form of a lay-by or car park, and these will serve as the **Arrival Points** for each site. A number of these Discovery Points will be further enhanced to improve the quality of the visitor experience, subject to compliance with the relevant environmental and habitats regulations.

At this stage, we want the help of the Local Authorities to prepare the Arrival Points to the Discovery Points for the launch of the Wild Atlantic Way in 2014.

This document provides guidelines as to the works that may be required to meet a minimum standard of presentation of these sites. The Guidelines also include an Ecological Method Statement which sets out the ecological standards and procedures which must be complied with by the Local Authorities in implementing any works.

In relation to the further development of the *Discovery Points*, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment are currently being undertaken of the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme and the findings of these assessments will determine the scope, extent and nature of future works, if any.

These Guidelines, therefore, relate only to the parking facilities at the *Discovery Points*.

Ferry to Island
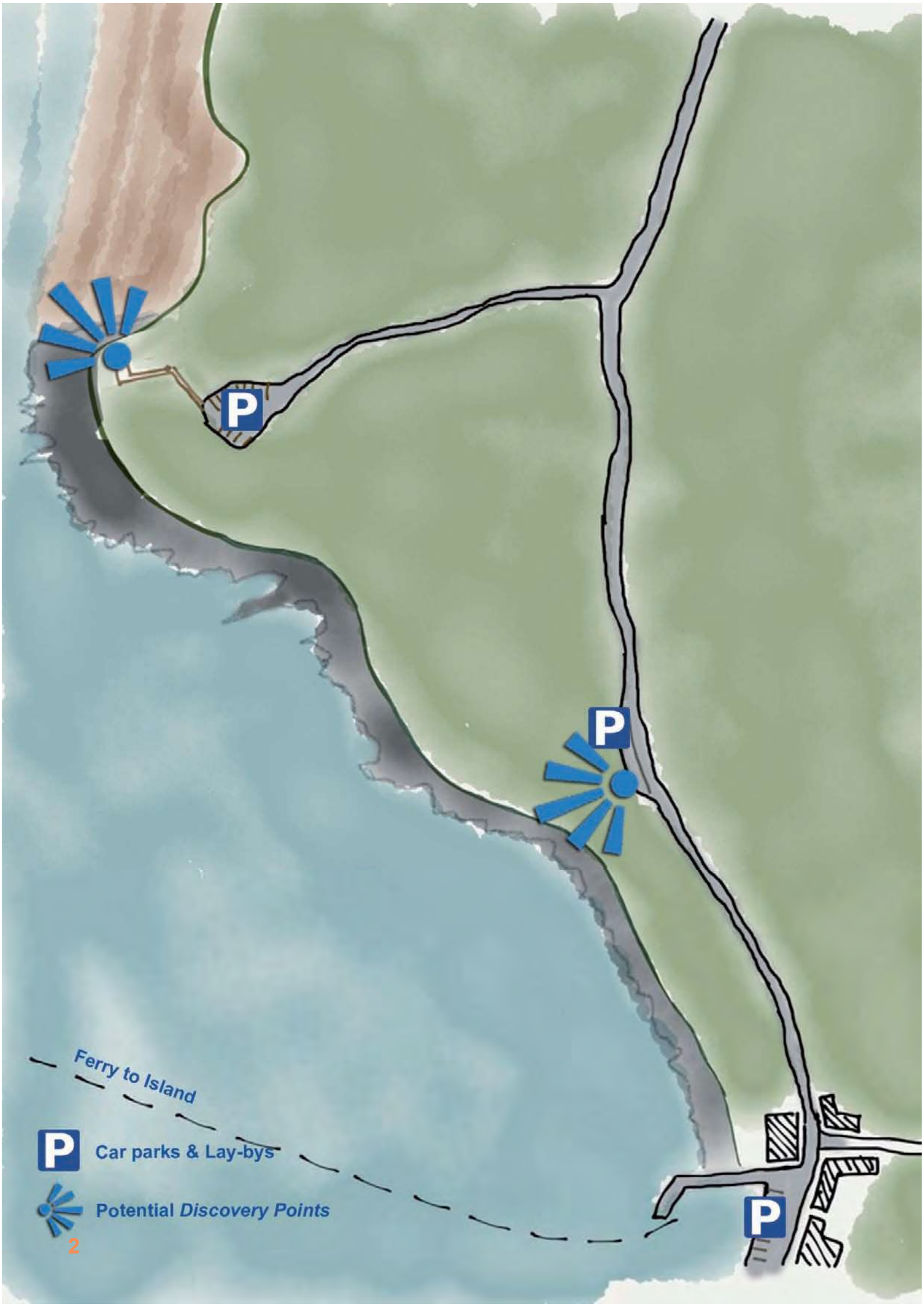
P Car parks & Lay-bys

Potential *Discovery Points*

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OVERVIEW

The parking facilities are the *Arrival Points* for vehicles and provide pedestrian access for visitors to the *Wild Atlantic Way* site markers, and in the longer term, to the *Discovery Points*.

In some cases, the parking facility will incorporate the *Discovery Point*, either because there is no access from it into the surrounding landscape for a variety of reasons, or that it is considered that the best view of the surrounding landscape and seascape is to be had from the parking facility.

Parking facilities are not authentic landscape elements, however, it is important that they are well presented and do not compromise visitor experience of the natural landscape or seascape attraction.

By virtue of their remote and unsheltered locations, many are highly exposed to the excesses of wind and rain, and have endured damage to surfaces, boundaries and facilities - in some cases giving rise to a sense of dereliction. **Poor presentation and dereliction** will undermine visitor experience of the sites.

The purpose of this document is to assist Local Authorities in identifying appropriate repair works that **will enhance the presentation** and visitor experience of parking facilities. Included as part of these guidelines is an Ecological Method Statement. All remedial works undertaken by Local Authorities should comply with these Guidelines and the Ecological Method Statement.

All parking facilities should be effective, visually discreet, and compatible with their natural context.

SITE APPROACH AND ENTRANCE

The extent of what is considered the Site Approach will be determined by the particular characteristics and context of each site.

- In the case of lay-bys, the approach will probably only include the section of road alongside it and any defined entrance.
- For small car parks at the end of cul-de-sacs or along very minor roads, the approach may include some or all of the minor road linking to the main route, as well as any defined entrance.
- Car parks adjacent to settlements, beaches and harbours vary considerably in size, and may incorporate and service other facilities or attractions. In such cases, it may be appropriate that the approach be limited to the part of the car park where the *Wild Atlantic Way* site marker is to be located.

Typical maintenance works may include:
- Repair of broken road surfaces;
- Repair of rutted road edges;
- Cutting roadside grass verges;
- Trimming of hedgerows;
- Weeding and removal of inappropriate species and dead planting;
- De-cluttering and removal of excessive or obsolete signage;
- Repairing or removing broken or inappropriate entrance structures including height restrictions;
- Removal or tidying up of derelict or abandoned equipment in adjoining fields or areas.

PARKING SURFACES

The site car parks, by virtue of their exposed locations, are prone to physical damage by high volumes of drainage, high winds and temperature change, giving rise to broken and uneven surfaces, potholes and surface drainage problems.

Parking surfaces should be **continuous, reasonably firm and durable, be free of tripping hazards**, incorporating free flowing drainage, and should also be **visually compatible** with the surrounding context.

Surface materials will typically include tar and chip or compacted stone for rural sites, whereas village and harbour sites might include bitumen macadam, tar and chip, and possibly concrete.

Hot rolled asphalt incorporating drainage channels, gullies, painted line markings, concrete edgings etc are not generally appropriate, but may be required at specific sites where higher volumes of visitors are anticipated.

Issues to Consider

General:	Tidy up sites by removing **debris and gravel piles**, and repairing broken elements.
Drainage:	Examine the effectiveness of the site drainage, by considering site levels and gradients, the source and direction of cross flows, and the optimum outlet routes. Determine free **flowing discreet drainage system** that will assist in ensuring the integrity of the parking surface and edges.
Surfaces:	Repair any broken surfaces, potholes, sudden level changes or broken or rutted edges that may give rise to tripping and difficulties for buggies and wheelchair users. Use materials that are consistent with the local road, existing car park or surrounding landscape context as appropriate.
Vegetation:	Grass and other vegetation can break through compact surfaces after a number of years. In some cases this might be considered part of the **character**; for others, it might be considered **derelict**. An assessment of what is appropriate must be made, and such vegetation either left alone, or the surface renewed to eliminate it. If renewing surfaces, the specification should consider the likelihood of vegetation re-establishing itself.

In general, **do not introduce urban traffic solutions** such as highly finished tarmac, paint marking, bollards, kerbs, barriers or traffic signage in areas that are distinctly rural and natural in appearance.
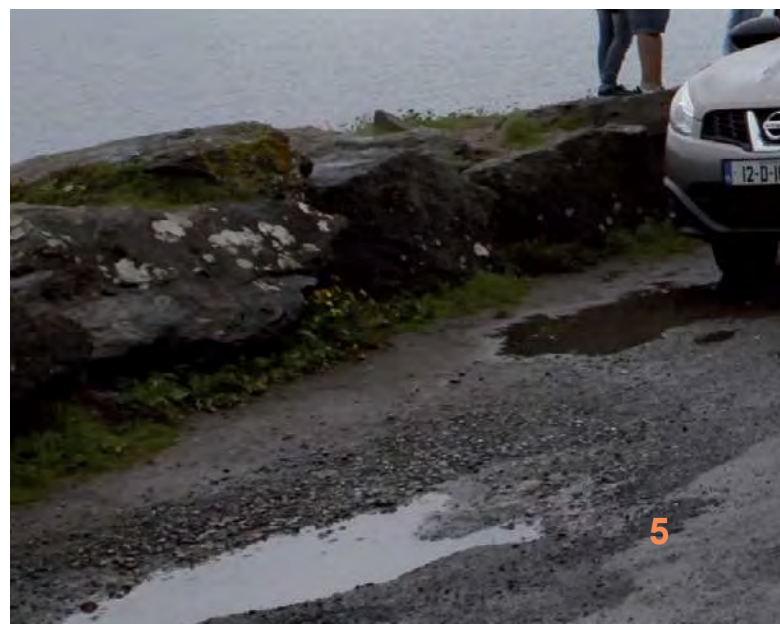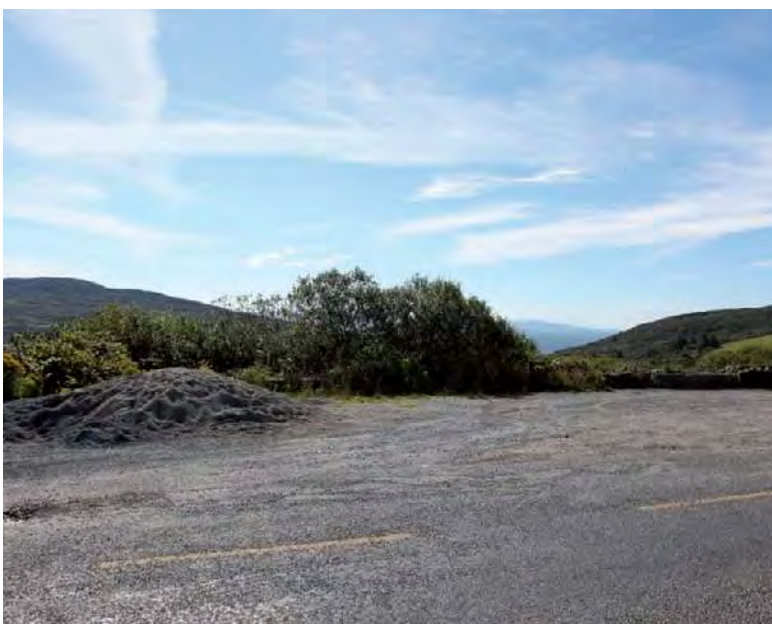
SITE BOUNDARIES

Boundaries for parking facilities vary significantly, and typically in rural settings include earth mounds, sod and stone banks, hedgerows, post and wire fencing etc., that are consistent with the wider landscape setting. In some cases, they may also include examples of local craftsmanship, such as dry stone walls.

Rural boundaries have an **inherent rugged and almost natural appearance**. Undulating lines, off-plumb fence posts, and weathered appearances are perfectly acceptable authentic elements of the landscape.

Repair and maintenance works for improved presentation may require:

Earth mounds: Any broken or eroded parts should be repaired to match the original.

Sod and Stone banks: Reinstate any damaged sections and remove overgrown or dead planting, or any inappropriate species;

Hedgerows: In general, annual trimming to maintain vistas should be undertaken outside bird nesting season, ideally in autumn to allow recovery in advance of the tourism season.

Dry stone walls: Repair any broken or fallen sections to match the original

Post & wire fence: Replace and missing or broken posts or sections of wire

Sand dunes: Natural features with marram grass should not need maintenance.

Inappropriate boundaries might include bollards (concrete, steel, painted timber), boulders, chain link fencing, painted timber fences, crash barriers, and walls made from blockwork, modular materials or concrete.

Where inappropriate boundary treatments are present they should be removed and replaced with an alternative that is consistent with the surrounding landscape context. If vehicular constraints are necessary for safety or for restricting access, consider solutions derived from typical appropriate boundaries.

SIGNAGE

Sites should be free of all unnecessary clutter, so as not to detract from the setting and visitor experience. Excesses of signage, for direction, safety, information, interpretation and other purposes needs to be rationalised and simplified.

In many instances, typical actions required that may include:

- Removal of abandoned or derelict signage and signage infrastructure;
- Removal of any urban or otherwise inappropriate signage structures;
- Removal of all commercial advertising;
- Repair and repainting of signage infrastructure.

Local Authorities, in consultation with Fáilte Ireland and other relevant bodies, should seek to remove other tourism and interpretive signage, and if appropriate and necessary, to seek to incorporate other information in conjunction with the *Wild Atlantic Way* site marker.

The *Wild Atlantic Way* site marker will incorporate interpretation signage, the content for which will be agreed by means of a separate consultative process.

The objective is that upon arrival, the *Wild Atlantic Way* site marker should be readily visible, not confused amongst other signage, and be close to the point of interaction (or departure to) the natural and wild experience identified with each site.

SITE FURNITURE

Where site furniture is provided, it is important that it is appropriate to the natural landscape setting, and well maintained so as to enhance visitor experience of the site.

Actions required may include:

- Removal, replacement or repair of any furniture that is broken or appears derelict;
- Removal of any urban style seating or other site furniture that detracts from the authenticity of the site;
- Removal of any makeshift site furniture such as picnic tables and seating made of block, brick or concrete structures;
- Removal of bins comprising re-used oil barrels and other containers, moulded plastic, and urban council type bins.

Picnic tables and seating should generally be understated, robust and well maintained. Easy access is important, including the approach route and base installation.

Bins, where provided, should be convenient without being prominent, and should generally be of naturally bleaching timber construction. Consideration should be given where possible to the provision of dual bins for rubbish and recycling.

Particular attention should be given to the most appropriate location for the *Wild Atlantic Way* site marker. It should be obvious at the point of arrival by car, and also at the point of leaving the car park behind and proceeding by foot to the natural setting, and in time, to the Discovery Point.

Local Communities, themselves part of the *Wild Atlantic Way* experience, may have implemented community projects and in some cases, memorial plaques. It is important that the Local Authority identifies such interventions and their origins, and undertakes any improvement works in a manner that engages with such community participation.

SITE FACILITIES

The majority of sites do not typically incorporate extensive visitor facilities. Toilet facilities are provided at many of the village, beach and harbour locations, either on a permanent or seasonal basis. In addition, some of the parking facilities double as the location for community recycling facilities.

Actions required:

Toilet Blocks   Ensure toilet blocks in use are properly presented and maintained, internally and externally, so as not to undermine visitor experience;

Some sites incorporate disused and derelict toilet blocks. Where there is a demand, these should be refurbished and well presented. Otherwise, derelict toilet facilities should be demolished and their sites reinstated.

Temporary Toilets   Portaloos, whether temporary or permanent, are substantially below any international or local visitor expectation and should be removed.

Where there is a demand for toilet facilities, consideration should be given to the provision of proper facilities.

In exceptional circumstances, if temporary facilities are provided, they should always be fully screened by timber panelling and hedgerows.

Recycling: Consider possible alternative sites

Ensure they are located out of sight of visitors;

Provide screening, perhaps using timber panels and hedgerow surrounds

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SITE LIGHTING

The majority of sites are distinctly rural in character with the exception of those located in villages and harbours. In this regard, sites should have no lighting provided as frequently, the dusk, dawn or night time experience of the seascape and skyscape is part of the experience.

Inappropriate lighting installations should be removed.

In village, harbour or promenade locations, lighting may be a reasonable expectation and appropriate. Local Authorities should ensure that such fittings and illumination levels are suitable to the location. Bollard lighting might be considered a good alternative, perhaps in conjunction with lamp standards, to provide suitable wayfinding lighting without compromising the village or harbour character.

SOFT LANDSCAPING

In general, vegetation at sites in the form of indigenous hedgerows, shrubs, grass, marram grass and seasonal flowers is entirely appropriate.

Any vegetation that is dead, not indigenous, or inconsistent with the local landscape context, should be removed and replaced as appropriate in order to reinforce the authenticity of sites.

SUSTAINABILITY

The authenticity of the wild and natural environments being show cased along the *Wild Atlantic Way* is an essential part of the experience. It his regard, sites should be maintained and repaired in a sustainable manner, using, as appropriate, locally sourced materials and indigenous planting, as well as management techniques that are environmentally responsible. Particular regard should be given to safeguarding ecological characteristics, including flora and fauna, and the protection of the natural environments.

MAINTENANCE & SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

All sites that are brought up to an acceptable standard will be awarded a *Wild Atlantic Way* site markers and an interpretative panel, both of which will be placed in a suitable location at the Arrival Point. The high quality presentation of the sites however, will be an ongoing requirement, in order to maximise visitor experience and match expectations.

Fáilte Ireland will require a Service Level Agreement for each site with the relevant Local Authority.

This will serve as a contract between Fáilte Ireland and the Local Authority to ensure that investment in the sites now will continue to be effective for the *Wild Atlantic Way*.

What will the Service Level Agreement include?

Following the identification and agreement of the scope of works required for each site at this stage, a site specific Service Level Agreement will also be prepared. In essence, the Service Level Agreement will seek to ensure that maintenance and improvement works undertaken in the short term are kept at an acceptable standard by the Local Authority into the future.

Typically, they are likely to include:

- Periodic reporting on site condition, including photographs
- Defined management regimes and programmes
- Sites to be kept clean and tidy
- Bins to be emptied and any loose rubbish picked up
- Vegetation to have scheduled seasonal management plans
- Signage is kept clear and well presented, and unauthorised signage or advertisements removed
- Any painted structures should be re-painted as required to maintain good presentation
- Toilet facilities, where provided, are kept clean and stocked with necessary supplies
- Lighting, if appropriate, is maintained in full working order
- Site furniture is kept in good condition
- Parking surfaces to be maintained in good order
- Items that are broken, including by vandalism, are repaired quickly
- Graffiti is removed

Local Authorities will be required to commit to allocating appropriate resources to ensure that the appropriate standard is maintained.

ECOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT

1.1 Introduction

All projects must be undertaken in accordance with the Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points Remedial Works Guidelines, including this Ecological Method Statement, and in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

The purpose of the Ecological Method Statement is to identify what ecological control methods need to be specified to avoid adverse ecological effects arising from remedial works. All projects must comply with all planning, local authority and other statutory requirements both during and after the construction phase of the Project.

Remedial works are being proposed at the majority number of sites. The works vary in scale and are specific to the individual sites and incorporate a combination of the proposed works outlined on Table 1.1.

Proposed works
Extend surfacing in car park
Enlargement of car park/lay-by
Provision of footpath
Provision of site amenities e.g. toilet block, painting, seating
Provide Wild Atlantic Way site marker
Lay-by reshaping
Removal/replacement of bollards
Extension of timber boardwalks to create access locations within car park to boardwalks
Proposed Management Activities
Road repairs (e.g. pot holes)
Repair stone walls, fencing, concrete posts, and furniture
Repair surfacing in car park
Removal of vegetation, tree and hedgerow cutting
Repair and maintain verge around car park and along access road
Rationalise existing information signage, removal of existing barriers, general tidy up of area
Undertake maintenance of grassed amenity areas
Maintenance of site amenities e.g. toilet block, painting, seating
Repair works to paths, slipways, kerbs, steps, etc. due to storm damage
Reinstate rock armour
Drainage clearance works

The location of these sites are often within areas of high ecological sensitivity and therefore it will be necessary to consider the potential effects of such works on the natural environment. Depending on the site and the specific complexities, the works could potentially give rise to the following adverse ecological effects:

- Habitat loss and disturbance
- Disturbance of species
- Introduction and spread of invasive alien species.
- Increased runoff of silt and pollutants to surrounding aquatic ecosystems, which could impact on aquatic habitats and species

1.2   Ecological Control Measures

A number of Ecological Control Measures are to be integrated into the design of each site. The Ecological Control Measures have been detailed and tailored by giving due consideration to the sensitivity of the receiving environment and the scale of works proposed. Particular measures (see Table 1.2 below) are listed against each type of works being proposed for each site. It will be necessary for the Local Authority to specify that, when planning works at individual sites, the measures are adhered to and appropriately incorporated into the construction approach. Site specific detail on how these measures will be incorporated into the constriction design will vary depending on the characteristics of each site and will need to be considered prior to the commencement of construction.

Table 1.2 Ecological Control Measures

No.	Description of wording to be included in Works Specification
G1	All rubbish, debris and other waste material shall be segregated to prevent contamination, stored appropriately and covered where required. Removal of waste materials from site shall be undertaken by an approved contractor for treatment/disposal. Hazardous waste material shall be stored separately from other inert waste materials and kept covered in an appropriate area/container(s) to ensure that the material does not inadvertently enter any existing surface water drainage network materials. The hazardous waste materials shall be removed from site by an approved contractor for treatment at a licenced facility - as directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works
G2	Particular care shall be taken in the removal of stockpiles of material such as gravel and chippings. (Such stockpiles are frequently sources of non-native invasive plants, such as Japanese knotweed). Disposal of contaminated material may require transport to an approved, licensed facility. All rubbish, debris and other waste material shall be removed in such a manner as to ensure that none of the material is contaminated and/or released inadvertently to watercourses and other sensitive ecological habitats.
G3	Prior to removal, all vegetation shall be checked by the Ecological Clerk of Works to ensure that it is free of non-native invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed. Should any such species be encountered, the area shall be treated as directed by expert advice on the management of invasive species.
G4	Works involving the removal or clearing of vegetation that would have any impacts on nesting birds shall be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (i.e. outside the period 1st March to 31st August). In addition, the possible presence of roosting bats shall be considered prior to the undertaking any works that may disturb the roosts. Any further safeguards shall be included and provided for subject to the supervision of the Ecological Clerk of Works
G5	Should they be required, all hazardous substances, such as fuels, oils, cement and concrete products, shall be stored on-site in a secure, dry and contained area and isolated from drainage connections to any existing surface water drainage network

G6	Should they be required, all hazardous substances, such as fuels, oils, cement and concrete products, shall be used in a manner that ensures that contamination of other materials does not occur and that they do not inadvertently enter any existing surface water drainage network
G7	Where possible, machinery shall only operate from existing parking or built surfaces, and shall not enter any sensitive or designated ecological habitat – as directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works
G8	All resurfacing works shallould be undertaken within the existing or formerly paved areas
G9	All resurfacing and other minor construction or demolition works (including removal and consolidation of existing features, such as signage, litter bins, picnic tables) should be undertaken in a manner that ensures that no materials can inadvertently enter any watercourse or sensitive ecological habitat, and in a manner that ensures there are no impacts on fauna such as birds and bats – as directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works
G10	Prior to use, resurfacing materials, including hardcore and sub-surface fill material will be stored in a manner that ensures that they do not inadvertently enter any existing surface water drainage network, or any sensitive ecological habitat – as directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works
G11	All timber to be used in works shall be sustainably sourced
G12	Works to define boundary edges shall be undertaken in a manner that ensures that there are no impacts on any sensitive or designated ecological habitat on the natural environment – as directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works and shall consider the following: • Proposed low earth bunds shall be placed within the existing parking or built surface areas. • All material used, including rock, soil, seed and sods shall be sustainably sourced and appropriate to the setting
G13	Removal and consolidation of existing features, such as signage, litter bins, picnic tables shall be undertaken in a manner that ensures that there are no impacts on any watercourse or sensitive ecological habitat.
G14	Works to provide a natural surface to bare areas shalll be undertaken in a manner that ensures that there are no impacts on the natural environment. All material used, including soil, seed and sods shall be sustainably sourced and appropriate to the setting.
G15	Where possible, site markers shall be placed within existing hard standing areas and installed in a manner that ensures that there are no impacts on any sensitive or designated ecological habitat – as directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works
G17	An Ecological Clerk of Works shall be retained to advise on and monitor works associated with construction, demolition, resurfacing and/or drainage

1.3   Advisory Measures

Advisory Measures, in addition to the requirements to comply with all planning, local authority and other statutory requirements both during and after the construction phase of the Project are detailed in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 Advisory Measures

No.	Description
1 **Protection of Biodiversity including Natura 2000 Network**	Contribute as appropriate towards the protection of designated ecological sites including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Ramsar Sites, Salmonid Waters and Wicklow National Park. The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, will be supported in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including the following and any updated/superseding documents): • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)[1], the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)[2], the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)[3], the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC). • National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 1976[4], the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008[5] and the Flora Protection Order 1999. • National policy guidelines, including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate Assessment Guidance 2010. • Catchment and water resource management Plans. • Biodiversity Plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: and Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan; • Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges.

[1]   Including Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur). Note that the NPWS provide sensitive areas mapping for Freshwater Pearl Mussels which are listed under Annex II of the Directive.

[2]   Including Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur)

[3]   Including protected species and natural habitats

[4]   Including species of flora and fauna and their key habitats

[5]   Including protected species and natural habitats

2 Appropriate Assessment	All projects will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and an Appropriate Assessment report to the relevant level of detail, that: 1. The project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000. The methodology followed by the Appropriate Assessment should follow, as relevant and appropriate, that outlined in DEHLG (2009) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities*.

3	**AA and Exemptions**	Proposals for development must be screened for the need to undertake AA as per the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (Part 5, Section 42). If proposals are screened out then planning exemptions are not lost. If a Stage 2 AA is required then planning exemptions are lost and planning permission must be provided*. If a planning authority is applying for the permission and Stage 2 AA is required, then the application must go to An Bord Pleanála. *As per Part I, Section 4 (4) of the Planning Act 2000 as amended states that [Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (i), (ia) and (l) of subsection (1) and any regulations under subsection (2)]: development shall not be exempted development if an environmental impact assessment or an appropriate assessment of the development is required.*
4	**Environmental Control Measures**	A number of Environmental Control Measures have been integrated into the design of each site. The Measures have been detailed and tailored by giving due consideration to the sensitivity of the receiving environment and the scale of works proposed. These measures should be taken into account by any Appropriate Assessments and are part of the design and are not mitigation.
5	**Protection of Natura 2000 Sites**	No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 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 shall be permitted (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects[6]).
6	**Coastal Focus**	Works undertaken in coastal areas will be in accordance with best practice and support measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats. Protect, enhance and conserve the beaches from inappropriate development. Facilitate and Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and projection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.
7	**Biodiversity and Ecological Networks**	Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

[6] Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
  a) no alternative solution available,
  b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and
  c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

8	Waters	Protect the water resources, including rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, coastal waters and associated habitats 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 *North Western International*, the *Western*, the *Shannon International* and the *South Western River Basin Management Plans 2009-2015* (or any such plans that may supersede same) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same).
9	Non-Designated Sites	Recognise that nature conservation is not just confined to designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve biological diversity.
10	Non-native invasive species	Support, as appropriate, the National Parks and Wildlife Service's efforts to seek to control the spread of non-native invasive species on land and water.
11	Environmental Assessment	Ensure, as appropriate, that plans, programmes and projects comply with: • EU Directives - including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended) - and relevant transposing Regulations.
12	Cumulative/ In-combination effects	Any new development that could interact with projects for remedial works would have to comply with the provisions contained in relevant land use and other sectorial plans e.g. Development Plans, River Basin Management Plans. These provisions have been subject to and informed by Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment which have considered in-combination effects. With respect to events (such as a vehicle collision) that are not reasonably foreseeable, contingency plans and procedures are already in place at various levels e.g. emergency plans, local response arrangements. As part of the wider WAW project, environmental monitoring is being coordinated at a number of levels – this includes monitoring related to habitats.
13	Works to be carried out at Discovery Points and potential impacts	The methodology for the incorporation of environmental control measures will require consideration at project level for each site to account for individual complexities with regards to the sensitivities and layout of the individual site.

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Visitor Management Guidelines for the Wild Atlantic Way
June 2020

Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

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INTRODUCTION

The success of the Wild Atlantic Way has occurred from rising above the level of individual sites and routes – to create a large-scale and overarching brand that has international visibility.

Similarly, the future success of the endeavour will need everyone to be mindful of the requirement for visitor management approaches and practices that span strategic level in policy and plans right down to individual projects and sites.

These guidelines are set out under two parts[1]:

Part One: Offers an overview of visitor management at a strategic level and is intended to be used by policy and plan makers in the space of tourism strategy and planning.

Part Two: Shares experience and success of good design and management through practical example at project or site level. These can be used for the design of future projects as well as change and improvement at existing sites and are intended for those who own and manage sites as well as for those who design and regulate their improvement.

PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

The intention of these guidelines can be summed up in the following points:

- To make the visitor experience even better – while protecting the natural assets throughout the entire extent of the Wild Atlantic Way,
- To promote a very simple goal that every future decision for every policy, plan, project and action along the Wild Atlantic Way should always keep the experience Wild or make the experience 'More Wild' (refer to Appendix 1 for details on "More Wild"),
- To resolve two opposites - increasing benefit while reducing risk – to allow tourism to grow and to thrive, while also making sure that the reason for visiting – wildness – also grows and thrives, and
- To provide practical help and guidance to parties involved in visitor management both at strategic and site level.

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1. These guidelines should be considered and applied having consideration for the *"Site Maintenance Guidelines (remedial works guidelines)"* which forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Plan as well as *"Wild Atlantic Way Signature Discovery Points- Visitor Management and Design Considerations*

PART ONE

Guidelines for Strategic Planning of Visitor Management on the Wild Atlantic Way

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

1.0 PART 1: GUIDELINES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING OF VISITOR MANAGEMENT ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

Part 1 of these guidelines provides guidance on strategic concepts as well as explanations about terms, objectives and aims that can be used when preparing documentation that is likely to be used at the early stage of plans and projects along the Wild Atlantic Way.

The guidelines take us through a process which considers asset protection, what is success and guiding the decision-making process. Case study practical examples are set out and useful checklists are provided when considering policy and planning in this space.

1.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION 1 - INVOLVED PARTIES

MANAGED BY ALL - FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

The Wild Atlantic Way is owned and managed by the whole community, for the benefit of all. Its future needs a shared vision of what needs to be achieved for all, by all. Its future will depend on many actors – landowners, County Councils, local businesses, engineers, designers, scientists - all contributing their best, for the best. 'Wild' is not the result of a 'do nothing' approach. Every acre and mile of the Wild Atlantic Way is owned and managed by someone. Its appearance and character are the results of thousands of everyday decisions and actions, large and small.

A SHARED VISION

The community who own and manage the Wild Atlantic Way need to have a shared vision of the approaches and standards that will sustain its attraction. That needs consistency of strategic approach at a high level and also at the level of design details at site level.

The extraordinary Wild Atlantic Way experience is the result of many small experiences in many places that are owned and managed by many people. Unless every person in every place shares a vision of quality and standards, then the experience will be ordinary and disappointing.

This natural appearance is apparently effortless. In reality it is the result of pains-taking planning, maintenance and partnership in a shared vision.

1.2 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION 2- ASSET PROTECTION

The continued success of the Wild Atlantic Way depends on establishing and maintaining a brand – not a location. A brand is a promise about a type of experience that the visitor will have. The essence of the promise is to experience a 'wild' place. This sense of 'wildness' is the asset that the brand depends on – it must be protected. This requires a shared understanding under the following headings;

BRAND PROTECTION
Protecting and preserving wildness is critical to protecting and preserving the unique selling proposition and the brand promise of the Wild Atlantic Way. Protect wilderness because it is the brand.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Much of the route passes through areas with the highest level of ecological, landscape and cultural sensitivity. These are the ingredients of the asset. Failure to protect these will diminish the experience and will also create legal liabilities that could result in the loss of access to critical parts of the Wild Atlantic Way. Environmental protection is asset protection.

VISITOR PROTECTION
Near-coastal locations are inherently dangerous – especially during and after weather events. It is critical not to direct visitors towards locations with dangerous access arrangements. The visitor is the most critical asset – they must be protected.

EXPERIENCE PROTECTION
Visitors experiences will be improved by removing traffic congestion, site over-loading and poorly designed facilities that lack distinctiveness and authenticity. Attention to planning, design and detail are key to the improvement and protection of the quality of the asset.

PRODUCT PROTECTION
It is likely that the green credentials of tourism products will be increasingly scrutinised by discerning visitors and professional experts alike. Understanding of the significance and sensitivity of key landscape, heritage and ecological resources is required to protect the authenticity and quality of experience each element of the Wild Atlantic Way.

A safe, exciting experience of the wildness of the Atlantic is the promise. Its successful delivery requires a shared vision at every level from landowner and local entrepreneur to the County Council and national agencies.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION 3 – SUCCESS

Visitor management solutions for the Wild Atlantic Way needs a clear vision about what success will look like.

Success will be the result of a sustained effort by many players in many places. It is crucial that all are aware of and committed to delivering the six fundamental factors for success.

- The Wild Atlantic Way must deliver experiences that are unique, genuine and emotionally fulfilling.
- The Wild Atlantic Way Experience must be Wild and Atlantic.
- The Wild Atlantic Way must be memorable, comfortable, enjoyable – and safe.
- Wild Atlantic Way Products must be less seasonal, more dispersed, more special and more profitable.
- The Wild Atlantic Way brand promises wildness – this asset must be sustained.
- The Wild Atlantic Way is a living community – which must be served as the first priority of any strategy.

The quality of the individual visitor's experience is result of a shared vision sustained by many partners operating at every level from strategic planning to day-to-day management.

The achievement of '*Leave No Trace*' is easily overlooked. Outside peak season this road at Marble Hill has no parking or surfboard hire equipment. Note the beach and dunes in the background where natural processes are dominant with no visibility of any development or structures.

VICE MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism is an approach that Fáilte Ireland adopts in all of our activities and outputs and forms the foundation for an approach to successful & sustainable visitor management and asset protection along the Wild Atlantic Way.

1.4 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION 4 - GUIDING DECISION-MAKING

Here are the basic techniques common to all decisions about Wild Atlantic Way Areas and sites. Use them to explain how proposed plans and projects will help to achieve these.

THE TEST
We need to test every decision by asking – 'Will this make the place More or Less Wild?'

This is achieved by asking; -

- What need are we meeting?
- What problem are we solving?
- What are the options or alternatives?
- What changes will happen?

THE FUNDAMENTALS
Obey the old rule '*Measure Twice – Cut Once*' – by understanding the area first.
- Understanding full picture - ownership, use, management, significance and sensitivities.
- Understand the needs and views of other users too – especially fulltime and year-round farmers and fishermen, residents and those involved in businesses, maintenance and safety.
- Manage first, build as a last resort.
- Seasonal uses first – build as a last resort
- Always consider alternatives – no designing until options are considered.
- Consider the reversibility of what is being proposed.

THE BASICS
- Protect the horizon – keep it horizontal, clear, un-obstructed.
- Accommodate weather - erosion, corrosion, rain, wind, movement.
- Understand vegetation – none or slow, little screening.
- Understand coastal processes especially erosion, deposition by water, wind and storms.
- Access, Privacy, Property, Commonage, Foreshore.

UNDERSTANDING CONSEQUENCES
- Consider the effects of excavations for services and access.
- Consider the effects of drainage and compaction in high-energy environments.
- Anticipate the effects of new access and resultant desire lines.
- Consider future management and maintenance.

Appendix 2 sets out three case studies which demonstrate how the above approach and principles might be considered at a practical level in the instance of coastal planning along the Wild Atlantic Way.

A useful way to make decisions about development is to look at the location and ask, '*Will this place look more wild or less wild afterwards?*'
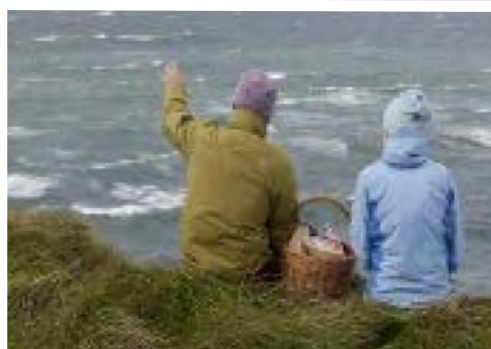
The highest achievement is to minimise the intrusion of any man-made development between the visitor and the Atlantic. Make do with less. This is what success looks like.

A sense of vastness is one of the Wild Atlantic Way's most powerful characteristics. It can dwarf any human projects. Good site or route selection exposes visitors to these huge vistas – without diminishing them.

1.5 CHECKLIST TO GUIDE DECISION MAKING

Set out below are checklists designed for both policy and plan level to be used by relevant parties when considering tourism related strategies and plans.

POLICIES

		IN NEAR-COASTAL AREAS DO POLICIES INCLUDE: -	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN	ACTION REQUIRED
POLICY REQUIREENT CHECKLIST	1.1	A requirement for an integrated consideration of visitor management – including resilient service hubs, access routes and low-impact parking and coastal facilities?				
	1.2	A requirement to include policies that direct facilities away from the near-coastal zone?				
	1.3	A requirement for plans and projects to have regard to relevant tourism guidance documents?				
	1.4	A requirement to take account of environmental capacity and resilience of near-coastal areas – with new developments being restricted to robust areas?				
	1.5	A requirement to direct high-capacity, standardised facilities for accommodation, catering, transport or entertainment away from the near-coast zone?				
	1.6	A requirement to include policies that emphasize locally distinctive seasonal events?				
	1.7	A requirement to explore potential for a core of winter activities?				
	1.8	A requirement to consider maintenance and daily cleaning of remote sites?				
	1.9	A requirement to provide the preparation and implementation of a Tourism Visitor Management Programme?				
	1.1	A requirement to identify sites that require the presence of specialists during design, construction and particularly during operations?				
	1.11	A requirement to include policies with separate peak and off-peak provisions in intensely used visitor areas?				
	1.12	A requirement to include policies with separate peak and off-peak traffic provisions?				
	1.13	A requirement to include policies to facilitate local pre-application consultation for larger tourism projects in smaller communities?				

2. PLANS

PLAN REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST		IN NEAR-COASTAL AREAS DO PLANS INCLUDE: -	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN	ACTION REQUIRED
	2.1	A requirement to consider the durability and safety of access and viewing points?				
	2.2	A requirement to avoid exposed or unstable locations that will require major works for visitor safety?				
	2.3	A requirement to provide Visitor Management Plans for tourism in near-coastal zones that integrate visitor access, parking and facilities with natural sensitivities?				
	2.4	A requirement to specify 'grades' of access that illustrate locations that are accessible to all as well as those that require appropriate fitness, clothing and knowledge?				
	2.5	A requirement for larger-scale standardised visitor facilities to be located in larger settlements?				
	2.6	A requirement to avoid locating demanding land-uses to hold crowds or large vehicles on sensitive, near-coastal areas?				
	2.7	A requirement to plan for different seasonal uses in the same areas used by tourism and other uses?				
	2.8	A requirement to plan for efficient maintenance of sites.				
	2.9	A requirement to cluster visitor and/or routes for efficient service?				
	2.1	A requirement to specify if sites are manned in peak season?				
	2.11	A requirement for Visitor Sites to be planned and scheduled according to different types and intensity of visitor management regime – according to site sensitivity?				
	2.12	A requirement for Visitor Site Management to be classified according to whether general or specialist staffing is required – according to site sensitivity?				
	2.13	A requirement for plans to include clearly separate provisions for peak and off-peak infrastructure and services?				
	2.14	A requirement for plans to include seasonal traffic patterns?				
	2.15	A requirement for plans to include local concerns to provide pre-design advice to external developers?				

1.6 FROM STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS TO IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE

Set out below is a table which highlights overarching principles of visitor management and how these can cascade from a strategic level down to project and site-specific levels.

| HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS			IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE		
PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	ISSUES	POLICIES	PLANS	PROJECTS
More Safety and Comfort	**Visitors will experience a genuinely Wild Atlantic – in Safety and Comfort – without barriers**	Steep, elevated areas are favoured viewing points. These can be dangerously exposed to high winds and/or large waves. Visitors can be unaware of the dangers of near-coastal areas.	Include policies that require an integrated consideration of visitor management – including resilient service hubs, access routes and low-impact parking and coastal facilities.	Consider the durability and safety of access and viewing points. Avoid exposed or unstable locations that will require major works for visitor safety.	Ensure that locations of public access offer views towards steep coastal features – but avoid direct access without careful planning for environmentally compatible safety measures. Direct public access to steep areas should be a last resort.
		Areas that feel 'wild' are devoid of man-made features. Providing facilities for the convenience or safety of visitors can lessen the sense of wildness.	Include policies that direct facilities away from the near-coastal zone. Require plans and projects to have regard to relevant guidance documents.	Require Visitor Management Plans for tourism in near-coastal zones to integrate visitor access, parking and facilities with natural sensitivities.	Minimise the extent of new building in the near-coastal zone. Minimise the need for new roads, septic tanks or new piped services. Re-used structures or temporary projects should be the preferred approach
		Visitors to remote areas are often ill-prepared for weather or topography. The provision of facilities – shelters, toilets or paths and steps – can lessen the sense of wildness.	Include policies that recognise the need to take account of environmental capacity and resilience of near-coastal areas – with new developments being restricted to robust areas.	Consider 'grades' of access that illustrate locations that are accessible to all as well as those that require appropriate fitness, clothing and knowledge.	In remote or environmentally fragile areas always give priority to developments that are seasonal, removable or which have a minimal environmental footprint. Build new as a last resort.

HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS			IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE		
PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	ISSUES	POLICIES	PLANS	PROJECTS
More Special, Less Seasonal	Tourism Offerings will become more Special, less Seasonal	Larger numbers of visitors have high standards that encourage the adaption of robust, proven approaches. These may be very standardised and may seem bland and placeless.	Include policies to direct high-capacity, standardised facilities for accommodation, catering, transport or entertainment away from the near-coast zone.	Plan for larger-scale standardised visitor facilities to be located in larger settlements	Re-used structures or temporary projects should be the preferred approach in the near-coastal parts of the site.
		Safe design for vehicles and crowds requires adherence to strict rules. Uncompromising Safety Design can be incompatible to sensitive natural, historical or scenic areas.	Include policies to match uses and projects with the environmental capacity and resilience of near-coastal areas.	Avoid locating demanding land-uses to hold crowds or large vehicles on sensitive, near-coastal areas.	Locate demanding features away from sensitive natural, historical or scenic parts of near-coastal sites.
		Tourism in more remote areas has a very short season. Viability can be difficult, and it is difficult to recoup investment. Expensive public facilities such as schools often go un-used in summer.	Include policies that emphasise locally distinctive seasonal events. Include policies to explore potential for a core of winter activities.	Consider land-use plans for different seasonal uses in the same areas used by tourism and other uses.	In small, remote settlements, designs should consider how features such as parking, toilets, halls and green spaces could have different uses during different seasons

HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS			IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE		
PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	ISSUES	POLICIES	PLANS	PROJECTS
More Care and Protection	Nature, Scenery & Culture will enjoy more Care and Protection	Wild Places are often remote from settlements or service centres. Maintenance of such areas can be difficult, expensive and slow.	Include policies that require consideration of maintenance and daily cleaning of remote sites.	Plan for efficient maintenance of sites. Consider clustering and/or routes for efficient service. Plans should specify whether or sites are manned in peak season.	Projects should include locations and designs for waste collection that is adequately sized, weather secure and visually unobtrusive. Do not include waste facilities if these cannot be serviced daily during peak season. Un-manned projects should not include high-maintenance grass areas or floral planting.
		Despite extreme weather exposure, Wild Places often contain features that can be both significant and sensitive. Unmanaged Visitors can lead to damage to natural, cultural and scenic resources in remote places	Include policies that require the preparation and implementation of a Tourism Visitor Management Programme.	In accordance with site sensitivity, Visitor Sites should be planned and scheduled according to different types and intensity of visitor management regime.	Projects should include a consideration of the necessity for site and visitor management. Site Management costs and arrangements should be integral to design from the outset, Avoid designs that may require toilets and septic tanks for staff in sensitive remote areas.
		Care of wild places can require specialist knowledge and approaches, which can be more costly and complex than more ordinary places	Include policies that require the identification of sites that require the presence of specialists during design, construction and particularly during operations [eg ecologists during nesting or flowering season]	In accordance with site sensitivity, Visitor Site Management should be classified according to whether general or specialist staffing is required.	Projects should consider the practicality of managing and/ or staffing sites that require the on-site presence of specialists.

HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS			IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE		
PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	ISSUES	POLICIES	PLANS	PROJECTS
First Priority	Local Communities will be the First Priority	Seasonal visitor numbers are often much larger than the year-round population in remote areas. This can create seasonal surges of demand that the local facilities find expensive to maintain.	Include policies with separate peak and off-peak provisions in intensely used visitor areas.	Plans should include clearly separate provisions for peak and off-peak infrastructure and services.	Infrastructure projects and services in intensely used visitor areas should; - be sized to allow efficient peak and off-peak operation - provide for separate charging/ costing that differentiates between year-round local and seasonal visitor use.
		Fatigue during peak season can lessen the patience and welcome of local communities.	Include policies with separate peak and off-peak traffic provisions	Plan for seasonal traffic patterns.	Give circulation priority and convenience to local traffic.
		Large-scale local investment is often not realistic in small, remote areas. External investor can sometimes be insensitive to local concerns.	Include policies to facilitate local pre-application consultation for larger tourism projects in smaller communities.	Plans should reflect local concerns to provide pre-design advice to external developers.	Allow sufficient time and resources for meaningful local pre-application consultation when larger tourism projects are to be located in smaller communities.

PART TWO

Guidelines on Design & Management of
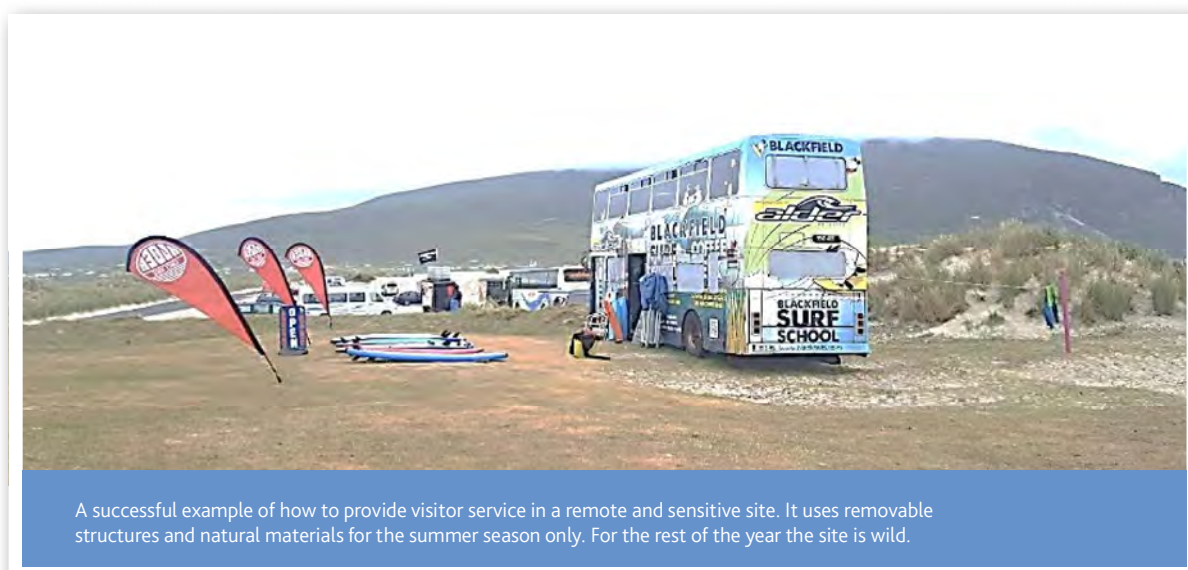Projects on the Wild Atlantic Way
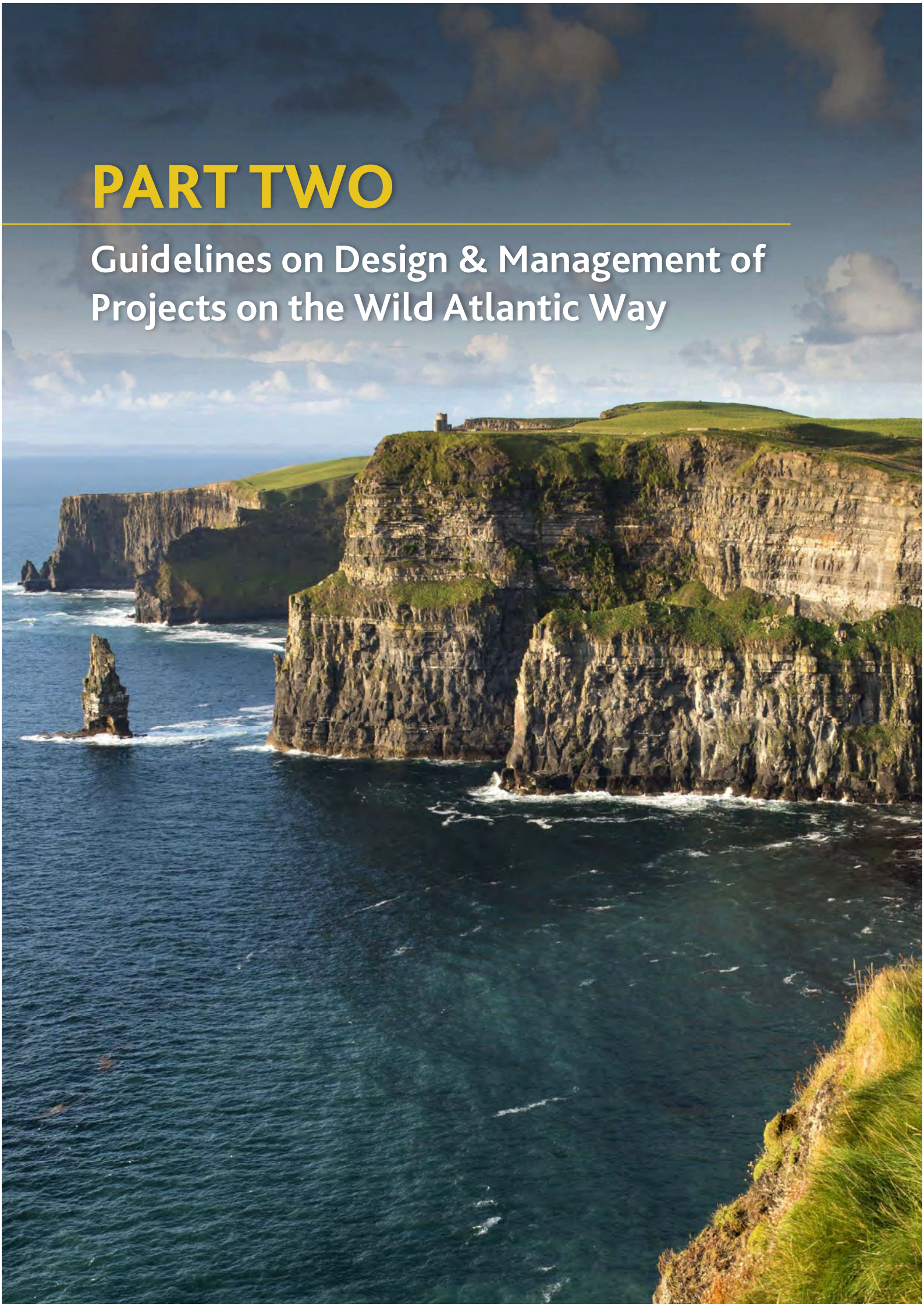
2.0 PART 2: GUIDELINES ON DESIGN & MANAGEMENT OF PROJECTS ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

Part 2 of these guidelines provides guidance on the design and management more specifically for projects at site level. In order to achieve successful site management at this level these guidelines explore the aim, risks, mistakes, learning from example, getting it right and maintenance.

2.1 THE AIM

The overall aim of these guidelines in to provide practical advice so that the 'Leave No Trace' approach to visitor management can be achieved in ways that are easily implemented by landowners, site managers and those developing services or businesses in the area.

A successful example of how to provide visitor service in a remote and sensitive site. It uses removable structures and natural materials for the summer season only. For the rest of the year the site is wild.

Example of Overall Approach – The image above contains a number of the elements used in the successful provision of facilities and amenities for visitors along the Wild Atlantic Way. It demonstrates the need for the absence of conflict between visitor activity, business and the protection of fragile natural resources, by implementing the correct plan, siting, design and materials.

Plan – to avoid permanent building projects wherever possible. The activities are seasonal and in very harsh weather-exposed locations. This approach provides facilities only when they are required during each day of the summer season. Visitors can stay and be entertained in nearby settlements in the evenings. All mobile structures are removed during the winter months – the wildness is un-affected.

Siting – both the parking, the access and the activity businesses are all located set back from the shore –so that the unspoiled appearance is preserved. This also lessens pressure on the ecology of the beach.

Design – the boundary of the access road and the parking area is formed by an adaptation of local materials [sand] and self-replenishing vegetation [grass].

Materials – the seasonal businesses are inviting and bright – to attract attention and custom – while the permanent features blend in with the appearance of the natural environment.

Before considering any advice or guidelines about good examples it can be instructive to reflect on the risks – both to visitors and to nature.

2.2 ADMIT THE RISKS

KEEP NATURE & VISITORS SAFE

It is important for all parties to accept the existence of risks associated with increasing visitor numbers at sites along the Wild Atlantic Way.

Groupthink, involving a denial of the existence of risk, is the single biggest cause of failure in most systems. Risks can only be anticipated and avoided if they are admitted in the first instance.

• Visitors can be at risk if exposed to steep or unstable coastal edges.

• Nature is at risk from erosion caused by excessive visitor numbers in fragile environments.

Design and choice of materials can increase risks if they fail to take account of the severity of exposure and weathering in coastal locations.

Clifftops offer the best views – but they often contain the most sensitive ecological features – such as the vegetation. **Photos 1 and 2** shows how these can easily be damaged by trampling. This can take many years to recover and can expose visitors to danger see **Photo 3**.

The weather and exposure of the Irish Atlantic shores create very challenging and unforgiving environment for artificial materials and structures See **Photo 4**. Considerable expertise is required to ensure that designs will be robust – without becoming intrusive.

WHAT GOES WRONG & WHY?

Design and management problems occur on coastal projects because of a recurrence, and occasional combination, of four main reasons.

1. LACK OF CO-ORDINATION

The plethora of signs in Photo 1 illustrates that many coastal areas and attractions are often owned and/or managed by a number of groups. All are legitimate and all are well-intentioned – but over time their individual and un-co-ordinated actions can combine to produce visual blight, like this example, that detracts from the wild character of the background. The lack of co-ordination of materials, designs, maintenance and facilities in Photo 2 illustrates how these foreground factors combine to create an unkempt first impression of this beach.

2. OVERDESIGN

Vehicular and marine access, parking and erosion protection are usually designed by civil and structural engineers who, rightly, place great emphasis on strength and durability. Such considerations may not be appropriate when applied to more 'ordinary' features' such as the field edges in Photo 3, where a simple hedge or earth embankment would have retained the rural character needed for an amenity area.

3 INAPPROPRIATE DESIGN DETAILS

A typical example of this would be the development of a conventional path (e.g. excavation, fill, kerbing etc). across a sensitive bog area. A more appropriate design and solution here would be a board walk which would have appeared much more natural, while protecting the ecology.

4. POOR OR ABSENT SITE MANAGEMENT

Many coastal sites are remote, seasonal and have complex, multiple arrangements of ownerships. As a result, access, movement, litter control and maintenance/ repair can be occasional or even haphazard – see Photo 4.

2.3 GETTING THE DETAILS RIGHT

Selection of design solutions is critical. There are a wide range of options for types of development in sensitive coastal zones. Not all of these are equally suitable for all locations.

Considerable care and expertise are needed at every stage from plan conception through to project execution. Consideration for alternatives, siting, design and materials is key.

ALTERNATIVES

A key technique is to ensure that a wide range of alternatives are considered and that each one is evaluated against an appropriate range of criteria, including; -

*   Environmental compatibility,
*   Quality of visitor experience,
*   Health and safety in use,
*   Capacity to recover from periodic storm events,
*   Need for maintenance [and availability of expertise and resources to implement],
*   Cost of maintenance and repair versus initial capital costs, and
*   Monitoring and Mitigation Strategy.

SITING

The location of a project or activity is the single most important way of protecting the environment – and of ensuring a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. Sites need to be selected because of suitability – not availability.

Irish tourism lasts for a short season. Temporary structures and facilities – especially in sensitive areas – create lighter and more reversible environmental effects.

A new building is not always the best way to provide new tourism facilities beside the sea. Mobile and seasonal outlets create a small environmental footprint; they are less affected by winter weather and the area remains unchanged after they leave.

In many instances the details of design and materials are secondary to the selection of the correct location. Siting that takes account of natural shelter [both from weather and from visibility] can greatly reduce visual impact – while increasing visitor comfort. The siting of toilets and parking in Malin Head Photo 1 takes full advantage of a local outcrop to minimise the effects on the surrounding landscape – so that the visitor experience of the wildness of the headland is less affected.

Movement within a site can be significantly governed by slope. Pedestrians follow lines of least resistance. This example, also from Malin Head Photo 2, shows how a small local rise is used to make the path appear to follow or flow around contours very naturally – avoiding harsh straight lines - while confining visitors to the path. This type of skilful blending with local topography means that only a small part of the path is visible – which also reduce visual impacts.

DESIGN

Design of elements must strive to reinforce the wild character of the near-coastal zone. Overdesign is the single biggest cause of loss of character in these locations.

It is very important, from the outset, to ensure that every decision is made by referring to the 'Wild' aspect of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Consider the selection of seating, as an example.

Photo 3 illustrates the common assumption that a 'natural' material – such as timber will automatically fit in with a natural location. The photo shows how the colour, shape and detail all contrast strongly with the natural environment – with the unintended consequence of drawing attention to the chair and detracting from the natural setting.

Photo 4 illustrates a common assumption – especially by professional designers – of the need for 'honest' designs that employ highly contrasting materials shapes and forms – stainless steel and concrete in this example.

Photo 5 illustrates that sometimes the best chair is not a chair at all. These large rocks provide seating in a way that is not visually intrusive and that fits well with the ecology and natural character of the area.

MATERIALS

Careful and wise selection of materials can significantly improve the perception of the wild and natural character of the area. However, 'natural' materials need to be carefully considered – to take account of the wild and peripheral nature of costal sites.

Everyone is accustomed to thinking about ensuring that their clothes and interior designs consist of 'matching' materials and patterns.

The same applies when considering the selection of materials and patterns for use at the special coastal sites along the Wild Atlantic Way.

In the first place the materials need to fit in with a natural environment – so uncut stone and unpainted timber should be the first choice.

Steel and concrete should be used sparingly because these are durable – but not flexible – which is a requirement in many-near-shore locations.

Ocean exposure, moving sand and winter storms cause rapid weathering and frequent damage to coastal projects.

Materials should be capable of being readily repaired or even partially replaced using locally available materials and labour.

Photos 1 – 3 from Murvagh Beach provide a good illustration of the 'palette' of materials that work best in the near-coastal environment.

Photo 4 from Ros Golli shows how walls made out of unbedded stone fit in well with the appearance and natural environment.

For more details on durability and intrusiveness of materials refer to **Appendix 3**.
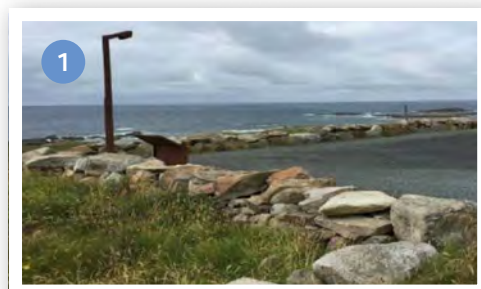
WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Any proposals for managing or developing parts of the Wild Atlantic Way should commence by considering the range of options that are available to deal with a proposed project. Typically, projects arise from a desire to improve, protect or provide visitor facilities. Typical questions include;

• How to improve the visitor experience?

• How to protect existing assets from overloading?

• How to provide a new visitor attraction?

The following sections provide a range of practical options of how to: -

• Use appropriate approaches to projects

• Use appropriate techniques

• Use appropriate design details

• Match materials and methods to local conditions

It also provides examples with discussions of use, type, issue and suitable locations for each of the main types of potential projects associated with the Wild Atlantic Way including; -

• Pedestrian Access

• Vehicle Access

• Monitoring and Managing – by design

Developments that robustly protect the environment remain unobtrusive, so that a sense of enjoyment and nature remain dominant.

The use of simple material with least embellishment often produces the best and most robust results in near-coastal environs. This example also shows how sharp and clear separation between natural and man-made materials and forms allows the natural elements to be visually dominant.

Many countries now successfully employ seasonal walkways on beaches and in dunes. These can be removed during the winter.

2.4 LEARNING FROM EXAMPLES

The following tables set out practical examples of success, mistakes, details, materials used, access to site and potential ideas for monitoring & maintenance at sites.

	EXAMPLES	USE APPROPRIATE APPROACH TO PROJECT
LEARNING FROM SUCCESS		Layby Developments, like this example, allow views of sensitive coastal areas without any construction within the sensitive near-shore environment. This location – set back from the wave zone and exposed cliffs – allows safer viewing by visitor – with no loss of experience of the wildness.
		Alternative Access Developments – such as this cycleway – permit use of less intrusive projects that can be more compatible with the type of sensitive environs that are found within the near-shore zone. Developments should always explore the option of using less intrusive methods and materials within 'the last kilometre of land' – which defines the more sensitive near-coastal zone
		Seasonal and Temporary Uses and Structures should always be the preferred option in sensitive near-coastal locations. These create less environmental effects, are completely reversible and allow the use of relatively fragile structures that can be removed during the stormy winter season.
		Removable structures – such as this beach walkway through dunes - can be employed during peak visitor season in very sensitive environments. Such environments cannot sustain permanent structures – due to ecological sensitivity as well as exposure to extreme weather.

	EXAMPLES	USE APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES

...

LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

Flexible and adaptive structures, such as this partially floating walkway – allow access through sensitive tidal areas – without the requirement for intrusive permanent civil engineering projects.

Appropriate Techniques that are most suitable for the receiving environment.

This example of a boardwalk is fixed directly onto a sandy, well-drained surface – which permits these attractive flowing lines.

These are suitable for areas in the vicinity of dunes.

Appropriate Applications, such as the construction of this boardwalk involves elevation of the structure above the saturated peats in this example.

The supporting timber framework results in a very difference appearance – with a defined edge composed of straight segments.

These are suitable for areas commonly found near cliff edges and rock shores.

	EXAMPLES	INAPPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES

Good Technique – Wrong Place

Boardwalks can be successful in wetland or dune sites – but winter storm waves and surges on exposed beaches can quickly damage them.

Good Materials – Wrong Place

Stainless steel, insitu concrete and grass sward have very high resistance to extreme weather – but not to the actions of the sheep who roam this visitor attraction.

Good Design – Poor Management

Mown grass paths can be unobtrusive and robust. However, they need to be regularly rotated with due consideration to the resilience of the specific species of the underlying vegetation.

Good Intention – Poor Execution

Concerns about controlling erosion, traffic, safety and convenience appear to have squeezed natural features from a number of coastal locations on the coast.

Good Intentions – Wrong Place

Artificial floral displays that are appropriate in parks and urban areas are not compatible with the aim of sustaining the wilderness character of the WAW.

They also require levels of care and maintenance that are often unrealistic at more remote coastal sites.

EXAMPLES	SMALL DETAILS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE
	In this instance the cliff-top path is located within a fenced-off portion of an ordinary paddock. Spectacular cliff scenery is visible across the field boundary. Visitor safety and ecological protection are assured by the simple detail of locating the path on the correct side of the field boundary.
	This is a very successful example because the path marks the junction between unmanaged wild shore habitats to the right and more conventional farmland to the left. All paths should, where possible, be located along the boundary between wild and farmed areas.
	A simple path through grass creates an orderly appearance – while gently directing visitor access away from sensitivities. This have a very significant advantage of being easily moved from year-to-year to further reduce pressure on the soil and vegetation – while allowing trampled areas to recover.
	The colour of the timber boardwalk together with its location at the lowest point in the gap are important details that allow this vital protection to 'disappear' and sustain the visitor's experience of a wild shore. Protection of visitor safety and ecological integrity must take account of visual amenity.

DETAILS MATTER

EXAMPLES	MATCH MATERIALS & METHODS TO LOCAL CONDITIONS

Wherever possible, always consider the re-use of existing paths and roads instead of new construction.

No matter how skilfully materials and methods are used for new designs, it will take decades to match the experience of using long established routes.

These timber steps and rail are flexible and suitable for the dynamic environment of a dune system.

The use of timber readily lends itself to removal and repair after winter storms – which often disturb or damage the portions nearest the beach.

This type of construction requires regular inspection and maintenance – to repair emerging damage and to ensure safety of visitors.

These concrete and steel materials are durable in the harsh near-coastal environment – but they are only suitable for use on a stable base – such as the rocky foreshore here.

The path is also set well back from the area of wave action – which helps to minimise the need for repairs due to winter storms.

These very large stones have been inserted into an exposed steep slope overlooking coastal cliffs.

Such installation requires significant effort and expertise. It also requires regular monitoring to facilitate the detection and correction of emerging patterns of wear.

The management of such paths may occasionally require closure or diversion to alternative routes to allow recovery and repair.

	USE	TYPE	ISSUE	SUITABLE LOCATION	EXAMPLES
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS	**WALKING & CYCLING PATHS AND TRACKS** There is a wide range of options for access. Different types of paths are suitable for different types of locations. **Note** Unsuitable paths in unsuitable locations can be both dangerous and harmful to the environment.	**Temporary Surface** Many proprietary types available – ranging from simple 'roll-up' timber slats to specialist plastic and steel systems.	Some areas only require access in good weather. These are removed in winter or during storms.	Suitable for all areas that are only used on a seasonal or temporary basis. They can be particularly useful in beach areas during peak periods with good weather.	
		Worn path These are formed by regular light traffic – both by walkers and animals. Excessive traffic means paths must be closed.	These must be regularly inspected and repaired. Alternative routes will be needed to cope with potential overloading. Upgrading is not an option	Acceptable in many natural areas – such as shores and uplands areas with regular monitoring, good drainage and very low numbers of users. They are intrinsically unsuitable for large numbers.	
		Mown Grass Path These are formed by regular mowing between areas of meadow or scrub vegetation.	The key to success is to make the path consistently wide, avoid steep areas or concentration	Suitable for many areas with good drainage and low numbers of users. These need to be monitored regularly. More robust paths may need to be installed before damage occurs	
		Boardwalk – elevated. These simple looking structures require a lot of commitment due to significant construction effort as well as annual inspection and repair.	They require very careful site selection and detailed design. A modified version is used in uplands.	Suitable for bogs, heath, wetlands and marshes. These are not suitable for unstable areas such as cliff or stream edges, dunes or beaches.	
		Boardwalk – surface These require very careful site selection and detailed design. They look beautiful and feel lovely in bare feet.	It is very important to avoid waterlogged areas Essential to inspect and repair regularly.	Suitable for dry sandy soil – ideal behind dunes as connections between parking and beaches. They can also play an important role in dune management.	
		Surfaced Path – unsealed. These are very robust, safe and compatible with a wide range of habitats.	The best pathway for coastal access. They require very careful site selection and detailed design. Location along the exact boundary of habitats is critical.	Suitable for junction between improved grassland and splash-zone near the shore. If carefully located and skilfully designed these require low maintenance.	
		Surfaced Path – sealed This is like a miniature road and is particularly suitable for cycling and greenway routes.	These are sturdy, safe and compatible with a wide range of robust habitats. Expensive to develop, low maintenance costs.	Suitable for normal agricultural soils or, occasionally, on the bed of an old existing road/railway in more sensitive areas	

	USE	TYPE	ISSUE	SUITABLE LOCATION	EXAMPLES
VEHICLE ACCESS	**NO VEHICLE** It is important to be clear about where there are no vehicles	**Green Road**s are old tracks for driving stock – they are not used by vehicles or bicycles – but in places are used by walkers and horse riders. Some parts may not have public access.	The rights of way need to be understood and respected.	These are pre-existing routes. These need to be identified and incorporated into visitor access proposals.	
	OCCASIONAL VEHICLE There are many roads that are only used occasionally. These have a lot of potential for walking access in rural areas	**Grass Tracks** These have evolved over time – usually as incursions into natural and semi-natural areas. They are not to be confused with mown grass paths.	These damage soil, and plants, so are generally unable to accommodate increases or intensification of use.	These are pre-existing routes that usually occur at the edges of beaches, commonage, bogs and uplands.	
		Surfaced Tracks These are old public roads that now receive little or no traffic or maintenance. They are usually dead ends. These are suitable for walking, hiking, cycling or horse riding.	Where road may be used for agriculture, turf cutting etc. there may be times of year where there is some level of traffic on these narrow roads	These are very important visitor resources that need to be identified and incorporated into visitor access proposals.	
	CAR, BUS AND TRUCK ACCESS The length of the Wild Atlantic Way means that most journeys will take place in vehicles	**Minor Sealed Road** These are narrow public roads that receive low levels of local traffic or maintenance. These are suitable for walking, hiking, cycling or horse riding.	Where road may be used for agriculture, turf cutting etc. there may be times of year where there is some level of traffic on these narrow roads	These are very important visitor resources that need to be identified and incorporated into visitor access proposals. Local agreement is critical.	
		County Roads The majority of the Wild Atlantic Way occurs on such roads. These are generally the location of all signage and Discovery Points.	Some locations along these roads will require more laybys, foot paths and cycle-routes	The routing of the Way used roads that would not need to be upgraded to carry extra traffic Some may follow routes parallel to the vehicle touring route.	
	PARKING	Laybys Occasional/ Overflow on Grass Occasional/ Overflow on Mats	It is critical to avoid over-specification of parking facilities	Laybys that extend existing roads are the best approach. Always give first preference to temporary uses – such as parking on grass or sand – these can be re-enforced.	
			These can be sensitive and highly seasonal uses	Overflow parking areas made with reinforced grass can be used in highly seasonal sites.	

	USE	TYPE	ISSUE	SUITABLE LOCATION	EXAMPLES
MONITORING AND MANAGING – *BY DESIGN*	**RIDGE TRAILS**	Ridge Paths These are formed by regular light traffic – both by walkers and animals	This highly concentrated erosion occurs at the point of maximum natural erosion. Undisturbed, it rapidly reverts to a natural state.	The peaks and final approach ridges of steep-sided hills.	
	HIKING TRAILS	Paved Climbs These are heavily modified steep areas where large shaped boulders are imported and expertly placed to ensure safety and prevent erosion.	These require expert location, design, construction and very regular inspection and repair. Ensure alternatives are available.	These occur on the steeper parts of a climb.	
		Paved Trails These are less modified steep areas where flags and stones are imported and expertly placed to ensure safety and prevent erosion.	These require careful location, design, construction and regular inspection and repair.	These occur on the middle and lower parts of a climb where the route is well defined.	
		Desire Lines Trails of wear in vegetation – that can rapidly become soil-eroding	These can appear gradually or sometimes quickly in response to a local change – such as flooding or a fallen tree. These need to be regularly inspected and repaired.	These occur near the lower parts of a climb – or at transitions where the main trail is not clearly defined	
	EDGE TRAILS	Upland Fences These occur along boundaries of ownership or management	Without forethought, inspection and good maintenance these can rapidly become the location of 'desire-lines' These can be a mixture of animal and visitor trails	Along fences	
		These occur where dune management systems are in place	As above	As above Along dune fencing	
		Cliff Edges These occur along edges of steep ground	These can occur near any cliff edge as a result of regular light traffic – both by walkers and animals	Along edges	

2.5 VISITOR MANAGEMENT

All of the evidence from Ireland's monitoring of visitor activity along the Wild Atlantic Way

demonstrates conclusively that visitor management is the key to ensuring that tourism and environmental protection can be sustainably combined.

Visitor management regimes are established by completing the following steps;

1. Site Designation for Appropriate Visitor Management

2. Adopt Appropriate Visitor Management System

3. Implement Site Maintenance System

SITE DESIGNATION FOR APPROPRIATE VISITOR MANAGEMENT TYPE
From the outset, every site and project should be designated according to the proposed management system.

Key Criteria for the designation of appropriate management system include; -

1. EVIDENCE
- Is there any evidence about existing patterns of use?
- Is there any evidence about existing problems resulting from use?
- The location and type of problem should be mapped and described – ideally the specific cause of the problem should be identified.

2. SIGNIFICANCE
- Is the site subject to any formal designations?
- Are the reasons for the designation known and fully understood?
- Are there legal requirements arising from the designations?

3. SENSITIVITY
- Are there particularly sensitive features on the site?
- Are the threats to this sensitivity known and understood?
- Are the measures to protect this sensitivity known and understood?

4. LOCATION
- Located in or adjacent to an existing settlement?
- Located in or adjacent to established land-uses and structures?
- Located on a site of established visitor activity?
- Located in a remote location?

5. RESOURCES
- Is the site owned or permanently managed by a public authority?
- Is the site owned or permanently managed by a private enterprise?
- Is there an arrangement in place to finance the proposed site management and/ maintenance?
- Does the management require technical or scientific expertise?

6. SUSTAINABILITY
- Are the resources to manage and maintain the site permanent?
- Are the resources to manage and maintain the site tied to a private enterprise?
- Are the resources to manage and maintain the site dependent on a voluntary group?

Visitors enjoying a safe and sustainable experience within the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre that is designed and managed to accommodate the pressure of large visitor numbers
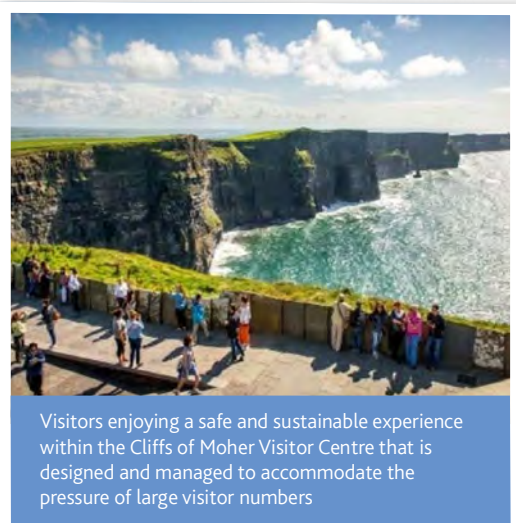
Example of a beach management scheme that helps tourists to clean up after their visit.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Once the key criteria for site management systems have been assessed then an appropriate system for management of the site can be designed and implemented. Answering the questions in the previous checklist should help to ensure that the proposed management system is appropriate, effective and sustainable.

There are four types of Visitor Management Systems. These are different and distinct from Site Maintenance Systems – which are considered below;

1. Fully Managed
2. Occasional Managed [Regular weekly inspection - daily at peak]
3. Occasional [Irregular - each season]
4. Rarely/ never

TYPES OF VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL SITE	MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	TYPICAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
Fully Managed Sites	Full time staffing with access control	National Monument with Building	• All day, every day. • Often open for most of year	• Daily Opening, Cleaning, supervision and guidance • Ongoing repair and renewal. Annual refurbishment • Expert inspection, monitoring and reporting • Site system maintenance
Regularly Managed Sites	Jointly managed with other sites	Popular Beach	• Daily visit peak season, Weekly visit off-season	• Cleaning and litter removal • Checklist Inspection – condition, erosion • Occasional repair • Annual renewal
Occasionally Managed	Inspected at least monthly	Cliff walk	• Seasonal Inspection • Annual repairs	• Checklist Inspection – condition, erosion • Periodic renewal
Rarely Managed	Annual inspection	Mountain Peak	• No management	• Checklist Inspection – condition, erosion • Condition reporting

SITE MAINTENANCE

Site Maintenance is different, but closely related, to Site Management. It is one of the most critical activities required to ensure both environmental protection as well as ensuring visitor satisfaction. It is critical therefore, that arrangements and resources are considered and provided from the outset. There is strong evidence from surveys of visitors that poor site maintenance creates a disproportionate large and negative impression of the entire landscape and experience.

A site without appropriate maintenance should not be promoted.

Maintenance usually refers to regular activities that include:

DAILY TASKS
- Emptying waste bins and replacing liners
- Collecting litter, debris
- Disposal of waste
- Monitoring for damage and wear and tear
- Making minor repairs

WEEKLY TASKS
- Grass cutting
- Checklist inspection for damage, wear or erosion

SEASONAL TASKS
- Repair, renewal or replacement of damaged or worn site furnishings, surfaces, paths, steps,
- fences, signs
- Repair and re-instatement of damaged or worn natural areas – surfaces, slopes, vegetation, walls etc.

The following checklists should be consulted when considering new projects at sites and site management at new and existing sites.

2.6 CHECKLIST FOR PROJECTS IN NEAR-COASTAL ZONES

	IN NEAR-COASTAL AREAS ARE PROJECTS REQUIRED TO	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN	ACTION REQUIRED
1.1	Ensure that locations of public access offer views towards steep coastal features, while avoiding direct access without careful planning for environmentally compatible safety measures?				
1.2	Direct public access to steep areas as a last resort?				
1.3	Minimise the extent of new building?				
1.4	Minimise the need for new roads, septic tanks or new piped services?				
1.5	Re-use structures or temporary projects as the preferred approach?				
1.6	Build new as a last resort?				
1.7	Always give priority to developments that are seasonal, removable or which have a minimal environmental footprint?				
1.8	Locate demanding features away from sensitive natural, historical or scenic near-coastal areas?				
1.9	Consider how features such as parking, toilets, halls and green spaces could have different uses during different seasons?				
1.10	Include locations and designs for waste collection that is adequately sized, weather secure and visually unobtrusive?				
1.11	Avoid inclusion of waste facilities if these cannot be serviced daily during peak season?				
1.12	Avoid inclusion of high-maintenance grass areas or floral planting in un-manned projects?				
1.13	Include consideration of the necessity for site and visitor management?				
1.14	Ensure that Site Management costs and arrangements are integral to design from the outset?				
1.15	Avoid designs that may require toilets and septic tanks for staff in sensitive remote areas?				
1.16	Consider the practicality of managing and/or staffing sites that require the on-site presence of specialists?				
1.17	Ensure that infrastructure projects and services in intensely used visitor areas are sized to allow efficient peak and off-peak operation?				
1.18	Ensure that infrastructure projects and services in intensely used visitor areas provide for separate charging/ costing that differentiates between year-round local and seasonal visitor use?				
1.19	Give circulation priority and convenience to local traffic?				
1.20	Allow sufficient time and resources for meaningful local pre-application consultation when larger tourism projects are to be located in smaller communities?				

PROJECT REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

2.7 CHECKLIST FOR SITE MANAGEMENT IN NEAR- COASTAL ZONES

	IN NEAR-COASTAL AREAS HAS SITE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERED?	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN	ACTION REQUIRED
2.1	Whether there is any evidence about existing patterns of use?				
2.2	Whether there is any evidence about problems resulting from use?				
2.3	Have the location and type of problem been mapped and described?				
2.4	Is the site subject to any formal designations?				
2.5	Are the reasons for the designation known and fully understood?				
2.6	Are there legal requirements arising from the designations?				
2.7	Are there particularly sensitive features on the site?				
2.8	Are the threats to this sensitivity known and understood?				
2.9	Are the measure to protect this sensitivity known and understood?				
2.10	Is the Site located in or adjacent to an existing settlement?				
2.11	Is the Site located in or adjacent to established land-uses and structures?				
2.12	Is the Site located on a site of established visitor activity?				
2.13	Is the Site located in a remote location?				
2.14	Is the site owned or permanently managed by a public authority?				
2.15	Is the site owned or permanently managed by a private enterprise?				
2.16	Is there an arrangement in place to finance the proposed site management and/ maintenance?				
2.17	Does the management require technical or scientific expertise?				
2.18	Are the resources to manage and maintain the site permanent?				
2.19	Are the resources to manage and maintain the site tied to a private enterprise?				
2.20	Are the resources to manage and maintain the site dependent on a voluntary group?				

Left vertical label: PROJECT REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

APPENDIX 1 – WHAT IS WILD?

WHAT IS WILD?

Most definitions of 'Wild' or 'Wilderness' refer to the absence of cultivation or management by humans as the defining factor.

This very human-centred approach does little to say what the Wild is – just what it is not. Such a definition is of little use when we are looking at the North Atlantic in the middle of a winter storm – no plough or fence will ever tame that.

HOW WILD?

It is not enough to use the word 'natural' and 'wild' interchangeably. A reedbed or pond might be natural – though hardly 'wild'.

'Wild' in this context conveys as sense of scale – being both very large and also very energetic – to the degree that there is no possibility of control.

'Wild' is also a sense of otherness, animal, mysterious, unknowable – what we humans are not.

The Wild Atlantic Way offers visitors the opportunity to experience the Wild. But this cannot be offered lightly.

Danger is a very real part of the Wild. Weather, wind tides and heights cannot be controlled or tamed. All must be approached with great caution.

Ireland's Atlantic coastline is the edge of a true wilderness where natural processes are fully dominant. In this dynamic, changing and unpredictable environment human activity needs to be carefully managed.

CARE IN THE WILD

Visitors are also strangers, unfamiliar with the danger that lurks in the Wild. They need to be guided and cared for as they experience the Wild. Similarly, we need to ensure that they pose no threat – by their expectations or requirements of this wild edge of the world. We must care for those who visit our wild places and we must care for the wild places too.

CARE OF THE WILD

Despite its huge scale and energy, parts of the Wild have curiously fragile aspects. Damage heals slow here

The Atlantic wilderness offers opportunities to experience unconfined weather and wildlife that can evoke a sense of the sublime and awe.

Direct personal exposure to wilderness can provide people with profound and emotional experiences. This requires considerable care to protect both the environment as well as the visitor.

APPENDIX 2 – CASE STUDIES

The Brú na Bóinne Visitor Management Strategy has successfully implemented the concept of separating visitor attractions from visitor facilities at a strategic level and has now been reproduced in many international locations.

This Appendix looks at this site specifically as a practical example. It aims to illustrate how this concept could be applied to attractions in the coastal zone along the Wild Atlantic Way. It also illustrates how visitor facilities can gradually be moved away from the most sensitive and significant near coastal zones and into more robust near-by areas of managed agricultural lands.

CASE STUDY 1 – STRATEGIC VISITOR MANAGEMENT - BRU NA BOINNE

A cluster of 3 large Neolithic passage tombs – Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth, are one of Ireland's most important archaeological sites. They are protected by a Visitor Management Plan.

Located less than an hour from Dublin, the site annually attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors. These ancient sites have a limited capacity to accommodate visitors without causing wear and tear to the fabric and context of the monuments – or reducing the quality of the visitor experience.

Landowners, local and state agencies have collaborated since 1995 to devise a strategy to manage visitor numbers - with the objective of accommodating ever increasing numbers – yet reducing pressure on the monuments.

At the core of the strategy lay two simple approaches;

1. to spread the load more evenly between the three sites
2. to move parking, shops, cafes and visitor facilities away from the monuments.

The diagrams illustrate how the original overcrowding was reduced by a combination of the removal of direct car access to the monuments and by the provision of new visitor facilities at a site south of the river.

This approach has succeeded in reducing 2017 visitor numbers to the Newgrange monument to levels last experienced in 1988.

This pioneering technique is now being widely adopted.
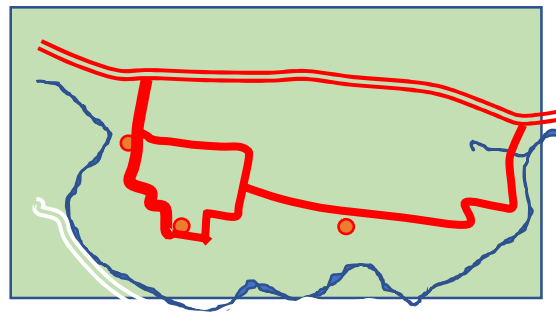
Before the Visitor Centre local roads were congested and the monuments were experiencing unsustainable visitor numbers
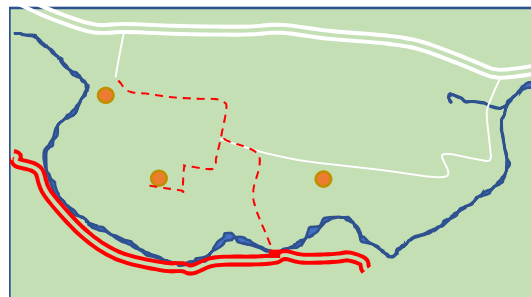
After the Visitor Centre traffic was confined south of the river and pressure on the sites and the monuments was greatly reduced.
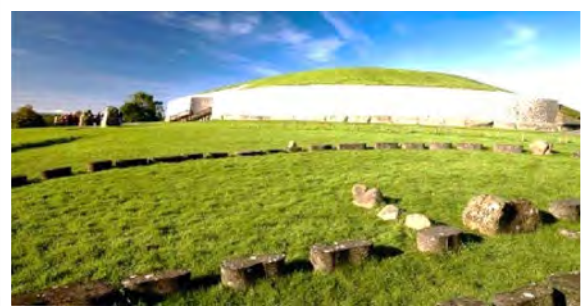
Visitors Experience is greatly improved with better information, more comfort, no traffic congestion, less crowds and full catering and rest facilities.

CASE STUDY 2 - STRATEGIC VISITOR MANAGEMENT – POTENTIAL FUTURE APPLICATION IN BUSY COSTAL ZONE

It is possible to grow visitor numbers while also increasing the wildness of the more intensively used coastal locations by adopting a strategic approach.

The graphic below illustrates the options that might be available to site owners or operators and how considering the "more wild option" could be realised for an iconic cliff-top viewing point. This may be applicable to recommendations and actions coming from the recently completed Wild Atlantic Way Route Review.

As numbers increase, on-site facilities – such as parking, toilets and shops – can be relocated away from the coast to existing nearby settlements and villages. Here, visitors pay for parking in return for a free minibus to the coastal features. Visitors may also opt to hike or cycle to the coast. The visitor facilities would augment the existing business in the settlements, as well as allowing more mixing with locals.
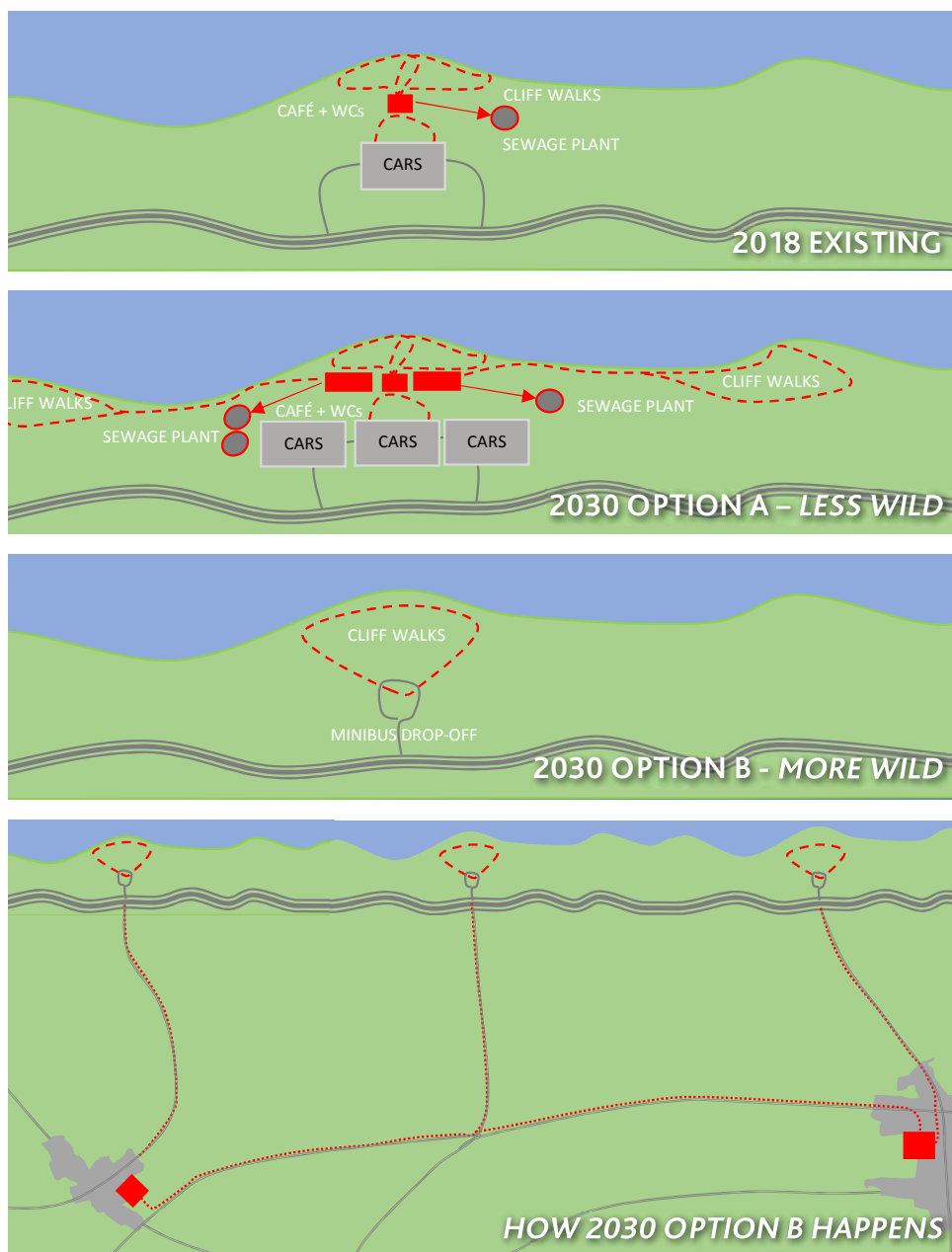
Built elements gradually re-located away from coast to nearby villages. Visitors travel to a number of smaller dispersed cliff-walks.

CASE STUDY 3 - STRATEGIC VISITOR MANAGEMENT – POTENTIAL FUTURE APPLICATION AIMED AT MAKING THE SHORE MORE WILD

It is possible to grow visitor numbers while also increasing the wildness of the more intensively used coastal locations by adopting a strategic approach that involves co-ordination between landowners, local authorities, tourism interests and agencies that care for habitats.

The graphic below illustrates how a typical Irish rocky coastline might be managed into the future to ensure the "more wild" approach might be achieved while also ensuring continued use by all including visitors.
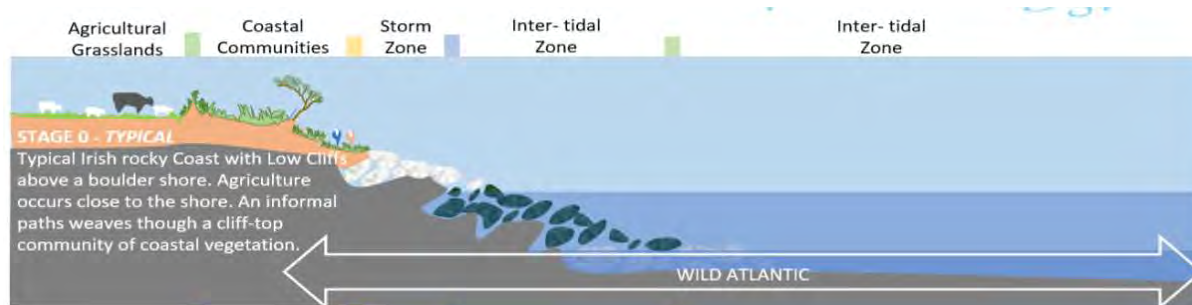
Stage 0

Stage 0 – This very natural situation – an undisturbed wild coast that is followed by a narrow, informal path. This area will be unable to sustain significant increases in visitor numbers without carefully planned management and intervention.
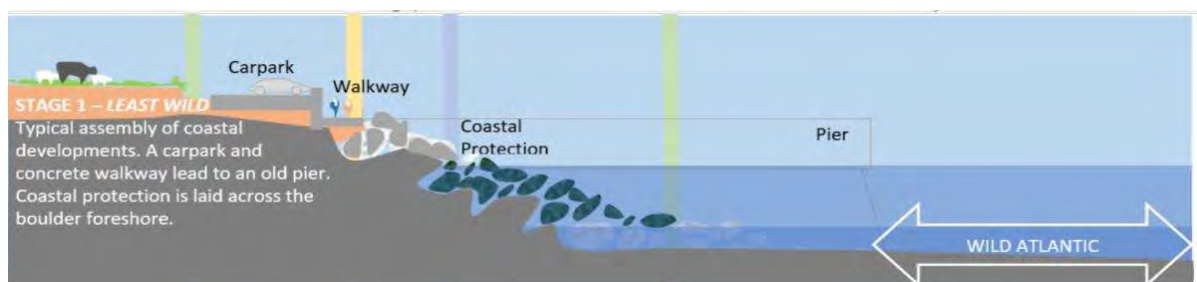
Stage 1 – Many Coastal Sites have a significantly diminished sense of wildness because of an accumulation of un-coordinated and inappropriate projects. Future plans and projects need to halt and gradually reverse this loss of wildness.

Stage 2 'Rewilding' of near-coastal areas can begin to be achieved by gradually moving back all 'hard projects' – carparks, toilets, access roads – so they are not visible from the shore, nor within the special habitats of the coastal environment.
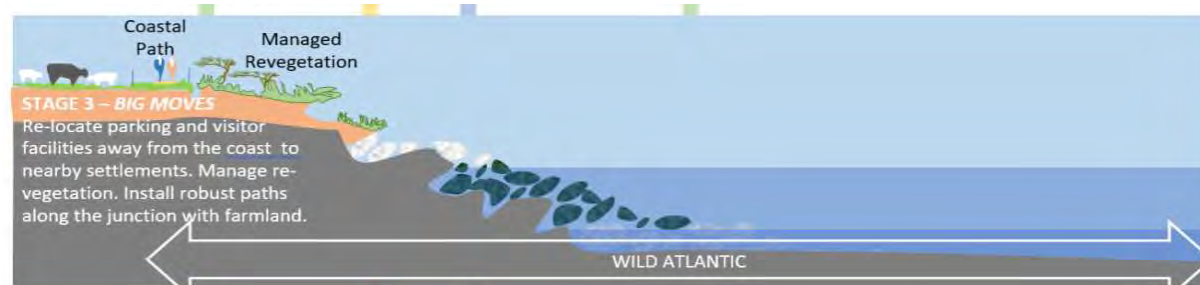
Stage 3 By following the high-level strategy illustrated on the previous page – which applies the lessons learned from Brú na Bóinne – it will eventually become possible to re-establish a completely wild experience of the Atlantic coast. In this strategy a buffer of managed re-vegetation separates [and shelters] the agricultural areas from the natural habitats near the shore. The path follows the junction between the two types of management areas.

APPENDIX 3 – GUIDELINE OF SECTION OF MATERIALS

The tables below compare materials to assist in making selections for their use in the near-coastal zone. Table 1 compares Durability – the ability to resist decay, due to weathering or wear, with visual and natural intrusiveness – the extent to which materials will contrast with the appearance or processes of the natural environment. Table 2 compares Flexibility – the ability to absorb environmental loading – due to waves, wind, erosion or weather - with the ease of repair using local materials and labour.

In general, many designers give excessive priority to durability and insufficient priority to the ease of repair using local materials and labour. Many durable materials – such as stainless steel, brick, toughened glass, paviors and concrete – are very visually intrusive.

Installations in near coastal locations are subject to extreme weathering and wear. When damage occurs in these remote sites – it can be important for repairs to be carried out quickly and inexpensively – often using locally available materials and labour. Visually intrusive materials that have not been repaired can greatly magnify adverse impacts and can quickly give a place a run-down appearance.

More	**Visual and natural intrusiveness**						**Least**
Durability	Stainless Steel	Brick	Paving	Geotextile	Stained timber	Shaped earth, sand	Large Rocks – no mortar, minimal shaping
	Toughened glass	Concrete	Concrete slab	Elevated boardwalk	Treated timber	Hedgerow	Drystone walls
	Weathering steel [Corten®]	Blocks	Tarmacadam	Boardwalk on ground	Painted or varnished timber	Earth berm	Mortared coursed stone
	Painted steel	Composite panels	Gravel	Mown grass	Split paling	Drystone or timber retention	Dressed stone
Less	Plastic coated steel	Wire fencing	Quarry screening and quarry dust	Trail	Logs	Wall or fence	Gabions

Table 1 Comparison of Durability of Materials with their Visual and natural intrusiveness

More	Ease of repair using Local Materials and Labour						Least
Flexibility Durability	Stainless Steel	Brick	Paving	Geotextile	Stained timber	Shaped earth, sand	Large Rocks – no mortar, minimal shaping
	Toughened glass	Concrete	Concrete slab	Elevated boardwalk	Treated timber	Hedgerow	Drystone walls
	Weathering steel [Corten®]	Blocks	Tarmacadam	Boardwalk on ground	Painted or varnished timber	Earth berm	Mortared coursed stone
	Painted steel	Composite panels	Gravel	Mown grass	Split paling	Drystone or timber retention	Dressed stone
Less	Plastic coated steel	Wire fencing	Quarry screening and quarry dust	Trail	Logs	Wall or fence	Gabions

Table 2 Comparison of Flexibility of Materials with the Ease of Repair using Local Materials and Labour

'Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others'

The objective of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) 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.

The SEA which has been undertaken for the Operational Programme, the findings of which have been informed by the Appropriate Assessment (AA) and are presented in an SEA Environmental Report which accompanies Operational Programme, has resulted in the integration of this Appendix into the Operational Programme in order to facilitate environmental protection and sustainable development at lower levels of decision making.

This appendix includes various provisions with which local authorities and others will demonstrate compliance at lower levels of decision making in order to get funding. These decision making processes will include project level Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and AA as appropriate.

Proposals for development must be screened for the need to undertake AA as per the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (Part 5, Section 42).

A local authority is unlikely to carry out an AA of their own development as the competent authority in such instances is likely to be An Bord Pleanála. A local authority must screen proposed developments for AA to determine whether a Section 177AE application to An Bord Pleanála is required.

If proposals are screened out then planning exemptions are not lost. If a Stage 2 AA is required then planning exemptions are lost and planning permission must be sought[1]. If a local authority is applying for the permission and Stage 2 AA is required, then the application must go to An Bord Pleanála.

Developments or works by other groups or individuals may require planning permission or, if not, may require Ministerial consent in European sites. Local authorities are likely to be responsible for deciding whether there are restrictions on exemptions in the case of exempted development by a group or individual.

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[1] *As per Part I, Section 4 (4) of the Planning Act 2000 as amended states that [Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (i), (ia) and (l) of subsection (1) and any regulations under subsection (2)]: development shall not be exempted development if an environmental impact assessment or an appropriate assessment of the development is required.*

Topic[2]	Requirement[3]
All	**Regulatory framework for environmental protection and management** Local authorities and others shall cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. Local authorities and others will demonstrate, as appropriate, that plans, programmes and projects comply with EU Directives - including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) – and relevant transposing Regulations.
All	**Information to be considered by local authorities and others at lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment** Lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment by local authorities and others, as relevant, should consider the sensitivities identified in Section 4 of the SEA Environmental Report, including the following: • Candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas; • Features of the landscape that provide linkages/connectivity to designated sites (e.g. watercourses, areas of semi-natural habitat such as linear woodlands etc) • Salmonid Waters; • Shellfish Waters; • Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; • Nature Reserves; • Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas; • Areas likely to contain a habitat listed in annex 1 of the Habitats Directive; • Entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and Zones of Archaeological Potential; • Entries to the Record of Protected Structures; • Un-designated sites of importance to wintering or breeding bird species of conservation concern; • Architectural Conservation Areas; and • Relevant landscape designations.
All	**Construction and Environmental Management Plan** Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared in advance of the construction of larger projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures indicated in this Appendix to the Operational Programme and any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including: a. location of the sites and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse, b. location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities, c. details of site security fencing and hoardings, d. details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction, e. details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage, f. measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network, g. measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris, h. alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works, i. details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels, j. containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater, k. disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, l. a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains, m. details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan. n. if peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan. o. measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed). p. appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases.
All	**Maintenance Plan** Lower tier assessments should examine the need for Maintenance Plans informed by environmental considerations to be prepared and implemented.
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	**Protection of Biodiversity including Natura 2000 Network** Local authorities and others shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); UNESCO World Heritage and UNESCO Biosphere sites; Ramsar Sites; Salmonid Waters; Shellfish Waters; Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; Flora Protection Order sites; Wildlife Sites (including Nature Reserves); Certain entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas; Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs); Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979) ; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

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[2] The SEA Directive identifies a number of environmental topics which must be considered in the assessments being undertaken for plans and programmes. These topics are listed in this column and comprise biodiversity and flora and fauna, population and human health, soil, water, air and climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape.

[3] The provisions listed under this column are the requirements which the local authorities and others will have to comply with in order to get funding.

Local authorities and others shall demonstrate compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including the following and any updated/superseding documents):

- EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)[4], the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)[5], the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)[6], the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC).
- National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 1976[7], the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008[8] and the Flora Protection Order 1999.
- National policy guidelines (including any clarifying Circulars or superseding versions of same), including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate Assessment Guidance 2010.
- Catchment and water resource management Plans, including River Basin District Management Plans 2009-2015 (including any superseding versions of same).
- Biodiversity Plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Plan (including any superseding version of same).
- Ireland's Environment 2014 (EPA, 2014, including any superseding versions of same), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges.

Appropriate Assessment

All projects and plans arising from this programme will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:

1. The Plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
2. The Plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
3. The Plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

Protection of Natura 2000 Sites

No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 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 shall be permitted on the basis of this programme (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects[9]).

NPWS & Integrated Management Plans

Regarding, integrated management plans, Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for Special Area of Conservation involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done.

Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared for all Natura sites (or parts thereof), Fáilte Ireland and local authorities shall engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Operational Programme and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.

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[4] Including Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur). Note that the NPWS provide sensitive areas mapping for Freshwater Pearl Mussels which are listed under Annex II of the Directive.
[5] Including Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur).
[6] Including protected species and natural habitats.
[7] Including species of flora and fauna and their key habitats.
[8] Including protected species and natural habitats.
[9] Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
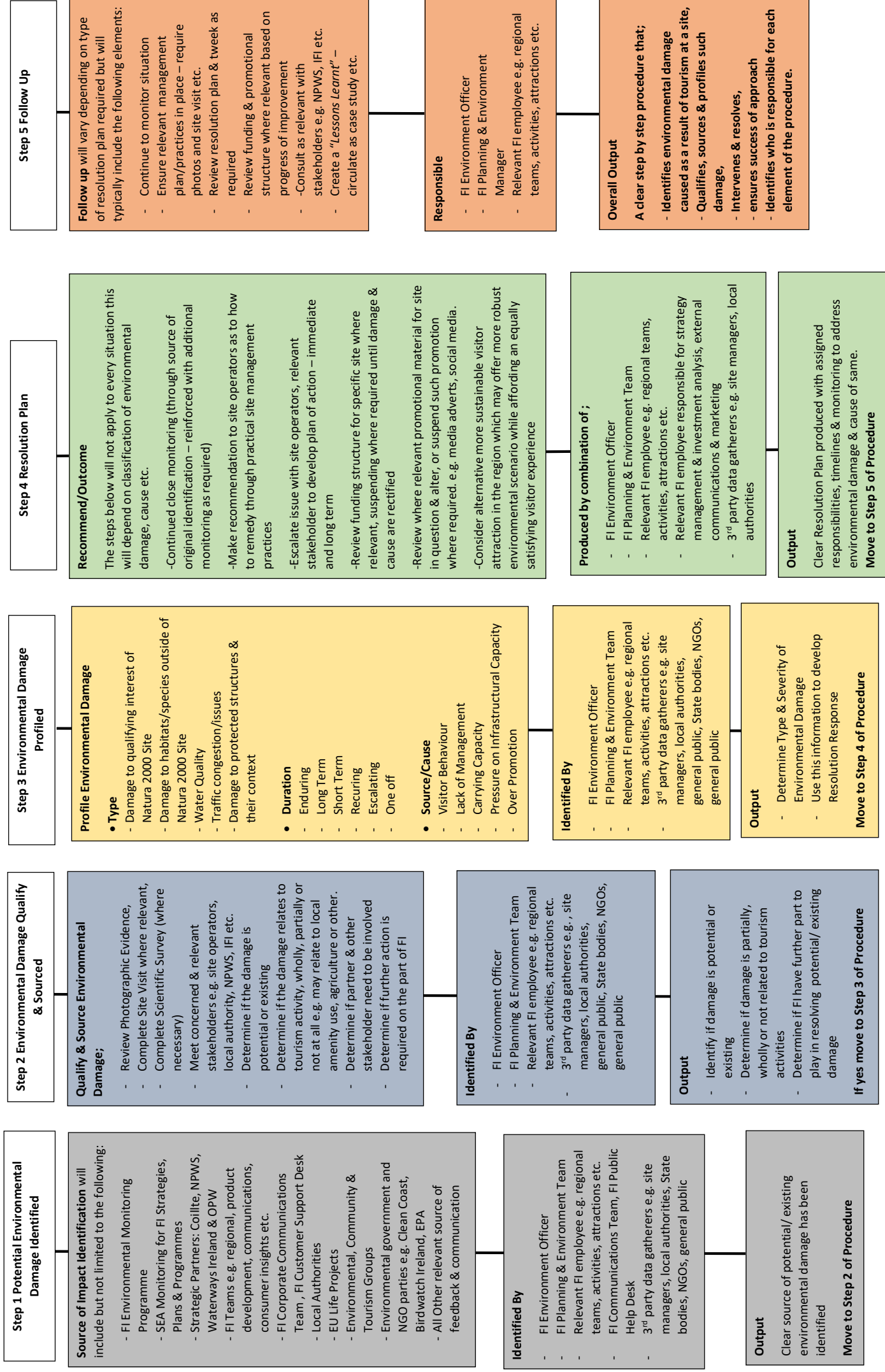a) no alternative solution available,
b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and
c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

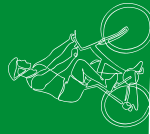|		
	Coastal Zone Management Local authorities and others shall demonstrate that works will be undertaken in accordance with best practice and local authorities and others shall, as appropriate: support measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats; and facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and projection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.	
	Biodiversity and Ecological Networks Local authorities and others shall demonstrate, as appropriate, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.	
	Protection of Riparian Zone and Waterbodies and Watercourses Local authorities and others shall demonstrate that waterbodies and watercourses are protected from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas, as appropriate.	
	Non-Designated Sites Local authorities and others shall demonstrate the appropriate protection of non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity.	
	Non-native invasive species Local authorities and others shall support, as appropriate, the National Parks and Wildlife Service's efforts to seek to control the spread of non-native invasive species on land and water.	
Population and human health	**Human Health** Local authorities and others shall assess proposals for development in terms of, inter alia, potential impact on existing adjacent developments, 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, local authorities and others shall ensure the introduction of mitigation measures in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level.	
Soil	**Soil Protection and Contamination** Local authorities and others shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate. Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed.	
	Areas of geological interest Local authorities and others shall demonstrate protection and maintenance of the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest.	
Water	**Water Framework Directive and associated legislation** Local authorities and others shall contribute towards, as appropriate, the protection of existing and potential water resources, and their use by humans and wildlife, including rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, coastal waters and associated habitats 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 (SI No. 272 of 2009), the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same). Local authorities and others shall support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development.	
	River Basin Management Plan Local authorities and others shall support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the various River Basin Management Plans 2009 – 2015, and associated Programmes of Measures, or any such plans that may supersede same during the lifetime of the Operational Programme, as well as relevant recommendations contained in the Water Quality in Ireland 2007 – 2009 (EPA, 2011, and any updated/superseding document). Local authorities and others shall demonstrate that proposals for development would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands and coastal waters. Also local authorities and others shall have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 which provides guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.	
	Bathing Water Local authorities and others shall contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum, and EU Guide Values, where possible.	
	Flood Risk Management Guidelines Local authorities and others shall support, as appropriate, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010), the DEHLG/OPW publication *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines* (2009) (including any clarifying Circulars or superseding versions of same) and relevant outputs of the Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS).	
	Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Local authorities and others shall ensure that new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems as appropriate.	
Air and Climatic	**Infrastructure for Walking, Cycling and Water-based activities** Local Authorities and others shall work with Fáilte Ireland, the National Trails Office, Coillte, the	

Factors	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking, cycling and water-based activities along the Wild Atlantic Way.	
Material Assets	**Construction Waste** Local authorities and others shall demonstrate that all waste arising during construction phase will be managed and disposed of in a way that ensures the provisions of the Waste Management Acts and regulations and Regional Waste Management Plans. Construction Waste Management Plans will be implemented by local authorities and others to minimise waste and ensure correct handling and disposal of construction waste streams in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, July 2006.	
	Waste Creation Local authorities and others shall support the minimisation of waste creation and promote a practice of reduce, reuse and recycle where possible.	
	Waste Disposal Local authorities and others shall safeguard the environment by seeking to ensure that residual waste is disposed of appropriately.	
	Irish Water Local authorities and others shall co-operate with and support, as relevant and appropriate, Irish Water in its new role as the lead authority for water services.	
Cultural Heritage	**Archaeological Heritage** Local authorities and others shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act, 1930 (as amended).	
	Protection of Archaeological Sites Local authorities and others shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings, archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.	
	Consultation Local authorities and others shall consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to proposed developments adjoining archaeological sites.	
	Underwater Archaeological Sites Local authorities and others shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of underwater archaeological sites in riverine, intertidal and sub-tidal locations.	
	Architectural Heritage Local authorities and others shall help to ensure the appropriate protection of architectural heritage by complying, as appropriate, with the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any updated/superseding document).	
Landscape	**Landscape Designations** Local authorities and others shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of county and local level landscape designations from incompatible developments. Proposals for development that have the potential to significantly adversely impact upon these designations shall be accompanied by an assessment of the potential landscape character and visual impacts of the proposed development - demonstrating that landscape impacts have been anticipated and avoided to a level consistent with the sensitivity of the landscape and the nature of the designation. Such assessments should be prepared having regard to the relevant aspects of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013 Landscape Institute).	
	Coastal Areas and Seascapes Local authorities and others shall protect the character and visual potential of the coast and conserve the character and quality of seascapes.	

Tourism Related Environmental Damage – Failte Ireland (FI) Resolution Procedure

Step 1 Potential Environmental Damage Identified

Source of Impact Identification will include but not limited to the following:

- FI Environmental Monitoring Programme
- SEA Monitoring for FI Strategies, Plans & Programmes
- Strategic Partners: Coillte, NPWS, Waterways Ireland & OPW
- FI Teams e.g. regional, product development, communications, consumer insights etc.
- FI Corporate Communications Team, FI Customer Support Desk
- Local Authorities
- EU Life Projects
- Environmental, Community & Tourism Groups
- Environmental government and NGO parties e.g. Clean Coast, Birdwatch Ireland, EPA
- All Other relevant source of feedback & communication

Identified By

- FI Environment Officer
- FI Planning & Environment Team
- Relevant FI employee e.g. regional teams, activities, attractions etc.
- FI Communications Team, FI Public Help Desk
- 3rd party data gatherers e.g. site managers, local authorities, State bodies, NGOs, general public

Output

Clear source of potential/ existing environmental damage has been identified

Move to Step 2 of Procedure

Step 2 Environmental Damage Qualify & Sourced

Qualify & Source Environmental Damage;

- Review Photographic Evidence,
- Complete Site Visit where relevant,
- Complete Scientific Survey (where necessary)
- Meet concerned & relevant stakeholders e.g. site operators, local authority, NPWS, IFI etc.
- Determine if the damage is potential or existing
- Determine if the damage relates to tourism activity, wholly, partially or not at all e.g. may relate to local amenity use, agriculture or other.
- Determine if partner & other stakeholder need to be involved
- Determine if further action is required on the part of FI

Identified By

- FI Environment Officer
- FI Planning & Environment Team
- Relevant FI employee e.g. regional teams, activities, attractions etc.
- 3rd party data gatherers e.g. , site managers, local authorities, general public, State bodies, NGOs, general public

Output

- Identify if damage is potential or existing
- Determine if damage is partially, wholly or not related to tourism activities
- Determine if FI have further part to play in resolving potential/ existing damage

If yes move to Step 3 of Procedure

Step 3 Environmental Damage Profiled

Profile Environmental Damage

- **Type**
  - Damage to qualifying interest of Natura 2000 Site
  - Damage to habitats/species outside of Natura 2000 Site
  - Water Quality
  - Traffic congestion/issues
  - Damage to protected structures & their context

- **Duration**
  - Enduring
  - Long Term
  - Short Term
  - Recuring
  - Escalating
  - One off

- **Source/Cause**
  - Visitor Behaviour
  - Lack of Management
  - Carrying Capacity
  - Pressure on Infrastructural Capacity
  - Over Promotion

Identified By

- FI Environment Officer
- FI Planning & Environment Team
- Relevant FI employee e.g. regional teams, activities, attractions etc.
- 3rd party data gatherers e.g. site managers, local authorities, State bodies, NGOs, general public, general public

Output

- Determine Type & Severity of Environmental Damage
- Use this information to develop Resolution Response

Move to Step 4 of Procedure

Step 4 Resolution Plan

Recommend/Outcome

The steps below will not apply to every situation this will depend on classification of environmental damage, cause etc.

- Continued close monitoring (through source of original identification – reinforced with additional monitoring as required)
- Make recommendation to site operators as to how to remedy through practical site management practices
- Escalate issue with site operators, relevant stakeholder to develop plan of action – immediate and long term
- Review funding structure for specific site where relevant, suspending where required until damage & cause are rectified
- Review where relevant promotional material for site in question & alter, or suspend such promotion where required. e.g. media adverts, social media.
- Consider alternative more sustainable visitor attraction in the region which may offer more robust environmental scenario while affording an equally satisfying visitor experience

Produced by combination of ;

- FI Environment Officer
- FI Planning & Environment Team
- Relevant FI employee e.g. regional teams, activities, attractions etc.
- Relevant FI employee responsible for strategy management & investment analysis, external communications & marketing
- 3rd party data gatherers e.g. site managers, local authorities

Output

Clear Resolution Plan produced with assigned responsibilities, timelines & monitoring to address environmental damage & cause of same.

Move to Step 5 of Procedure

Step 5 Follow Up

Follow up will vary depending on type of resolution plan required but will typically include the following elements:

- Continue to monitor situation
- Ensure relevant management plan/practices in place – require photos and site visit etc.
- Review resolution plan & tweak as required
- Review funding & promotional structure where relevant based on progress of improvement
- Consult as relevant with stakeholders e.g. NPWS, IFI etc.
- Create a *"Lessons Learnt"* – circulate as case study etc.

Responsible

- FI Environment Officer
- FI Planning & Environment Manager
- Relevant FI employee e.g. regional teams, activities, attractions etc.

Overall Output

A clear step by step procedure that;

- Identifies environmental damage caused as a result of tourism at a site,
- Qualifies, sources & profiles such damage,
- Intervenes & resolves,
- ensures success of approach
- Identifies who is responsible for each element of the procedure.

Greenway

Visitor Experience & Interpretation Toolkit

APRIL 2021

>> Greenways enhance local communities, the environment, the economy and the quality of life of the surrounding area <<

1 Introduction

Why develop a Greenway in your local area?

Greenway development in Ireland over the past number of years has resulted in very positive outcomes for the areas in which they are located. Accessed by locals, day-trippers, overnight tourists from Ireland and overseas, Greenways offer a range of benefits to individuals, local communities and local businesses.

Ultimately Greenways facilitate the creation of enjoyable and memorable experiences for the people who use them for exercise or recreation and increasingly we see people using Greenways for short daily commutes as they travel to work, school or college.

Greenways are for everyone. Although the needs of cyclists - in terms of gradient and surface - might be a key consideration at the design stage, the finished Greenway will also be enjoyed by pedestrians, everyday journeys to work and school, wheelchair users, children in buggies and several different types of bicycles (e.g. tandems, tag-alongs, toddler trailers, e-bikes etc.).

Greenways provide an excellent amenity for local populations. They also contribute to the rural economy by attracting visitors away from busy tourist hotspots and creating job opportunities in tourism and hospitality businesses.

Classifications of Greenways

The Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways; (hereafter called the Greenways Strategy) defines a Greenway as:

" a recreational or pedestrian corridor for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. "

The Greenways Strategy focuses primarily on Greenways that can be of strategic significance on a regional or national level as these can facilitate complementary local developments.

>> National Greenways are at least 100km in length. At this length, visitors will usually stay overnight thus increasing the tourism and economic impacts.

>> Regional Greenways will ideally be 40km long, or if shorter, they will have the potential to be extended to connect to a longer strategic route.

>> Local trails or transport corridors that link residential areas with workplaces/schools etc. are not considered under the Greenways Strategy, unless they link to an existing Greenway.
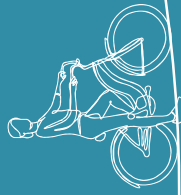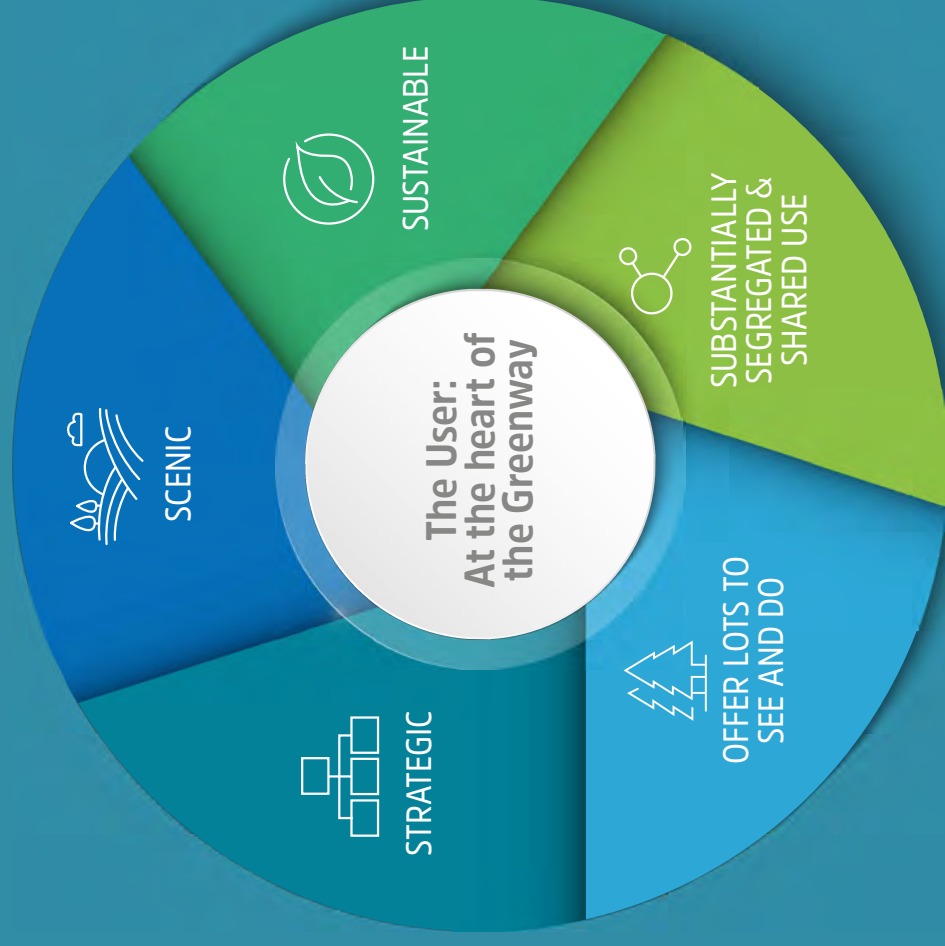
The 5 S's of Greenway Development

The User: At the heart of the Greenway

The Greenways Strategy recommends that the user/visitor should be at the heart of all Greenways.

As such, all Greenway development should be underpinned by the 5 S's:

>> *Greenways provide an excellent amenity for local populations. They also contribute to the rural economy by attracting visitors away from busy tourist hotspots and creating job opportunities in tourism and hospitality businesses* <<

SUSTAINABLE

SUBSTANTIALLY SEGREGATED & SHARED USE

SCENIC

The User: At the heart of the Greenway

STRATEGIC

OFFER LOTS TO SEE AND DO

For further information see
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways

2 Funding & Public Spending Code Requirements

In recent years, funding for Greenway development has come through a variety of sources including;

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

>> Greenways Strategy Funding

Department of Rural and Community Development

>> Rural Regeneration Funding

>> Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

>> Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Department of Transport

The Carbon Tax Fund 2020 has provided support in the order of €4.5 million to 26 Greenway Projects around the country for feasibility, planning and design. For details of projects that have been funded see Carbon Tax Fund 2020

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Some Greenways were approved under the first call of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, which development, as set out in Project Ireland 2040, through the regeneration and rejuvenation of Ireland's five cities and other large towns.

EU

Interreg Europe - OUR WAY

Local Authorities

Internal budget allocations by respective local authorities.

Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

LEADER funding, administered by Local Action Groups / Local Development Companies

The next EU Regional Development and Cohesion Policy will run from 2021-2027.

Local Communities

Fundraising by local community organisations and voluntary groups

The Funding Process

This list is not exhaustive and developers are advised to keep abreast of funding calls under existing and new programmes as they come on stream.

Calls for applications can have relatively short turnaround times and in almost all cases to date, successful applicants had shovel-ready applications with planning permission already in place.

It is important to also note that capital development funding programmes now require applicants to include plans for ongoing maintenance, marketing and promotion as well as the initial capital expenditure.

Public Spending Code Requirements

Projects must comply with the Public Spending Code (PSC) which was updated in 2019.

In addition, the Department of Transport has developed PSC guidelines for Projects under €20 million with an additional note for projects over €20 million. Please contact the Department of Transport for further information and documentation.
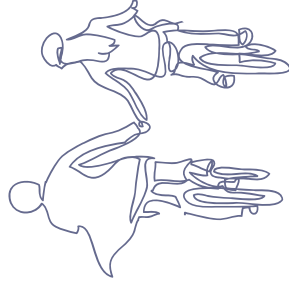
Plan Ahead

>> Aim to have issues such as land acquisition (where necessary), Greenway design and planning permissions in place. Then the project is 'shovel-ready' when funding calls are announced.

Future funding calls may not necessarily be grant aided up to 100%, so developers should earmark sources of match funding within annual budgets.

Applicants are required to satisfy themselves that all statutory planning, environmental and other legislative requirements have been met (relevant to the Project Phase that is being applied for) to allow them to carry out the proposed development. Applicants are advised that consultation with relevant statutory agencies (e.g. NPWS etc.) should be undertaken as appropriate.

A declaration in relation to compliance with statutory planning, environmental and other legislative requirements must be prepared PRIOR to seeking any funding. Projects that do not confirm that they have met the requirements will not be funded <<

3

The Importance of a Multi-Disciplinary Team in Greenway Development

As noted elsewhere in this toolkit, Greenways are not simply a means of getting from A to B, they are an experience in and of themselves. They offer local communities social, health, and economic benefits and the existing Greenways in Ireland have proven to be significant tourism attractors to a wide geographic area.

Creating a multi-disciplinary team to oversee the planning, design, development, maintenance and marketing of your Greenway is crucial to ensuring its long-term success.

The team should include:

>> **Support** from the chief executive and senior management team whose direction will influence a range of internal and external stakeholders.

>> **Community engagement** colleagues to include marketing and communications, Greenway animation via outdoor activities, tourism, heritage, and history. Communicating with local stakeholders should commence long before construction on the Greenway itself commences and ongoing communication has been noted by other Greenway developers as a cornerstone of successful Greenways.

>> **A liaison officer** on the ground who has good interpersonal and communication skills is key to maintaining relationships with local landowners and general community interests. A dedicated central point of contact can also direct specific enquiries and concerns to other local authority colleagues, who may be best suited to addressing them in a timely and comprehensive manner.

>> **Expertise** regarding knowledge and information of funding sources and procedures is important for the ongoing maintenance and new developments as well as the initial construction.

>> A number of Greenway **developers** have also noted that local authority engagement with Smarter Travel policies was helpful in the early stages of Greenway development and learnings from Smarter Travel can be successfully applied to Greenway design.

>> **Engineers and technicians** are key for the infrastructural design, delivery, and maintenance of Greenways. Naturally it is essential that the infrastructure is technically sound, but the Greenway also needs to respond appropriately to users preferences and needs. Consumers will vote with their feet (literally in this case!) and if the Greenway is not appealing, they will simply choose to go elsewhere thus reducing the potential economic impact of the resource for the local area.

>> **Specialists** in the areas of recreation and tourism will have excellent insights regarding what locals and tourists want from Greenways. They will also be able to advise on how aspects of Greenway route design or ancillary infrastructure can impact levels of engagement and can contribute to repeat and referral usage.

Local Councillors perform a role in determining the policy of the Council subject to, and in accordance with, the Local Government Act 2001 as well as representing the needs of the electorate of the county.

" *Here in Waterford City and County Council we have learned that having a strong multi-disciplinary team in place has been crucial to the success of the Waterford Greenway project. Early and meaningful engagement by this team with the various key stakeholders has also been vitally important. The development of Waterford Greenway has been and continues to be an evolving story.*

Waterford City and Council recognises the need to continue to engage with landowners, businesses and local communities in order to plan for the ever changing landscape that we find ourselves in and ensure the continued success of Waterford Greenway into the future. "

Michael Walsh, Chief Executive, Waterford City and County Council.

A flexible approach to multi-disciplinary planning and delivery is always important. It is certain that issues as well as opportunities will emerge from a variety of sources as plans for your Greenway evolve. Keeping a focus on the end users and an open mind as to how those issues and opportunities could impact on their experience of the Greenway should be a priority for all members of the team.

Having to retro-fit elements of the Greenway can be an expensive and time-consuming response to user feedback over time, so the multi-disciplinary approach to early planning and design is recommended.

4 Design Approach & Construction

Where to start when developing your Greenway

An overview of the key considerations when planning a Greenway is outlined below. The content is not prescriptive, and Fáilte Ireland recommends that developers consult the sources referenced throughout this toolkit for more detailed information.
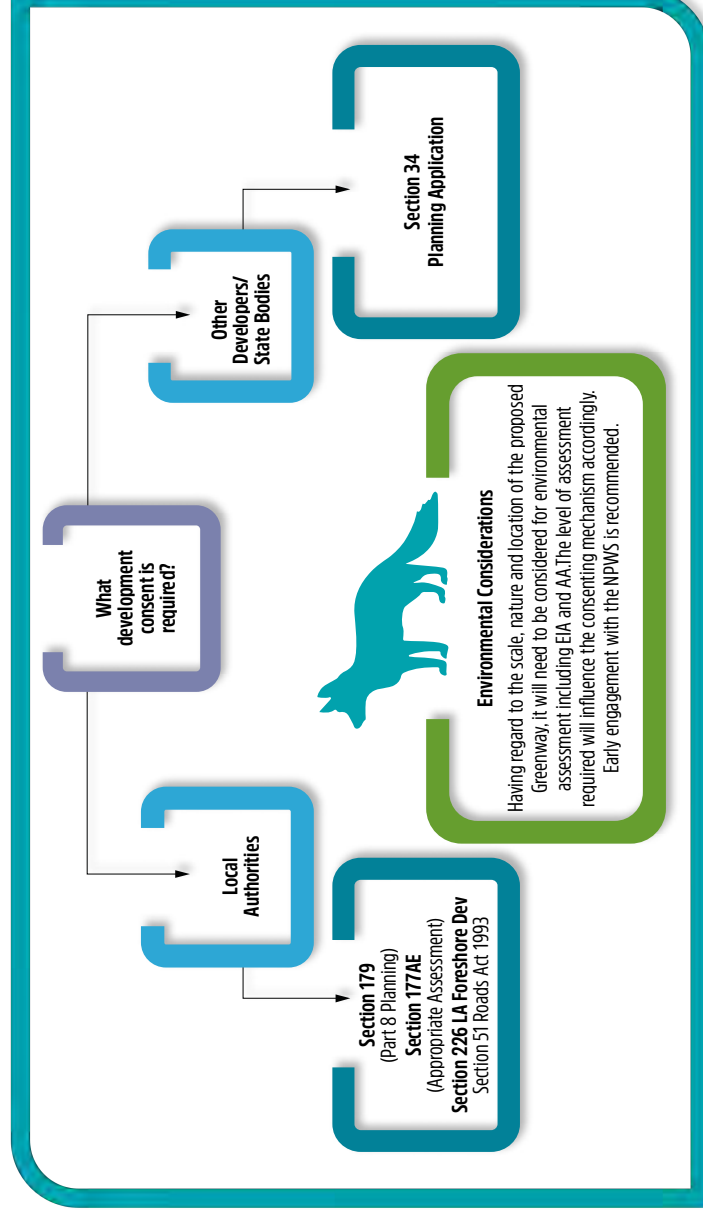
What are the standards?

When developing a Greenway, the standards that apply are set out in Transport Infrastructure Ireland Rural Cycleway Design

When developing links on urban roads, the standards that apply are set out in;

The National Transport Authority's (NTA)National Cycle Manual

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

Note: Standards may be subject to change at different times and TII should be consulted at the outset of the design process for each Greenway project.

Stages in the planning process

The process for planning new Greenways should include the following tasks at a minimum. This list is not exhaustive, and the tasks are not necessarily sequential. Developers are advised to clarify additional requirements with relevant sources.

What development consent is required?

Local Authorities

Section 179 (Part 8 Planning)
Section 177AE (Appropriate Assessment)
Section 226 LA Foreshore Dev
Section 51 Roads Act 1993

Other Developers/ State Bodies

Section 34 Planning Application

Environmental Considerations

Having regard to the scale, nature and location of the proposed Greenway, it will need to be considered for environmental assessment including EIA and AA.The level of assessment required will influence the consenting mechanism accordingly. Early engagement with the NPWS is recommended.

Note: The above list is not exhaustive, and it is advised to consult with the relevant Planning Authority / An Bord Pleanála for advice and guidance

Think about the user when designing the Greenway

Greenways are used by many people whether they are walking, cycling, in a wheelchair or pushing a buggy.

- Segregation from vehicular traffic
- Linkages
- Width
- Gradient / Slope
- Surface
- The Environment
- Signage for nearby attractions/ amenities
- Ancillary infrastructure

>>*Think carefully about rest areas, points of interest or viewing points to ensure they do not cause a blockage on the Greenway i.e. make sure there is room for other users to pass by an area where one or more groups of users have stopped to rest, take a photo or simply enjoy the view* <<

Segregation from vehicular traffic: it is best practice when Greenways are fully segregated from vehicular traffic. Where a particular local situation does not allow for this, traffic calming measures should be put in place to make the route suitable for inexperienced cyclists

Linkages: routes should link to towns and village centres with larger cycling/walking networks and/or other activities/locations.

Where possible, provide safe cycling corridors from local train/bus stations. Greenways have the potential to provide a car free experience from start to finish combining public transport with cycling.

The environment: it is essential Greenways comply with the requirements of Irish and European law including, but not limited to, EU Directive 2014/52/EU

Width: the path should be a minimum 3m wide to accommodate two-way traffic comfortably, noting that many users may not be competent cyclists (e.g. parents cycling with toddler trailers or tag-along bikes might be doing so for the first time). The optimum width is 5m where possible, especially around urban centres and/or busy trail heads. It is understood that the optimum width is not always possible and developers are advised to make a judgement call on progressing with narrower trails for limited sections of their Greenway, if the narrower section adds value to the overall experience of the Greenway.

Gradient/slope: TII's standard recommends that any slopes should have a maximum gradient of 3% Where this is not possible on limited sections, developers are advised to make a judgement call on the achievable gradient, assuming the end result adds value to the overall Greenway experience for the user.

Surface: the surface should ideally give a sense of the Greenway's local environment.

Signage: signage along the Greenway should recommend visitor attractions and experiences in the local area.

Parking facilities: it is important to identify existing car and bicycle parking facilities available on or near the route and determine if there is a requirement for additional car parking spaces and where they should be located. If the trailhead is isolated from an existing town or village then vehicular parking may be required.

Ancillary infrastructure: facilities that enhance the Greenway experience for users: e.g. trailheads, rest and shelter facilities, mapping/route orientation, furniture and aesthetic or sculptural additions. The range of facilities should be appropriate to the anticipated volume of users and type of likely demand.

For more information see
Greenways and Cycle Routes
Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines
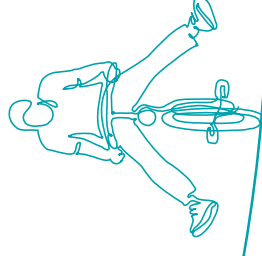
Points to Remember

1 **Feedback from Greenway users regularly points to the need for providing access to water and toilet facilities.**

Poor or no toilet provision will impact negatively on the Greenway's reputation and it is generally recommended that toilet facilities are ideally available approximately every 10 km. On the Great Western Greenway, Mayo County Council has undertaken the responsibility to provide toilets, whilst in Waterford the local authority has come to an agreement with hospitality businesses along the Greenway that they will provide toilet facilities to all Greenway users. At the early planning stage, local authorities need to explore how best to provide those services on their respective Greenways.

2 **In order to ensure your Greenway meets the needs of the end user, the design process should observe the 5 S's**

i.e. Scenic – Sustainable – Substantially Segregated & Shared Use – Strategic – Offers lots to See and Do. Developers are also advised to remember at all times that the Greenway will attract a wide variety of end users including pedestrians, cyclists, locals, tourists etc.

To ensure the wide-ranging needs of the respective users are addressed from the outset, some Greenway developers involve landscape architects at the design stage. This helps to identify aspects such as best use of the route, how to create engaging interpretation where there are no naturally occurring points of interest, how to make the most of the local habitat and so on. Remember, trying to retro fit a better user experience on your Greenway is usually expensive and time-consuming, so it's advisable to take your time at the beginning, ensure you have an holistic team onboard and put yourself in the end user's shoes!

3 **See the Appendices for a sample tender brief for the development of an interpretation strategy.**

4 **Sport Ireland maintains a National Trails Register**

Inclusion on the Register is based on meeting agreed criteria and standards. Greenways that are funded under the National Greenways Strategy will be required to go through this registration system.

5 Code of Best Practice for Engaging with Landowners

The importance of Communicating with Landowners

The Greenways Strategy stresses that great care must be taken with Greenway routes to ensure they do not affect the ability of adjacent landowners to continue to operate their farm or enterprise. To that end, during the planning and development stages it is important to take account of the type of nearby farming activity. Early engagement, ideally at or before the first route options stage, with landowners, who may be directly or indirectly affected, is essential.

The Greenways Strategy goes on to advise that during the Planning Process, project promoters should carry out a professional assessment of land use when assessing any impact on agriculture.

The strategy advises that assessments be carried out by agronomists and agricultural advisors and at no cost to the landowner.
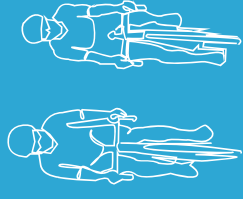
Code of Best Practice

To provide clear guidance on the use of private land in Greenway development, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is developing a Code of Best Practise for Greenways.

A working group comprising the Department of Transport, the Department of Rural and Community Development, Fáilte Ireland, Rural Recreation Officers, local authorities and representatives of the landowner groups has been established to work with TII on developing the code.

At time of publication, the code had not yet been finalised, but when complete, Greenway developers are advised to consult and abide by it before before commencing any advance Greenway planning.
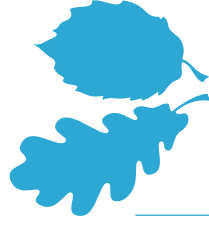
The Code of Best Practice

...deals with issues such as:

>> agreeing the consultation process

>> the factors to be considered when choosing a route

>> ways of minimising severance

>> range of possible mitigation works

>> appropriate types of accommodation works e.g. fencing

>> appropriate levels of payment for land

>> suitable types of access both for landowners and the public

>> mechanisms to minimise disruption and to ensure the smooth and timely delivery of Greenway projects

A Code of Best Practice & Guide to Process for National Greenway Projects is currently being developed by a range of stakeholders. A link to the published document will be added here when completed.

6 Public Consultation, Community & Business Engagement

Involving members of the local community throughout the entire process is a critical success factor in Greenway development. Nurturing a genuine two-way relationship with local stakeholders, who are interested in collaborating with the developer on the creation and delivery of a joint vision is key to the long-term sustainability of the Greenway.

Best practice is that the public consultation process should be personable in every aspect e.g. the language and imagery used across all forms of communication, the accessibility of development agency staff working on the project, the empathetic understanding of issues raised and so on. Whether public consultation is managed directly by the developer or whether it is outsourced to a third party, the project management team and the process itself ought to be centred around the local community. This means taking the time to properly understand and appropriately respond to their fears, expectations, hopes and aspirations for current and future generations.

The importance of communicating with locals

Support and buy-in from the local community and local businesses are essential. Early engagement with the local community is as important as early engagement with landowners.

In Mayo and Waterford, the local authorities cite the importance of establishing a multi-skilled team, within the local authority, to oversee and implement the important task of community and business engagement.

Ensuring there is an appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and experience between the developer staff and various audiences such as farmers, businesses, community leaders and so on will ensure effective communication.

It is essential to acknowledge that some people may have genuine concerns before a Greenway is developed. An effective and efficient system should be put in place to listen to those concerns and to find a common ground with solutions that work for all. It is critical to answer queries and respond to concerns in a timely manner.
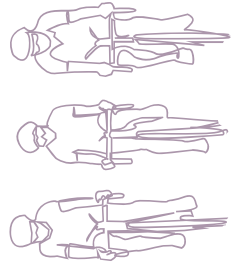
A project liaison officer should be appointed at an early stage to engage with all stakeholders and to act as the official point of contact between the project promoters, landowners and members of the public.

If there is a Rural Recreation Officer in the area they may be the initial point of contact for landowners and community.

A public consultation process should inform the public about the Greenway proposal, the manner in which the eventual route will be selected and the considerations that will inform this choice, i.e. social, practical, environmental, engineering, financial and tourism.

This process also provides an opportunity for landowners and the wider local community to highlight aspects of concern, which typically centre around:

>> Anti-social behaviour

>> Littering (evidence from the Great Western and Waterford Greenways is that this has not been an issue to date)

>> Facilitating unauthorised access to farms and farmers' yards

>> Dogs roaming loose on farmland

>> Insurance claims

>> Inadequate stock proofing measures

>> *Think about your public consultation invitation as a sales pitch! Ensure it generates excitement and interest amongst the local community and reassures them that by engaging in the process, a joint vision that works for everybody is achievable.* <<

Uncovering new opportunities

Engagement with local business owners can help to identify opportunities to enhance existing visitor services in the area. This could range from simply extending opening hours in the local shop, to adding a service that complements the current business offering or to the development of completely new businesses that will encourage visitors to stay longer in the area.

Consultation with the local community also presents an opportunity to uncover the local stories that are uniquely associated with the Greenway route.

No two Greenways are the same and part of what distinguishes one from another is the built, natural, historical and social heritage of the area. Sourcing and presenting this heritage will not only add to the character, individuality, and emotional value of the Greenway, it can also help to underpin local community identity and ownership.

Sustainability and Biodiversity

VICE Model

The VICE Model is adopted by Fáilte Ireland in all of our activities and outputs, both internally as an organisation and externally in our duties as the National Tourism Development Authority.

VISITOR

COMMUNITY

INDUSTRY

ENVIRONMENT

Sustainability

Sustainability is one of the key components of a Greenway. The benefits of Greenways are multifaceted. They facilitate active travel and influence how people travel through sustainable modes and encourage regular physical exercise.

The increase in economic activity that a Greenway brings creates opportunities for new employment and provides existing businesses the opportunity to diversify their offering including cycle hire services, accommodation, food and beverage and construction sectors, resulting in sustainable employment which is sustained throughout the year.

Greenways also have an important role in the protection and promotion of natural assets. The enhancement of habitats not only has a direct environmental benefit, but it also allows communities to value and protect its natural heritage. Greenways can play a central role in meeting the challenge of climate change through a range of direct and in combination measures.

Greenways can contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals such as:

Potential sustainable measures to consider for your Greenway;

>> Are there opportunities for regeneration and reuse of underutilised assets along the Greenway and within the towns and villages surrounding it, to improve the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the area? (Consider using the VICE model for sustainable development)

>> Can you promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through the Leave No Trace Principles?

>> Help combat waste by installing refill stations along the route

>> Use of public transport to get to the Greenway

Biodiversity

Greenways should promote and enhance biodiversity, conservation, and habitat and be good for nature. Wildlife will readily colonise new areas and creating the right mixture of habitats to attract the greatest diversity of wildlife along the Greenway corridor, is entirely achievable with appropriate management. Connectivity is as crucial for wildlife as it is for Greenway users. Forming 'wildlife corridors' that allow both to move and adapt can be achieved by creating green corridors. The Greenway can also support the All Ireland Pollinator Plan by addressing pollinator decline and protecting pollination services and becoming a pollinator highway.

What makes a Greenway attractive? High maintenance, overly manicured green spaces are becoming a thing of the past. Balancing the needs of wildlife, people and the environment requires a different approach. Therefore, it is important that all stakeholders and partners involved in the management and maintenance of the Greenway ensure that biodiversity is considered and incorporated from the outset.

How can your Greenway support Biodiversity?

>> Ensure your Greenway Management Plan prioritises improving environmental quality and promoting local biodiversity (native plants and animals), protecting, and showcasing local features.

>> By delivering tree, hedgerow and wildflower planting the range of habitats and species can be diversified. Together with other planting improvements these can help create a wildlife corridor that links to other green infrastructure.

>> Improve wildlife knowledge by engaging the local community and schools to volunteer to undertake dedicated survey work. Many of these corridors will become community green spaces and fostering a sense of ownership through involvement is essential.

Further Resources...

including more detailed case studies, templates and examples can be found at:

Greenways Management Handbook
Sustrans UK

The National Biodiversity Data Centre
The National Biodiversity Data Centre is an initiative of The Heritage Council

Pollinator-friendly Management of Transport Corridors
The National Biodiversity Data Centre

Leave no Trace Ireland

8 Interpretation

Bringing your Greenway stories to life

Greenways are not simply a means of getting from A to B, they are an experience in and of themselves. They also allow users to experience the communities linked to the Greenway and should tell the stories of the people and places through which they pass.

Interpretation enables that storytelling. It is a communication process that helps us to share our stories with others. Information presents facts; interpretation unveils the local stories that are unique to your Greenway.

In planning your Greenway, think about the kind of interpretation that suits your local area. Thinking about the stories you need to interpret, the local geography and climate, ask yourself 'What makes our Greenway different? What is the best way for us to tell our stories?

Interpretation tools that bring stories to life could include:

>> Guided interpretation (with personal local guides or via self-guided trails)

>> Printed/graphic material (leaflets, panels, plaques, displays)

>> Digital tools (websites, audio posts, apps and podcasts)

>> Onsite installations using natural materials indigenous to the area (seating, picnic benches, stiles, boardwalks, sculptures or other artistic installations

While budget will help you identify which of these tools you can afford, an interpretation plan will ensure your money is wisely spent.

Your **interpretation plan** should address issues such as:

Target markets

>> Who is the Greenway for?

>> How will the needs and interests of your target markets differ between locals, domestic tourists, international tourists?
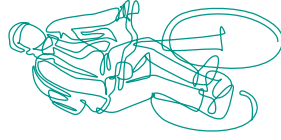
What stories do you want to tell?

>> What features, qualities and stories make your Greenway special and memorable?

>> Are there specific elements that will be of more interest to international visitors than to locals or domestic visitors? If so, what is the best way to highlight them?

>> Who are the characters associated with the local area and how can you bring them to life?

Creating a sense of place

>> How can you create a sense of place around your Greenway to achieve memorable stand-out?

>> Does your Greenway feature built and/or natural heritage assets that could become iconic photo opportunities?

>> How can you use your Greenway to signpost other local attractions and activities that will add value to the overall experience for users?

Animating your Greenway

>> Can you schedule events at different times of year to animate the Greenway for locals as well as for visitors? These could be run exclusively by the developer, by third parties or a combination of both

>> Do seasonal variations of changing landscapes or changing wildlife offer opportunities that can be maximised with pop-up or temporary interpretation.

Rule of thumb for all forms of interpretation…

>> Keep the language simple, informal, short and sweet

>> Use more images and less text

For inspiration on animation and identifying and telling your story through interpretation see:

>> Bored of Boards. The Heritage Council

>> Ireland's Ancient East Storytelling Toolkit. Fáilte Ireland

>> Interpretation Toolkit. Woodland Trust (UK)

>> Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns. Fáilte Ireland

" Think like a wise man, but communicate in the language of the people. "

W.B. Yeats

PORT NA FEADOIGE

9 Creating Greenway Experiences

Experiential Tourism

Experiential tourism is travel that is motivated by the desire to connect with a place, its culture and people. Research shows that today's visitor is less concerned with simply seeing or doing things; what they really want is to immerse themselves in the locale, interact with people, engage the senses, and learn the history and stories that are unique to a place.

Developing experiences is all about combining natural landscape assets, tourism products, customer service, and engaging stories to create compelling consumer offerings or 'experiences' for the visitor. When the senses are engaged this triggers emotions and creates lasting memories.
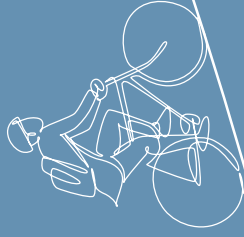
>> *A memorable tourism experience is what a visitor gains from the combination of the place, its attractions, activities, the people they meet along the way and the stories they share. Experiences help visitors remember the visit as being special and ensure that they talk about it afterwards* <<

Touch

Taste

Smell

Hearing

Vision

What are Greenway Experiences?

To create experiences, the Greenway needs to be bundled with a range of associated services such as transport to/from the Greenway, accommodation, food, bike hire, guiding, culture, heritage etc. so that potential visitors can imagine themselves creating memories with family and friends when they visit the Greenway.

Experiences are successful when a business immerses the visitor in an interesting and engaging story, so creativity and building in the unexpected are important when developing Greenway experiences.

The Gourmet Greenway is one such example

The Gourmet Greenway, a food trail along the Great Western Greenway was created by Mulranny Park Hotel. It consists of eighteen local food producers who have collaborated to showcase the area's delicious artisan foods.

The Greenway becomes more enticing for visitors when it is part of a cluster of attractions and activities that help the visitor to uncover other experiences in the area. By working together, businesses can leverage the Greenway as the doorway to a range of experiences and the resulting economic benefits are shared by individual businesses involved as well as the wider community.

> " *Education is not the filling of the pail, but the lighting of the fire* "
>
> **W.B. Yeats**

The Experience Wheel

The Experience Wheel was developed by Fáilte Ireland to capture the components that, when combined, deliver a memorable tourism experience.

The centre layer contains the four components of a memorable tourism experience:

The next layer in the wheel details how you can deliver on expectations for each component. For example:

1. Product: 'the hardware' at the core of the experience i.e. your Greenway

2. Service: 'the software' i.e. looking after visitor needs with ancillary infrastructure

3. Story: the stories unique to your Greenway, its heritage, history, characters

4. Narration: how you tell your local stories, pre, during and post the Greenway visit (see section 7 Interpretation and section 10 Marketing & Promotion for more details)

1. Product: the Greenway experience is truly immersive, most if not all senses are engaged

2. Service: meeting passionate and hospitable people along the Greenway

3. Story: drawing on interpretation tools to bring local stories and characters to life

4. Narration: communication that both informs and motivates visitors

The outermost layer summarises the type of emotions that arise when the experience is positive. So, the aim is to have your visitor feeling energised, enriched, valued or enlightened.

Positive emotions lead to good memories which can lead to recommendations and plans for returns trips, thus putting your Greenway firmly on the map.
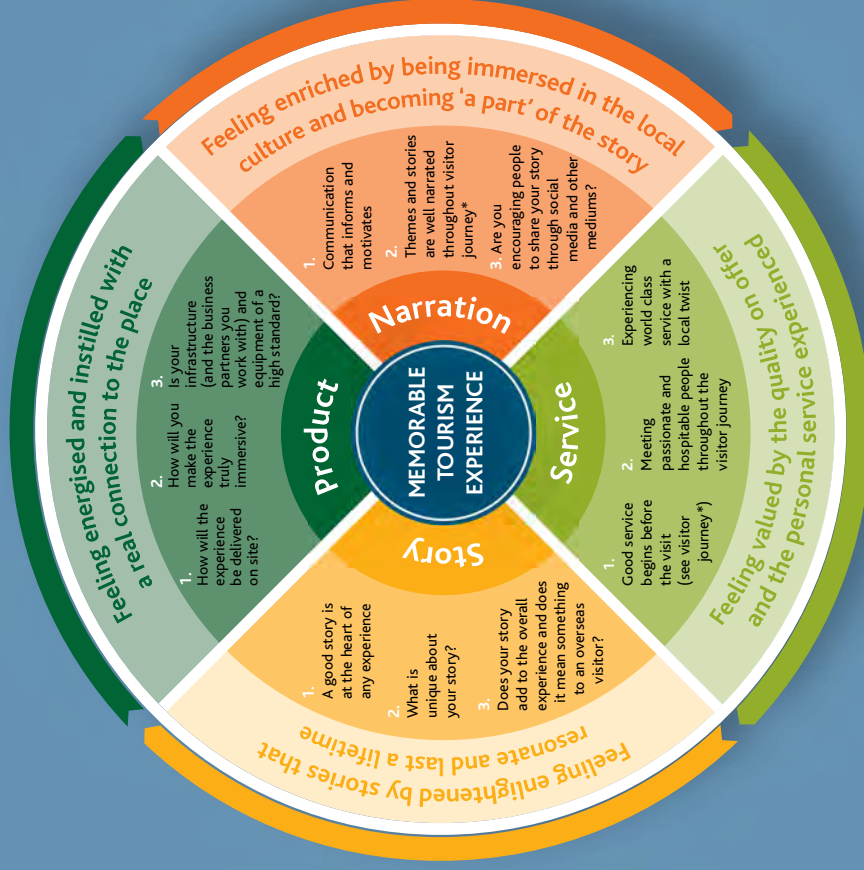
The Experience Wheel captures the components that contribute to deliver a memorable Tourism Experience

Fáilte Ireland Supports

Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with local authorities, delivers training programmes for businesses located on or near Greenways. The objective is to help them identify how they can leverage their local Greenway and create experiences around existing or new tourism products.

Fáilte Ireland also provides supports (e.g. training, seminars, information exchange) that address the needs of local authorities engaged in Greenway development throughout the country.

A guide to understanding and developing memorable tourism experiences can be found at: Fáilte Ireland Experiences Explained

Fáilte Ireland research has found that people feel **six key emotions when walking or cycling. The best routes deliver, to some degree, on all six emotions.**

1. **Feeling closer:** People feel closer to friends, family and travel partners, closer to nature and wildlife and closer to the places they are experiencing.

2. **Feeling like an explorer:** Discover new places and things, go off the beaten track, see more of a place, explore different scenery and landscapes.

3. **Feeling free:** Enjoy a sense of freedom and an escape from routine and everyday life, enjoyed at their own pace and on their terms. There is also a childhood joy to cycling.

4. **Feeling entertained:** A sense of adventure and fun by offering things to see and do along the route, stories and memories to make, social interactions and overall good times.

5. **Feeling healthy:** Boost people's mental and physical wellbeing; walking and cycling makes people feel fitter, feel better about themselves and feel like they have achieved something small.

6. **Feeling relaxed:** Cycling and walking are great ways to chill out, 'clear the mind' and just relax. By getting out into nature, people are getting away from busy city living and stresses and into to a slower pace of life.

Creating Greenway experiences that evoke these emotions should be a priority.

> *Offering experiences has given me a much greater profile and greater opportunity to increase my overseas sales. Offering a German Tour Operator bike hire for €15 may not be impressive, but combining bike hire with a visit to a mussel farm, a trip on a real working fishing charter, meeting the local skipper, dining on your own catch and cycling on a 42km traffic free path with fabulous views...now that gets their attention...that's the difference between selling product and selling experiences*
>
> **Travis Zeray, Clew Bay Outdoorsy**

10 Branding & Naming

Greenways Branding

Sport Ireland Outdoors has developed branding guidelines for Greenways. The guidelines, which can only be used on routes that meet the definition of a Greenway, must be used by all Greenways funded by the Department of Transport.

Greenway developers should ensure that the Greenway logo complies with design and brand guidelines and should advise suppliers for signage (e.g. on-road directional, trail head welcome signs, Greenway map boards) and communications (e.g. website, social media, printed collateral, interpretation) to consult the rulebook for the Greenway brand at: Greenway Design and Brand Guidelines

Consistency in the use of the Greenway brand will maximise visibility and make it easier for potential users to find your Greenway. This applies to online channels (before they visit your area) and in-destination (after they arrive). See section 11. Marketing & Promotion. It will also help to raise awareness internationally of the entire greenway offering in Ireland and support the achievement of objectives set out in the Greenways Strategy.

The Greenway logo has been designed to work alongside the Blueway logo reflecting their similarities while also emphasising their differences. Counties that offer both Greenways and Blueways can enjoy the benefits of both.

Blueways are approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites, based on, and closely linked with the water, together with providers facilitating access to activities and experiences.
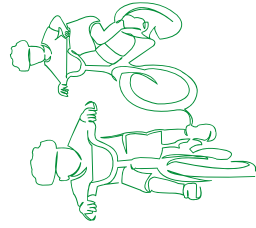
EuroVelo Branding

EuroVelo is a European cycle route network that encompasses 17 routes across Europe. Some sections of Greenways in Ireland form part of the EuroVelo routes 1 and 2. EuroVelo provides a ready-made brand to market cycling in Ireland to experienced cyclists. Greenways which are part of a EuroVelo route should include a EuroVelo route information panel in their signage system; this can be either as a logo on the main sign or attached to this sign (see below). The use of the EuroVelo branding enables coordinated promotion of these routes on a National and European wide basis.

" Dry word and dry facts will not fire hearts "

John Muirs
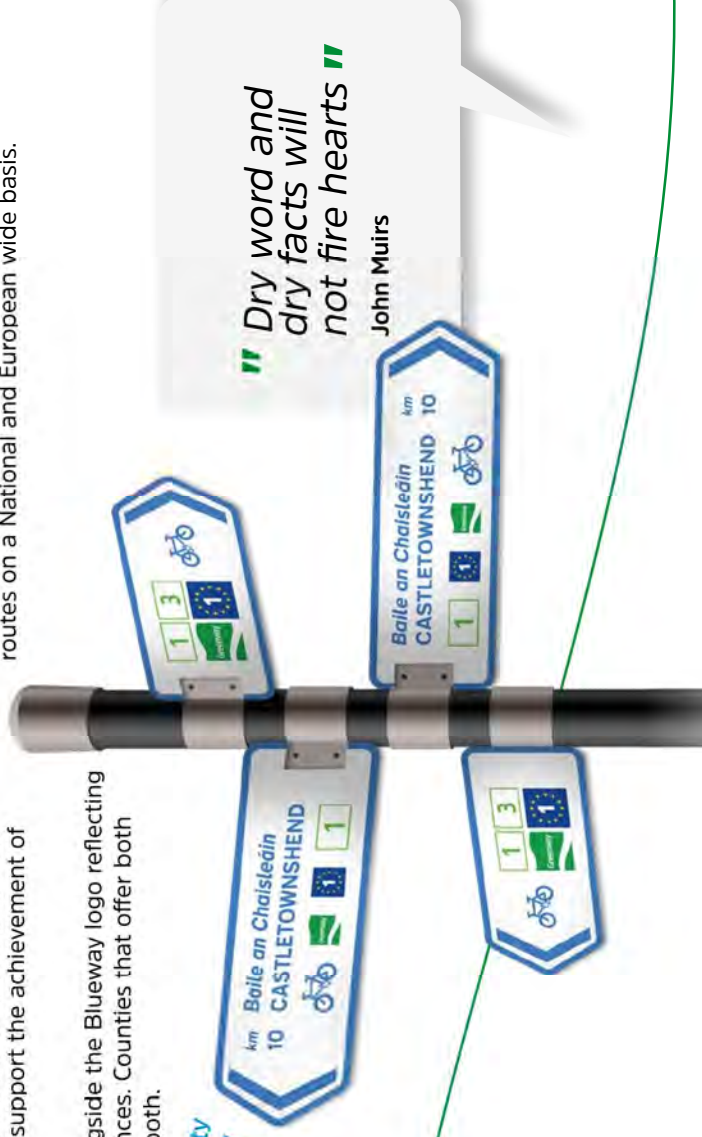
Naming your Greenway

Naming your Greenway in the context of national Greenway branding is also important so that you can create your own identity within the wider Greenways network. Fáilte Ireland is preparing a separate toolkit to help Greenway developers name their Greenway appropriately. That toolkit recommends a five step **GREEN** process:

G

GIVE THE ROUTE
Tell people where the route is / where it starts and finishes.

R

REVEAL YOUR THEME
Tell people about your distinctive brand assets and codes. Scenery, Nature, Heritage, History, Culture etc.

E

EVOKE BIG EMOTIONS
Tell people how they'll feel on the route.

E

EXPLAIN KEY DETAILS
Tell people the vital info about the route (distance, difficulty, tourism brand link, things to see/do).

N

NAME IT CLEARLY
Summarise everything into the name of the route.

11 Marketing & Promotion

Creating awareness about your Greenway

Designing and constructing a Greenway is only one step in the process towards monetising the infrastructure for the wider community. Even before construction is complete, a marketing strategy and action plan for the promotion of the Greenway needs to be developed and implemented.

There are two stages in the promotional campaign of a new Greenway that need to be considered:

1. **The pre-launch, launch and first six months promotional campaign**

2. **Annual marketing and promotional campaign**

The first stage aims to create awareness about the new Greenway to local, regional and national audiences. This requires considerable input that is front-loaded in the months leading into the Greenway launch and ideally throughout the first six months following the official launch. It can be extremely beneficial to outsource the promotion and marketing communications at the launch stage, whilst the annual marketing and promotional campaign can usually be more easily managed in-house through the tourism officer in partnership with local tourism providers.

The second stage aims to ensure awareness levels amongst domestic audiences are maintained and that your Greenway is also promoted to international visitors.

Counties that have had Greenways in operation for several years, stress the importance of budgeting for an annual marketing and promotional campaign. It should also be noted that future funding applications will require developers to include 10-year budgets specifically for interpretation, marketing, and promotion.

As with the interpretation strategy, budget will guide the ongoing marketing strategy and action plan to a certain extent. Fortunately, many effective marketing and promotional activities are low cost or free of charge. It is essential however that somebody within the development agency (e.g. Tourism Officer or a member of the Community & Enterprise Team) is given responsibility for implementing the marketing plan.

A range of marketing and promotion activities should be included in your marketing plan, some of which can be implemented directly by the development agency and some that will be implemented by local tourism providers.

(See the Appendices for a sample tender brief you can use to source marketing services for the launch stage.)

The full range of promotional activities can be categorised under five main headings;

1

PROMOTING THE GREENWAY

i.e. promotional activities carried out by the developer and/or the local tourism marketing body

2

FÁILTE IRELAND PLATFORMS

i.e. activities that can be undertaken in partnership with Fáilte Ireland

3

TOURISM IRELAND PLATFORMS

i.e. activities that can be undertaken in partnership with Tourism Ireland (the body responsible for promoting the island of Ireland overseas)

4

TRAVEL TRADE

i.e. Working with tour operators, online sales agents etc.

5

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND CROSS SELLING

selling i.e. collaboration between local businesses to encourage longer stays in the local area

While a comprehensive marketing campaign is essential to stimulate demand and grow visitor numbers on a new Greenway, this should not be regarded as a once-off activity. Greenway developers must ensure a marketing and promotion budget is in place every year.

Remember too that future funding applications will require developers to include 10-year budgets specifically for interpretation, marketing and promotion. As the number of domestic and international visitors to a Greenway increases, so too will the need for a year-round campaign than can nurture repeat and referral visits from loyal users throughout the peak, shoulder, and off-seasons.

Working in collaboration with local tourism providers and other ancillary services to create new visitor experiences and to pool funding resources can be extremely effective in achieving stand-out for the Greenway destination. As more Greenways are developed in the coming years, marketing investment will become ever more critical for individual Greenway destinations

1 | **PROMOTING THE GREENWAY**

ONLINE PLATFORMS INCLUDE:

>> Website - The Greenway's 'shop window'. It should:

- Be responsive on different devices (desktop, mobile, tablet)

- Be easy to navigate with contact details clearly visible

- Feature great imagery and video of your Greenway and the wider area

- Link to your relevant destination brand (Dublin / Ireland's Ancient East / Ireland's Hidden Heartlands / Wild Atlantic Way)

- Signpost visitors to bookable experiences with tourism providers on your Greenway

- Ensure search engine optimisation (SEOS) is in place

- Use Google analytics to track visitors

>> Social media channels:

Facebook and Instagram are generally the most popular consumer channels, while Twitter is good for trade communication. Create links from your website to your social media channels, update content regularly and use relevant hashtags #'

>> Email marketing:

Previous Greenway users who have had a great experience can be your best sales people! Where possible, ensure tourism providers along the Greenway stay in touch with them through targeted email marketing campaigns (observing GDPR guidelines) to promote repeat and referral visits. This could be particularly helpful to promote shoulder and off-season business

>> Online review sites:

TripAdvisor, Google Reviews and Facebook reviews are all referenced by visitors when planning their holiday. Register your Greenway on these review sites to manage your online reputation

>> Online advertising:

Social media channels offer very cost-effective opportunities for online paid advertising that can be targeted and easy to measure

OFFLINE PLATFORMS INCLUDE:

>> Brochures / fliers/ maps:

Printed material that visitors can get from the local tourist information office, hotel receptions, local shops

>> Advertising in local, regional and national tourism collateral:

Local tourist guides are consulted by visitors while they are in-destination and advertising in local /regional newspapers or radio stations that are within a couple of hours radius of the Greenway can encourage domestic tourism

>> Public relations (PR):

National, regional, and local media (particularly the lifestyle and travel sections / programmes) are always on the lookout for great imagery and quirky stories about new holiday experiences. Make it easy for them to find out about your Greenway by regularly staying in contact with them

Don't forget:
register the domain name for your Greenway website as well as your Greenway social media handles as soon as the name is agreed internally and before it is announced to an external audience.

2 FÁILTE IRELAND PLATFORMS

www.discoverireland.ie is the domestic consumer website managed by Fáilte Ireland. Listing your Greenway on this website has the potential to reach over 55,000 visitors per week as well as almost 350,000 overseas visitors per week through the international consumer website www.ireland.com

Get a free listing for your Greenway on both by completing the short form on www.failteireland.ie/get-listed

If you are planning a small festival or event on the Greenway, you can register the details about your event for free on www.failteirelandevents.ie/#/

3 TOURISM IRELAND PLATFORMS

Tourism Ireland promotes the Island of Ireland in 29 international markets and attracts over 19 million people to market websites each year. To avail of low cost or no cost marketing opportunities in the international marketplace you need to:

>> **Register with**
www.tourismirelandindustryopportunities.com to:

- Submit press releases and images/video about your Greenway to 'Have you a story to tell', which Tourism Ireland can share with their global network of travel trade, media contacts and consumers

- Target international customers directly for free by uploading Greenway experiences on www.ireland.com

- Register with the Community Forum community.ireland.com where you can join in the conversation and share your knowledge to help international visitors plan their holiday to your Greenway

- Contact your local Fáilte Ireland representative to explore opportunities with Tourism Ireland to feature your Greenway on future international buyer and media familiarisation trips

4 TRAVEL TRADE

As business on your Greenway expands, you can explore opportunities to target international markets through tour operators.

>> The Incoming Tour Operator Association (ITOA) hosts annual workshops in Dublin and Limerick. Presenting your Greenway at the workshops offers a sales opportunity to promote to ITOA members who contract on behalf of 4,000 international tour operators and travel agents see itoa-ireland.com

>> Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland also offer a range of trade sales opportunities in Ireland and in international markets. Contact your local Fáilte Ireland representative to explore appropriate opportunities.

5 LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND CROSS SELLING

Collaboration amongst local tourism providers is one of the most significant influencers in terms of encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more in the local area. When choosing a destination, customers need to know that there is lots to do and see. It is essential that tourism providers along the Greenway are familiar with local experiences and, when dealing with customer enquiries, everybody cross sells on behalf of the Greenway destination.

Making the most of your Greenway.

If you need imagery for your local area to use on your website, social media or printed material, you can download quality photographs and videos for free from Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland's digital library at www.irelandscontentpool.com

12 Ongoing Management, Maintenance, Monitoring

Overseeing the long-term sustainability of your Greenway

Management

Evidence from existing Greenways - both in Ireland and overseas - points to the need for ongoing management of Greenways by the developer. This need continues long after construction is complete.

A broad team is required for the design, planning, construction and long-term management of the Greenway and the team should include:

>> Support from the chief executive and senior management team to oversee difficult decision making and liaise with elected representatives

>> Community engagement team to include marketing and communications, Greenway animation via outdoor activities, tourism, heritage, and history

>> A liaison officer on the ground who has good interpersonal and communication skills

>> Engineers and technicians for the design, delivery and maintenance

>> Expertise regarding knowledge and information of funding sources and procedures
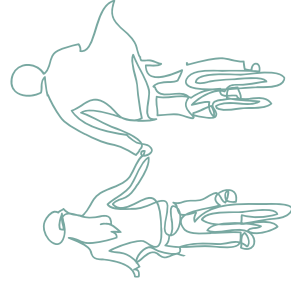
Maintenance

Maintaining a high standard of Greenway is essential, and appropriate maintenance provisions form part of the terms and conditions of funding under the Greenways Strategy. An ongoing maintenance plan should be incorporated into the developer's annual budget to facilitate this. The need to have a management and maintenance plan in place is also a requirement for registration by Sport Ireland.

Developers can maintain the Greenway themselves or through a payment scheme similar to the Walks Scheme implemented by the Department of Rural and Community Development, whereby modest payments are made to landowners or adjacent landowners on an annual basis to maintain a certain portion of Greenway. This can create a greater sense of ownership amongst the community.

Greenway users should be made aware that they share the trail with others and that respecting the needs of other trail users is vital. To encourage optimal trail sharing, developers should promote the Leave no Trace principles to users and present a Code of Conduct for users at access points to the trail.

There may also be an opportunity to create a volunteer programme for Greenway management and maintenance; local people can be the eyes and ears for changes on the ground that the developer cannot monitor daily. Engaging the local community in this way can help to instil a sense of community direction, control and ownership.
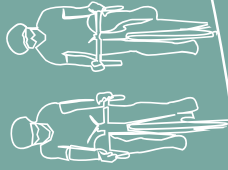
Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluating the numbers using the Greenway is key to identifying its impact and future potential. Two types of Greenways monitoring are utilised, and both are recommended;

1. **Quantitative monitoring: automatic counters**

2. **Qualitative monitoring: interviews and questionnaires**

Quantitative Monitoring

Quantitative data is primarily gathered by automatic people counters which provide information on how many people use the Greenway, usage levels at different times of the day, seasonal variations etc. Carefully consider the location of counters and, ideally, sites should be tested initially to determine which are the most appropriate. It will also be important to be able to distinguish between pedestrian users and cyclists.

Qualitative Monitoring

Qualitative monitoring will provide information on why and how people choose to use the Greenway. This information can be gathered using tools such as visitor surveys, focused interviews, focus groups and social media polls.

Combining quantitative data with qualitative feedback from users will provide the development agency, local businesses, and the local community with a rich resource to help everybody optimise the potential of the Greenway.

In addition to providing tourism data, qualitative monitoring can also provide insights into the broader economic, health, environmental and social impacts of the Greenway.

A monitoring and evaluation template is being developed by Fáilte Ireland and the Department of Transport. This will ensure consistency in the approach at a national level. The Fáilte Ireland Activities Team can provide you with a copy of this template when it is complete.

Top Tips from existing Greenways

1. The experience in Waterford, Westmeath and Mayo has been extremely positive, with transformative effects on many small businesses and small towns along and adjacent to the Greenway.

2. When Greenways are being developed, some people have genuine concerns, and it is vital that developers listen. The multi-disciplinary team approach will ensure effective consultation and communication. It is important to acknowledge that different interpersonal skills may be required to engage with different segments of the community and the developer should aim to have a range of team members who are best suited to engage with the respective segments (landowners, businesses, tidy towns, politicians, local people).

3. Learnings can be drawn from Smarter Travel principles and applied to Greenway development.

4. Identify champions amongst stakeholders and work in collaboration with them.

5. Nurture relationships with local bike hire companies; a good leader is needed, especially in early days, thereafter, others will join in but a good start is important.

6. In collaborating with local businesses who might like to create temporary or pop-up experiences, developers should make it easy for providers to secure relevant permissions or licences.

7. Distances: For families, around 10km between services is good, and playgrounds and restaurants located beside each other works well. Adult groups are happy to cycle longer distances between services, but they too will stop along the way (11km – 18km is usually the average distance travelled between stops).

8. Planting schemes (orchards, wild-flowers, insect hotels etc) add value to the user experience and local communities like to engage with their development also.

9. Promote the social, health, economic and fun benefits to the local community as well as the potential tourism impact.

13 Case Studies

Great Western Greenway

The Great Western Greenway runs along the route of the Midland Great Western Railway. Mayo County Council identified the potential to develop a nationally important walking and cycling path that would link established tourism destinations (Westport and Achill) by linking attractions and creating a more significant tourism offering in the wider area.

Early work took account of Government policies and strategies e.g. Smarter Travel 2009, Strategy for Development of Irish Cycle Tourism 2007, National Trails Strategy, National Countryside Recreational Strategy. Consideration was given to likely demand from different markets and international best practice was benchmarked.

A number of critical decisions had to be addressed such as: How do we get access to land? Where will we get funding? Who should be on the team? Mayo County Council reflects on the importance of knowing the facts, analytical thinking, problem solving and not jumping to conclusions.

With an initial investment of €6.7million, works on the Great Western Greenway commenced in April 2009 with permissive access from 162 landowners. Funding Partners included the Departments of Transport, Tourism & Sport and Rural & Community Development, Fáilte Ireland, Mayo County Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

The planning and design team included inhouse design from Mayo County Council's Road Design Section, Regional Design Office, Architects Department and Community Department the Municipal District Engineering and Staff, Machinery Yard and Mini Contracts were brought on board for the construction phase.

In 2010 the Great Western Greenway opened and welcomed 45,000 visitors in its first year. Since that time, the Great Western Greenway has become a signature experience on the Wild Atlantic Way. It offers visitors an authentic experience and an opportunity to explore hidden gems and create lasting memories through local engagement. It has extended dwell time in the towns and villages on the Greenway thanks to the development of immersive experiences that are pro-actively cross sold by local tourism providers.

In recent years, the average annual level of users in the order of 250,000, the development of the Greenway has been an enabling platform for innovation, regeneration and enterprise with the creation of many new businesses including; bike hire, cycling and walking guided tours, hospitality services – food and drink, local shops, accommodation providers, taxi services etc. An economic impact study undertaken in 2016 estimated that the 265,000 visitors the Greenway attracted in that year resulted in 200 direct jobs.

The Great Western Greenway has provided the county with an enormous platform for collaborative marketing, consistent marketing exposure and access to overseas visitors. It has won 12 national and international awards.

The Waterford Greenway

The Waterford Greenway runs along the route of the old Waterford, Dungarvan & Lismore Railway (WD.&LR 1878 – 1982). Identifying an opportunity to connect Waterford from the city to Dungarvan and spreading tourism into the wider area, the local authority commenced work on the project in 2006.

The Waterford Walking Strategy was prepared in that year and a licence agreement was secured from CIE. Although the process encountered challenges with some landowners initially, the local authority reached an agreement with them and Part 8 was approved in 2014.

Waterford City & County Council underline that engagement with landowners and the wider community is noted as key to sustainability and recommends that other local authorities consider establishing a landowner group and a Greenway forum that facilitates early engagement with clubs, tidy towns groups, local sports groups etc.

The local authority also notes that engaging with business and enterprise is key to tourism promotion of the wider region as is collaboration with agencies such as Fáilte Ireland, Local Development Companies, The Chamber of Commerce, The Local Enterprise Office etc.

Telling the story of the Greenway requires input from local history groups, local interest groups, historians etc. and it is vital to plan interpretation around different parts of the Greenway to tell the local stories.

According to Waterford City & County Council, the marketing and promotion of the Greenway can't start early enough in the process. This is as important to leverage support from the local community as it is to create awareness of the Greenway to domestic and overseas visitors.

Having opened in March 2017, total estimated number of pedestrian and cyclist visitor trips on the Waterford Greenway in 2019 is over 284,000.

Danube Cycle Path

The Danube Cycle Path is part of EuroVelo 6 and the section from Passau to Vienna is possibly the most famous cycle route in Europe. Starting at the German Border town of Passau the trail follows the Danube River into Vienna over 287KMs. Highlights include: the city of Linz, baroque abbeys, castles and the famous "Wachau" region with its villages, vineyards and romantic fruit orchards, Duernstein, where King Richard the Lionheart was captured on his way back from the crusades, and the 1000-year-old town of Krems.

The Passau to Vienna section of the Danube Cycle Path welcomes up to 600,000 cyclists a year and is usually completed in six days with an average daily distance of about 65kms.

Cycling experiences

Numerous tour operators offer holiday packages along the route. These include:

>> Self-guided cycling holidays: with prearranged accommodation, luggage transfer, bike rental and maps.

>> Guided cycling holidays: for those who prefer being part of like-minded cyclists or feel more comfortable having access to a knowledgeable guide.

>> Bike-and-barge tours: offer a mix of self-guided cycling and river cruising. Visitors spend the night on a barge followed by a cycle tour. Packages include maps, bikes and half-board meal plan. Guides are usually at an additional cost.

Accommodation and bike rental

>> At most trailheads, a choice of accommodation is available (hotels, campsites, B&Bs). Lunches and dinners are available from restaurants, cafés or take-away picnics from family farms.

>> Many accommodation providers hold the German Cyclists' Federation seal of quality as Bed+Bike accommodation www.bettundbike.de/ Facilities include secure bike parking spaces, drying rooms, e-charging stations and access to bike repair.

>> 350 bike rental businesses along the route with many also offer bike servicing.

E-bike charging-stations & bike rental services

>> In partnership with Austrian energy companies about 100 e-bike charging stations have been established and many bike friendly businesses along the route also offer free E-charging stations for E-bikers.

Vennbahn

Route Highlights

One of the longest rail bike paths in Europe at 125km, the Vennbahn cycle path runs from Aachen in Germany to Troisviergesin in Luxembourg.

Its history dates back to 1940 when Hitler reannexed the surrounding territory and the Vennbahn became a German line. The train, however, gradually lost its importance in the decades to come and was converted into a tourist attraction in the 1990s. This proved financially unviable and the track was paved over to create a 125km long bicycling path that crosses through rivers, ravines and picturesque towns containing a unique history.

The Vennbahn Cycle Route is an inter-regional project formally coordinated by the German speaking Community of Belgium (DG). It comprises 12 partners: local authorities and regional partners in Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg plus the EU-Feder Interreg. The partners are a mix of roads departments and economic development agencies. The total investment for the project currently stands at about €14.5m.

Vennbahn is a unique cultural and historical experience that offers diverse landscapes, border country atmosphere, history, culture and stories of local people. The Vennbahn has made storytelling a core element of the visitor experience. The history of each section is portrayed through the use of customised comic illustrations, which provide user-friendly background on the heritage role of the Vennbahn railway since the Prussian era, and local history including the region's strategic role in two world wars.

SCENERY

>> The Vennbahn connects abandoned railway stations, idyllic landscapes and picturesque historic small towns.

>> It leads through the extraordinary landscapes of the Eiffel, Ardennes and High Fens through Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg.

SEE & DO

>> Pottery museum
>> Rursee, one of Germany's largest dams
>> St. Vith history museum
>> Reulandcastle
>> A bat adventure path
>> A diverse range of culinary experiences

SECLUSION

>> The cycle path runs through the beautifully secluded landscapes of Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg and is surrounded by the breath-taking landscapes of the Eiffel, Ardennes and High Fens.

SAFETY

>> High quality infrastructure and roads mean it is a popular choice with both experienced and less experienced cyclists.

14 Greenways Development Checklist

| Heading	Action	Who will do it?	Timing	Budget €
GREENWAYS STRATEGY	We are clear about how our proposed Greenway satisfies the national or regional definition			
	For regional Greenways, we have identified how it can connect to a longer strategic route			
FUNDING	We have designed and implemented a process to ensure we are aware of impending funding sources and deadlines for funding calls			
	We have earmarked match funding within our organisation annual budgets to ensure we are ready to respond with an application to funding calls when they are announced			
	We are aware that our funding application must include budget for ongoing maintenance, marketing, and interpretation as well as the initial capital outlay			
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION	We have reviewed the TII Rural Cycleway Design (Offline) Standard to ensure all plans are compliant			
	We have reviewed the Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines and the other documents cited therein			
	We ensure the 5Ss of Greenway development are at the core of our design and construction process			
	Our planning and design take account of the Sport Ireland Outdoors registration system			
	We have identified the skills we have within or organisation and will outsource elements of the design if needed and as appropriate			
	Our designs are future proofed to anticipate growing numbers of Greenway users annually			
	Designers should keep in mind visitors behaviours when using the Greenway i.e. at scenic viewing areas of landscape and/or built infrastructure, visitors will need a wider section of the path or an area where they can safely pull in to appreciate the sight without impeding the experience of other visitors as they pass. Designers should also incorporate ways of facilitating visitors views at certain scenic points whether above or below i.e. the arches and heights of viaducts may not be seen by visitors as they travel along them.			
	Registration inspection by Sport Ireland Outdoors when Greenway is completed			

Heading	Action	Who will do it?	Timing	Budget €
ENGAGING WITH LANDOWNERS	We liaise with local landowners who may be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed Greenway route early in the process and maintain contact with them even after construction has been completed			
	We adhere to the Code of Best Practice that has been developed			
PUBLIC CONSULTATION	We have created an internal team within our organisation and have identified appropriate spokespeople as the relevant liaison person with different segments of the community			
	We have nominated a project liaison officer who refers specific enquiries to the relevant spokesperson on the wider local authority team			
	We have an open-door policy for community enquiries about the proposed Greenway and answer all queries in a timely manner			
	We ensure the needs of the local community are properly understood and addressed, whether the consultation process is managed internally or whether it is outsourced to a third party			
	We are in regular contact with local businesses and together aim to identify opportunities for new businesses / services that will add value to our Greenway and enhance its economic impact			
INTERPRETATION	We have developed an interpretation plan in partnership with public, private and community stakeholders			
	Drawing on the interpretation plan, we have identified our local stories and the best interpretive tools to tell those stories			
CREATING GREENWAY EXPERIENCES	We work closely with local businesses (tourism and non-tourism) to create Greenway experiences that help to bring to life the stories of our Greenway in an immersive way for visitors			
	We ensure our Greenway experiences are aligned with our destination brand (Dublin, Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartland, Wild Atlantic Way)			
	We liaise closely with local businesses to identify ways in which the development agency can facilitate and expedite experience development			
	We collaborate with Fáilte Ireland on the delivery of experience development workshops and training for business owners on our Greenway			
	We take part in Fáilte Ireland supports for greenway developers e.g. training, seminars, information exchange etc.			

Heading	Action	Who will do it?	Timing	Budget €
BRANDING & NAMING	We adhere to all national Greenway branding guidelines both online and in-destination signage. Where applicable, we also include EuroVelo branding on our signage etc.			
	We follow the Fáilte Ireland toolkit guidelines when naming our Greenway			
	We will register the domain name for our website and all social media handles before the Greenway name is communicated externally			
MARKETING & PROMOTION	We will outsource the launch stage (pre-launch and first six months after official launch) of the Greenway promotional campaign if we know that we do not have the resources internally to manage it effectively			
	We have an annual marketing and promotional plan with an associated budget for the ongoing promotional campaign			
	Responsibility for the implementation of the annual marketing and promotional plan is assigned to the Greenway Developer official. That person liaises closely with local tourism providers to optimise the joint marketing and promotional effort of the wider community			
ONGOING: MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE, MONITORING	In partnership with the local community, we implement an annual plan to ensure the optimal management and maintenance of our Greenway.			
	We undertake annual quantitative and qualitative research to better understand the needs and expectations of the people who use our Greenway (locals, domestic and overseas tourists) and we base future Greenway plans on the research findings			
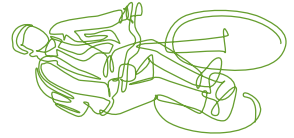
Appendices

Request for Tender Samples

1

Introduction

As it is likely Greenway Developers will need to outsource certain elements of their Greenway development plan, this toolkit presents sample specification briefs when contracting external expertise for:

>> Feasibility Study

>> Interpretation Strategy

>> Launch Marketing Campaign

These sample Requests for Tender (RFTs) will provide you with guidance and an overview of the content you should consider when preparing tender documents; however, you will need to tailor the sample content to the specific needs of your County / Greenway and you should liaise with your procurement section on same.

1. Sample RFT for Feasibility Study

Requirements and Specifications

Tenderers must address each of the issues and requirements in this part of the RFT and submit a detailed description in each case which demonstrates how these issues and requirements will be dealt with/met and their approach to the proposed delivery of the services. A mere affirmative statement by the tenderer that it can/will do so, or a reiteration of the tender requirements is NOT sufficient in this regard.

Introduction / Scope of Requirements

[Developer name] invites tenders from companies and consortia, with relevant experience to examine the feasibility of a Greenway which commences in [insert starting point] and extends to an end point at [insert end point].

The main elements required under this tender are:

1. **Technical study scope**
2. **Economic appraisal**
3. **Environmental appraisal**

A study area map is included in [insert Appendix name].

The Greenway is being developed in line with the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways Strategy.

Background to this Project

The Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways; (hereafter called the Greenways Strategy) defines a Greenway as:

'a recreational or pedestrian corridor for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area'.

Greenways are for everyone. They are not simply a means of getting from A to B, they are an experience in and of themselves. They also allow users to experience the communities linked to the Greenway and should tell the stories of the people and places through which they pass.

They provide an excellent amenity for local populations and offer domestic and overseas visitors immersive and memorable tourism experiences.

Vision Aim

The overall vision for [Greenway name] is [outline vision]

Strategic Objectives of [Greenway name]

The strategic objectives guiding the development of the [Greenway name] are:

[the list below is indicative only and some are likely to apply, but you will need to include those that are additional and specific to your Greenway]

>> Provide strategic, sustainable and safe connectivity between towns, villages, communities, community facilities, tourist attractions/services for the benefit of local communities, businesses and visitors.

>> To provide healthy living walking and cycling tracks as an amenity for the local population.

>> To drive an increase in visitor numbers, dwell time, spend within [County name] and the wider geographic region.

>> To provide the catalyst for an increase in collaboration between destinations, industry providers and groups in the area.

>> To interpret the history and heritage of the area bringing local stories to life in an immersive and engaging manner.

>> To use different interpretation media to tell the themes and stories of the [Greenway name].

Proposed Route Location

Developer to:

>> Insert details of the proposed route together with outline maps.

>> Indicate where / if the proposed route connects with other trails, walkways, Greenways in the region.

>> Indicate local historical, heritage or landscape highlights on or adjacent to the proposed route that the developer believes should be accessible on or from the Greenway route.

Project Elements

The development of the feasibility study encompasses three elements.

1. **Technical study scope**
2. **Economic appraisal**
3. **Environmental**

1. TECHNICAL STUDY

The successful tenderer must submit a methodology for the development of the technical study which should include but not be limited to the following steps:

>> Adherence to Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways and Greenways Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines

>> Review of planning policy and other policy considerations relating to the proposed route.

>> Stakeholder consultation with all relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies including, but not limited to: Department of Transport, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Department of Community and Rural Development, [other possible to note depending on route could include: NPWS, OPW, Waterways Ireland, IFI, Coillte, utility providers etc.)

>> Consult with landowners, property owners and communities regarding access and technical issues.

>> Consult with neighbouring local authorities in respect of potential connectivity of the proposed Greenway.

>> Identify the optimum route; alternative routes should also be noted in the event the optimum is unachievable.

>> Identify the physical, environmental and engineering and community constraints.

>> Prepare drawings and maps of the proposed route, aiming to achieve 100% off road.

Project Management

The project will require a collaborative approach with [Developer name] and all relevant stakeholders. The successful tenderer will demonstrate effective organisation and project management of the process in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

A site visit is a necessary requirement for all applicants prior to tendering. A project briefing will be held at [insert place] on [insert date] for those who wish to discover more about the Greenway prior to submitting a tender.

Intellectual Property Rights

The selected tenderer will be required to provide copyright to [Developer name] for unrestricted and free use of all contract documentation, drawings and maps, all designs produced under this contract, all text, image or multimedia content developed under this contract, any specifications produced and any other project information provided during the course of the project to [Developer name] and / or the company's agents.

Tender Requirements

>> An outline of the proposed methodology intended to be used in delivering this project.

>> A project programme of works for completion of each stage and section of the project.

>> Proposed team to deliver the requirements of the tender

>> Costings/Budget for each element of the project.

>> Propose locations of necessary services at trail heads and other sections along the route.

>> Recommend route surface, appropriate to the natural landscape and taking account of the local climate.

The proposed design should respect the standards that are set out in Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Rural Cycleway Design (Offline) Standard.

2. ECONOMIC APPRAISAL

The successful tenderer must submit a methodology for the development of the economic appraisal which should include but not be limited to the following steps:

>> Identify engineering / professional fees associated with the provision and delivery of the route.

>> Prepare a costing for the agreed route to include planning, design, construction and development.

>> Determine projected user numbers.

>> Present socio-economic business case to support the route. This should outline anticipated direct, indirect and induced economic impacts as well as the social and health benefits to the local community.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

The successful tenderer must:

>> Carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development Act 2000-2015, and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011)

>> Undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment.

>> Conduct a biodiversity and ecological survey of the route options.

2. Sample RFT for Interpretation Strategy

Requirements and Specifications

Tenderers must address each of the issues and requirements in this part of the RFT and submit a detailed description in each case which demonstrates how these issues and requirements will be dealt with/met and their approach to the proposed delivery of the services. A mere affirmative statement by the Tenderer that it can/will do so or a reiteration of the tender requirements is NOT sufficient in this regard.

Introduction / Scope of Requirements

[Developer name] invites tenders from companies and consortia, with relevant experience for the development of an interpretation scheme along the [Greenway name].

This tender covers research, narrative planning, development of all interpretive content and graphic design for interpretation media required by the interpretation scheme.

The objective of the interpretation scheme is to enhance the visitor's experience of the Greenway by helping the visitor discover and enjoy the heritage and culture of the landscapes and communities they pass through while on the [Greenway name].

The main elements required under this tender are:

1. **Identification of themes that tell the story of [Greenway name], the local area and the local communities.**

2. **Design of interpretation media as part of this scheme of interpretation.**

3. **Design of and development of all content for interpretation media along the Greenway route**

4. **Assist [Developer name] in procuring the manufacture, printing, delivery and installation of all of the interpretation media including snagging lists, through to completion and handover**

Background to this project

The Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways; (hereafter called the Greenways Strategy) defines a Greenway as:

'a recreational or pedestrian corridor for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area'.

Greenways are for everyone. They are not simply a means of getting from A to B, they are an experience in and of themselves. They also allow users to experience the communities linked to the Greenway and should tell the stories of the people and places through which they pass.

They provide an excellent amenity for local populations and offer domestic and overseas visitors immersive and memorable tourism experiences.

The [Greenway name] is being developed against this backdrop.

Vision Aim

The overall vision for [Greenway name] is [outline vision]

Strategic objectives of [Greenway name]

The strategic objectives guiding the development of the [Greenway name] are:

[the list below is indicative only and some are likely to apply, but you will need to include those that are additional and specific to your Greenway]

>> Provide strategic, sustainable and safe connectivity between towns, villages, communities, community facilities, tourist attractions/services for the benefit of local communities, businesses and visitors.

>> To provide healthy living walking and cycling tracks as an amenity for the local population

>> To drive an increase in visitor numbers, dwell time, spend within [County name] and the wider geographic region;

>> To provide the catalyst for an increase in collaboration between destinations, industry providers and groups in the area;

>> To interpret the history and heritage of the area bringing local stories to life in an immersive and engaging manner;

>> To use different interpretation media to tell the themes and stories of the [Greenway name].

Project stages

The development of interpretation and orientation media to enhance the visitor experience of the [Greenway name] will take place in two stages.

1. **Development of an Interpretation Strategy i.e. detailed interpretation plan including theme identification and design development that is aligned with the [Greenway name] brand, the National Greenways Strategy and [insert relevant destination brand i.e. Ireland's Ancient East / Ireland's Hidden Heartlands / Dublin / Wild Atlantic Way]**

2. **Implementation and Delivery of Interpretation Strategy i.e. to design and oversee the construction of the interpretation media for the project. The construction and installation of the interpretation media will be the subject of a separate tender.**

1. Development of an Interpretation Strategy

The successful tenderer must submit a methodology for the development of the interpretation strategy which should include but not be limited to the following steps:

1.1 REVIEW OF EXISTING DOCUMENTATION, FOR EXAMPLE:

>> County Development Plan [insert link]

>> County Tourism Plan [insert link]

>> Feedback from public consultations during the design stage of the Greenway development [insert link / include as additional documentation]

>> Research undertaken as part of the brand development if available

>> Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways

>> Fáilte Ireland – Sharing our Stories

>> Fáilte Ireland – Experiences Explained

>> IAE Storytelling Toolkit

1.2 IDENTIFICATION OF GREENWAY THEMES

Tenderers should outline their methodology for researching and gathering stories associated with the [Greenway name] and translating those stories into compelling themes and sub-themes that will underpin the [Greenway name] experience.

A hierarchy of themes that are unique to this Greenway should be developed. This will include the identification an overarching theme and sub-themes that may be highlighted at specific viewing points along the route.

The themes should interpret local stories, the character and distinctiveness of [Greenway name] for the visitor and create linkages to towns, villages, attractions etc. that are adjacent to the route.

The Interpretation strategy should be clear, concise and easy to follow and indicate the different types of media and technology that will be used at different sections of the route.

1.3 DESIGN OF INTERPRETATION MEDIA

The successful tenderer will demonstrate in detail the different types of media and technology that will be used in different sections of the route. This could include:

>> Printed or graphic material e.g. leaflets, panels, plaques, displays

>> On-site installations e.g. seating, picnic benches, stiles, boardwalks, way-marking and sculptures

>> Digital e.g. audio trails, apps and downloads

All elements are to be designed and specified materials must be capable of withstanding the impact of the adverse weather conditions. Guidance on maintenance of materials should be provided.

The interpretation media should be in-keeping with the natural landscape and give consideration to environmental legislation. Interpretation media at viewing points should create unique photo opportunities for visitors.

Trailheads should include a map of the Greenway indicating the locations of practical services such as toilets, refreshments, picnic areas, rest areas, viewing points etc.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPRETIVE CONTENT

Following sign-off on selection and prioritisation of sub-themes and stories, provide all copywriting for interpretation media along the route. Tenderers must demonstrate expertise in interpretive copywriting and should also outline the process that will be used for fact-checking / verification.

Graphic content and graphic design for interpretation media also need to be developed, taking account of brand guidelines.

All text-based and graphic content gathered and developed for the interpretation media must be provided in digital format to [Developer name] for reuse in digital, mobile and print media and to be shared with tourism industry partners as appropriate.

1.5 LANGUAGES (IIF RELEVANT)

All signage will need to comply with the Official Languages Act 2003. The interpretation strategy must be costed out for the delivery and implementation phase.

2. Implementation and Delivery

On behalf of [Developer name], the successful tenderer will be expected to design and oversee the implementation and handover of the interpretation scheme to completion.

The interpretation consultant will be required to produce all of the tender documents for fit out contractor and other sub-contractors as required.

Project Management

The project will require a collaborative approach with [Developer name] and all relevant stakeholders. The successful tenderer will demonstrate effective organisation and project management of the interpretive process in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

As part of the [Greenway name] project but separate to this tender, [Developer name] will be undertaking a brand development strategy for the Greenway. It is a requirement of this tender to engage with the company appointed to the brand development to ensure the interpretation strategy aligns with the Greenway brand.

A site visit is a necessary requirement for all applicants prior to tendering. A project briefing will be held at [insert place] on [insert date] for those who wish to discover more about the Greenway prior to submitting a tender.

Project Timeline

[Developer name] envisages that this project will be delivered in the order outlined above and in line the milestones outlined below. Any recommended changes to this order and timeline can be agreed after appointment.
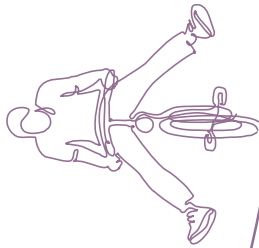
Milestones	
Insert date	Issue Tender
Insert date	Appointment
Insert date	Propose interpretation themes and sub-themes
Insert date	Secure sign off on interpretation media
Insert date	Oversee procurement of fabrication and installation of interpretation media
Insert date	Installation of all interpretation media

Intellectual Property Rights

The selected tenderer will be required to provide copyright to [Developer name] for unrestricted and free use of all contract documentation, all designs produced under this contract, all text, image or multimedia content developed under this contract, any specifications produced and any other project information provided during the course of the project to [Developer name] and / or the company's agents.

Tender Requirements

>> An outline of the proposed methodology intended to be used in delivering this project.

>> A project programme of works for completion of each stage and section of the project.

>> Proposed team to deliver the requirements of the tender

>> Costings/Budget for each element of the project.

3. Sample RFT for Launch Marketing Campaign

Requirements and Specifications

Tenderers must address each of the issues and requirements in this part of the RFT and submit a detailed description in each case which demonstrates how these issues and requirements will be dealt with/met and their approach to the proposed delivery of the services. A mere affirmative statement by the Tenderer that it can/will do so or a reiteration of the tender requirements is NOT sufficient in this regard.

Introduction / Scope of Requirements

[Developer name] invites tenders from companies and consortia, with relevant experience for the development of the launch marketing campaign for the [Greenway name].

This tender covers marketing and promotional activity for the pre-launch stage, a launch event and the post launch period for a term of six months. Thereafter, the marketing and promotion of the Greenway will be undertaken by [Developer name].

The objective of the launch marketing campaign scheme is to create awareness of and engagement with the [Greenway name] by locals and domestic tourists.

The main elements required under this tender are:

1. **Develop a brand mark unique to [Greenway brand] that aligns with the national Greenway brand mark.**

2. **Develop a digital media strategy including the creation of a website and social media channels (the www.greenwayname.ie and social media handles are already in place)**

3. **Undertake a local marketing communications campaign to create awareness of the Greenway in the lead up to the launch**

4. **Deliver a launch event with invited guests and manage the marketing communications to support the launch event**

5. **Create and deliver a 6-month marketing communications campaign for the post-launch period to target local and domestic Greenway users**

Background to this Project

The Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways; (hereafter called the Greenways Strategy) defines a Greenway as:

'*a recreational or pedestrian corridor for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area*'.

Greenways are for everyone. They are not simply a means of getting from A to B, they are an experience in and of themselves. They also allow users to experience the communities linked to the Greenway and should tell the stories of the people and places through which they pass.

They provide an excellent amenity for local populations and offer domestic and overseas visitors immersive and memorable tourism experiences.

The [Greenway name] is being developed against this backdrop.

Vision Aim

The overall vision for [Greenway name] is [outline vision]

Strategic Objectives of [Greenway name]

The strategic objectives guiding the development of the [Greenway name] are:

[the list below is indicative only and some are likely to apply, but you will need to include those that are additional and specific to your Greenway]

>> Provide strategic, sustainable and safe connectivity between towns, villages, communities, community facilities, tourist attractions/services for the benefit of local communities, businesses and visitors.

>> To provide healthy living walking and cycling tracks as an amenity for the local population

>> To drive an increase in visitor numbers, dwell time, spend within [County name] and the wider geographic region.

>> To provide the catalyst for an increase in collaboration between destinations, industry providers and groups in the area.

>> To interpret the history and heritage of the area bringing local stories to life in an immersive and engaging manner.

>> To use different interpretation media to tell the themes and stories of the [Greenway name]. This could include a number of tools appropriate to the route and the local area e.g. interpretive panels, maps, displays downloadable audio guides, onsite installations using natural materials indigenous to the area (seating, picnic benches, stiles, boardwalks, sculptures or other artistic installations).

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS RFT ARE TO:

1. **Create awareness of and engagement with the Greenway by the local community before the official launch of the Greenway; the aim is to encourage locals to use the Greenway as a local amenity**

2. **Create awareness of and engagement with the Greenway by domestic visitors immediately after the official launch event; the aim is to position the [Greenway name] as a hook to stimulate domestic tourism in the wider area**

Project Stages

There are five elements associated with the launch marketing campaign for the [Greenway name].

1. **Develop a brand mark.**

2. **Develop a digital media strategy.**

3. **Implement local marketing communications.**

4. **Deliver a launch event.**

5. **Implement a 6-month marketing communications campaign to target local and domestic Greenway users.**

1. Development of a Brand Mark

The successful tenderer must submit a methodology for the development of the launch marketing communications strategy which should include but not be limited to the following steps:

1.1 REVIEW OF EXISTING DOCUMENTATION E.G.

>> County Development Plan [insert link]

>> County Tourism Plan [insert link]

>> Feedback from public consultations during the design stage of the Greenway development [insert link / include as additional documentation]

>> [Research undertaken as part of the Interpretation Strategy if available]

>> Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways

>> Greenway Design and brand guidelines, a visual rulebook for the Greenway brand

1.2 DEVELOP THE BRAND MARK

Create a visual identity for [Greenway name] that:

>> Creates and maintains awareness and appeal with the local community as well as domestic and overseas visitors

>> Is aligned with the themes and stories identified in the interpretation plan (engagement with interpretation consultants working on this project will be required)

>> Is aligned with [insert relevant destination brand Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way] and that brand's proposition and objectives

>> Is fully formed for use across all platforms and marketing collateral as well as interpretation media

1.3 CREATE BRAND GUIDELINES

>> Present the rationale behind the brand mark and associated imagery

>> Provide guidance on the brand application across a range of marketing communications platforms, interpretation media and, way-finding signage

>> Present visual brand creative, brand story narrative, concepts and artworks

2. Develop a Digital Media Strategy

2.1 WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

The www.greenwayname.ie domain name has been registered. The tenderer is required to create a responsive website for the Greenway that reflects the themes, stories and experience unique to this Greenway.

The website should reflect international best practice in terms of:

>> Design, Layout and Navigation

>> Content, imagery and video

>> Usability

>> Call to action

>> Search Engine Optimisation and analytics

The website should reflect the brand identity and be aligned with [insert relevant tourism destination brand].

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The social media handles for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube [insert other as relevant] have been registered.

The tenderer will be required to produce and distribute creative digital content and proactively engage across all social media channels for the period [insert timeline – approximately two months pre-launch through to 6 months post-launch]

2.3 IMAGERY AND VIDEO BANK

The tenderer will be required to create a small number of copyright free photographs and up to three short videos that can be used at this launch stage across marketing communications platforms. The image and video bank will be extended and enhanced post-launch stage.

3. Implement Local Marketing Communications

Create and implement a local marketing communications campaign targeting local and regional broadcast, print and social to include:

>> Press releases and Photo calls

>> Traditional and digital advertising (including creative, production and media costs)

>> Familiarisation media visits with local / regional journalists

>> Social media activity – content, competitions

4. Deliver a Launch Event

In partnership with [Developer name] the tenderer will be required to organise a launch event to mark the official opening of the [Greenway name].

The tenderer will also be required to manage the media engagement around the launch at a local, regional and national level.

5. Implement a 6-Month Marketing Communications Campaign

Building on the local pre-launch and launch event marketing communications campaign, the tenderer will be required to extend the local and regional activities noted under points 2, 3 and 4 above to a national level in order to target domestic holidaymakers.

The national campaign should also include targeting of influencer marketing i.e.organise familiarisation trips with high profile influencers and bloggers and use social media platforms specifically for geo-targeting and demographic/ interest targeting.

The successful tenderer, in partnership with [Developer name] will also ensure the Greenway is listed on www.discoverireland.ie and domestic marketing activities with Fáilte Ireland are optimised.

Note:
While the responses must provide for the five elements outlined above [Developer name], also welcomes alternative / additional innovative recommendations on how best to achieve the communications objectives in the most cost-effective manner.

Project Management

The project will require a collaborative approach with [Developer name] and all relevant stakeholders. The successful tenderer will demonstrate effective organisation and project management of the interpretive process in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

As part of the [Greenway name] project but separate to this tender, [Developer name] will be undertaking a brand development strategy for the Greenway. It is a requirement of this tender to engage with the company appointed to the brand development to ensure the interpretation strategy aligns with the Greenway brand.

A site visit is a necessary requirement for all applicants prior to tendering. A project briefing will be held at [insert place] on [insert date] for those who wish to discover more about the Greenway prior to submitting a tender.

Project Timeline

[Developer name] envisages that this project will be delivered in the order outlined above and in line the milestones outlined below. Any recommended changes to this order and timeline can be agreed after appointment.
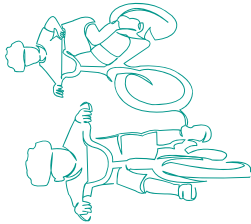
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Tender Requirements

>> An outline of the proposed methodology intended to be used in delivering this project.

>> A project programme of works for completion of each stage and section of the project.

>> Proposed team to deliver the requirements of the tender

>> Costings/Budget for each element of the project

| Milestones	
Insert date	Issue Tender
Insert date	Appointment
Insert date	Secure sign off on brand development
Insert date	Design and implement digital media strategy
Insert date	Commence pre-launch marketing communications locally
Insert date	Launch event
Insert date	6 month post-launch national campaign
Insert date	Handover of all marketing communications to [Developer name]

References

Reference sources and additional information;

>> Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways July 2018, Department of Tourism Transport & Sport

>> Greenway Design and Brand Guidelines

>> Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines, Department of Tourism Transport & Sport Appendix 1 of this document provides a list of other references/publications, which are relevant to the development of trails, including Greenways in Ireland.

>> Greenways Management Handbook Sustrans UK

>> Sustainable Development Goals The United Nations

>> The National Biodiversity Data Centre

>> Pollinator-friendly Management of Transport Corridors, National Biodiversity Data Centre

>> Leave no Trace Ireland

>> Bored of Boards, The Heritage Council

>> Ireland's Ancient East Storytelling Toolkit,Fáilte Ireland

>> Experience Explained, Fáilte Ireland

>> Interpretation Toolkit, Woodland Trust (UK)

Greenway

Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority
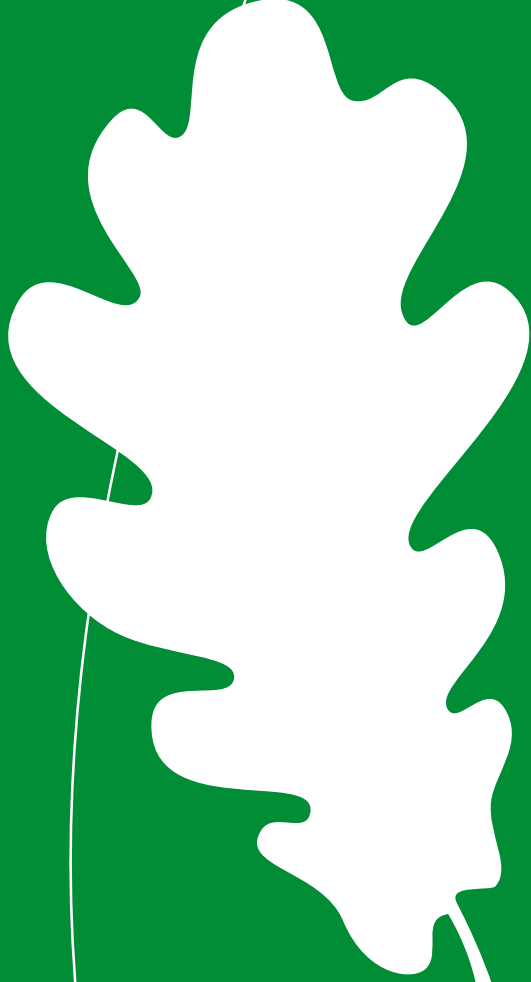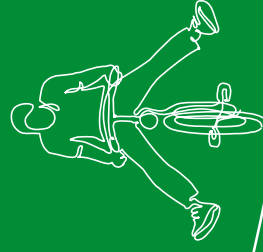
Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion – Failte Ireland Approach

Failte Ireland is the Irish Tourism Development Authority and a substantial remit in fulfilling its functions is the development of tourism marketing campaigns and promotional material for regions, counties, experiences (activities, festivals, attractions) and specific sites in some instances.

To this end we have a dedicated Marketing Directorate made up of a number of teams including the following; marketing communications, digital marketing, visitor engagement, corporate communications & public affairs and consumer planning & insights.

Failte Ireland recognises the importance in valuing, promoting, protecting and enhancing our natural heritage. Our environment and landscape are after all the cornerstone of Irish Tourism. So as with all other Failte Ireland functions our Marketing Directorate is dedicated to integrating environmental considerations and opportunities into all of its operations and actions. This includes environmentally responsible campaigning and promotion.

We already work to achieve this in Failte Ireland through our environmental assessments of plans, programmes and strategies and through our support, sponsorship and partnership with stakeholders including Leave No Trace, Clean Coast, EU Life Projects and NPWS.

We are constantly aiming to progress and ensure fundamental integration of environmental and wider sustainable responsibility into our Marketing Directorate role.

As a result of this our Marketing Directorate in working partnership with our Planning & Environment Team is about to embark on developing a documented process that will ensure full integration of environmental considerations into all campaign and promotional drives for Failte Ireland.

This process will be developed over the coming months and will further inform and influence our Regional Tourism Strategies during their lifetime.

IRISH BLUEWAY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Phase 3: Blueway Management and Development Guide

August 2018

Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI

on behalf of Sport Ireland, Waterways Ireland & Fáilte Ireland

Contents

1. Acknowledgements

The development of this document has required the review and update of existing standards for Canoe and Water Trails. Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland would like to acknowledge the previous work to develop the following documents which have acted as a strong reference during the development of this document:

- A guide to planning and developing Small Vessel Water Trails in Ireland (2013). Developed by Waterways Ireland and the Irish Sports Council / National Trails Office in conjunction with Irish Leisure Consultants (ILC)
- Blueway Soft Infrastructure Guidelines Discussion Document. Developed by ILC for the Irish Sports Council / National Trails Office
- Blueway / Water Trail Development Standards Ireland (2015). Developed by the Irish Sports Council / National Trails Office, Canoeing Ireland and Irish Underwater Council
- A Guide to Planning and Developing Recreational Trails in Ireland (2012). Developed by the Irish Sports Council / National Trails Office
- Principles and Standards for Trail Development in Northern Ireland (2013). Prepared by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland
- Toolkit for the development of Community Trail Networks (2014). Prepared by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland

2. Introduction

The rivers, loughs and coastline on the Island of Ireland provide a vast array of opportunities for exploration and enjoyment by visitors and locals alike. The relatively recent development of Blueways in Ireland has sought to maximise this opportunity.

This Blueway Development and Management Guide has therefore been designed as a resource to assist developers to develop, manage and promote Blueways more effectively.

Furthermore, the Blueway Ireland Steering Group (See Appendix 1) has taken the strategic decision to establish an accreditation system to ensure that any Blueways developed are sustainable, visitor focused and of a consistent high quality. This guide therefore outlines the accreditation criteria, process and support mechanisms.

It is recognised that many excellent guidance documents were already in place for the various components of a Blueway, however, this guide seeks to update and consolidate these through cognisance of:

- extensive benchmarking of international best practice (See Appendix 2)
- primary customer research
- one-to-one consultation with key stakeholders
- learnings from existing Blueway developments
- a constantly evolving tourism industry
- the broadening concept of a Blueway

3. Aim

The guide has been designed with the aim of providing detailed information and advice in order to answer the following queries:

- **Definition** – What is a Blueway?
- **Target Market** – Who will be attracted to a Blueway?
- **Benefits** – Why become accredited?
- **Criteria** – What are the fundamental components of a successful Blueway?
- **Achieving Success** – How to achieve Blueway Accreditation
- **Planning** – How to plan the development and management of a successful and sustainable Blueway

4. What is a Blueway?

The Blueway definition, brand proposition and key characteristics have been developed with visitor focus to the fore. This rationale is further outlined in Section 5.

4.1. Definition

A Blueway is defined as:

'A network of approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites, based on and closely linked with the water, together with providers facilitating access to activities and experiences.'

4.2. Blueway Brand Proposition

The Blueways Ireland brand represents:

- Being active in nature
- Exploration of waterscapes
- Service providers enabling easy access for all
- Multi-activity trail options
- Set within the context of places to stay, eat and go
- Enriched by local culture, heritage, arts and visitor attractions
- Responsible recreation within the environment

4.3. Key Characteristics

The definition and brand proposition are further explained through the following key Blueway characteristics:

- The core of the offering is a series of accredited and branded trails, on and alongside water.
- Central to the concept is the availability of a water trail or site (hence the term 'BLUEway').
- Land based trails (i.e. walking and cycling) with strong connectivity to water must also complement the water trails.
- The proposition is an activity tourism and outdoor recreation initiative therefore facilitating healthier lifestyles, social interactions and economic development.
- With a strapline 'Blueway, do it your way!' the ethos of the Blueways Ireland brand is to encourage active participation in outdoor recreation by offering a range of activity options and making it as easy as possible for all ages and abilities to engage in visitor experiences in a suitable environment. Blueways should therefore focus on 'soft adventure' i.e. the offering should appeal to those with limited skills or prior experience.
- The rationale for the brand is to package saleable product (½ day, full day or short-break packages) and make the booking process easy, to encourage exploration of the waterways, and increase visitor dwell time.
- The Blueways experience is enriched by promoting it within the context of the local culture, heritage, arts and artisan food offerings.
- It is a partnership between public and private sectors, with service providers and tourism businesses combining soft adventure/slow tourism experiences, (guided canoe trips, SUP, bicycle hire) together with visitor services (accommodation, food, attractions, toilets).

- Blueways should be planned, developed and managed to ensure their sustainability. As a minimum a Blueway should avoid any negative impact on the environment and ideally add to or improve the environment e.g. through education and access

4.4.   Blueway Descriptions

By definition, a Blueway is a network of recreational trails or sites, concentrated within a reasonable travel time within one area / destination. It is therefore important the Blueway is appropriately named to ensure resonance with the visitor, the naming of individual trails can focus on specific areas. As further explained in Section 5, the visitor will often have selected the destination first and will wish to use the Blueway as a conduit through which to explore its unique selling points.

A **Blueway Trail** does not have to encompass the entire area/destination; however, each component trail should offer an attractive proposition in their own right. For example, the 'Lough Derg Blueway' is comprised of several component Blueway trails e.g. 'Portumna Forest Walking Trails' and 'Mountshannon to Holy Island Paddling Trail.' For more information see http://www.bluewaysireland.org/head-into-the-blue/the-lough-derg-blueway

A **Blueway Site** will typically relate to a coastal environment e.g. beach, marina or harbour from which a range of multi-activity trails can radiate. The extent of each trail must be defined e.g. a snorkel trail or kayak trail must be defined by mapping and information. For example, the Achill Island Blueway is comprised of Doogart Kayak Trail and Keem Beach Snorkel Trail. For more information see https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/tcs/media/5d9fb7c2-1314-46ed-b97b-6c2b1fba256c_91605.pdf

Blueways will typically include a combination of:

- Walking Trails
- Cycling Trails – off road / segregated trails
- Paddling Trails / Sites – Canoeing / kayaking / Stand Up Paddleboarding
- Snorkelling Trails / Sites
- Sailing and Windsurfing Sites may also be included, however, given the needs of the 'Dabbler' this will be included as either Royal Yachting Association Recognised Training Centres or Irish Sailing Training Centres

5. The Blueways Visitor

Whether a Blueway user is a member of the community enjoying their local waterway or a visitor exploring a new destination, it is essential the Blueway delivers a memorable experience.

To do this successfully, it is crucial to understand the customers and their needs before initiating any development:

5.1.   Introducing the Dabbler

Research[1] has provided clear evidence that the 'Dabbler' or 'Novice' will be the best prospect visitor for Blueways in Ireland i.e. those that have **little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking adventure activities.**

The **'Dabbler'** is seeking the following from a Blueway:

Features

- A mixture of land and water activities
- A rich opportunity to experience Ireland's culture, history and scenery
- A safe experience

Locations

- Attractive locations - not simply just anywhere with water, but scenery unique to Ireland which visitors do not find closer to home
- Coastal locations – especially important to attract overseas visitors
- Sheltered waters - i.e. not the brunt of the ocean

Water-based activity offering - should be:

- Delivered by guides
- Focus on the easier entry level
- Follow high safety standards

It is clear that potential Blueway users are attracted by the proximity to water, however it is evident the preference remains to be alongside water rather than in or on the water. Hence the importance of multi-activity options.

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[1] Research was undertaken by Strategic Marketing on behalf of Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland in 2016. The research was conducted to gain an understanding of consumers' preferences for the development of Blueway experiences in key markets (Ireland, Britain, France, Germany) and the likely appeal of such a product. Methodology included online panel surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups.

When asked 'If you were to use a Blueway while on holiday, what would be the top three available activities in order of importance to you?', the following responses were obtained:

	Domestic	% respondents ranking the attribute in top 5	Overseas	% respondents ranking the attribute in top 5
Walking routes near water	1	64%	1	66%
Cycle paths near water	2	48%	2	48%
Swimming	3	43%	3	46%
Canoeing / Kayaking	4	29%	4	27%
Sailing / Boating (non-motorised)	5	22%	5	23%

5.2.   Best Prospect Tourist

Further understanding of the best prospect Blueway visitor can be gained through making reference to domestic and oversea visitor segmentation developed by both Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland.

In terms of overseas visitors, it is important to recognise that the physical activities (whether water or land based) will not be enough on their own to differentiate Ireland from many other destinations. Overseas visitors will require a full package of unique cultural and historical attractions and experiences to be enticed to visit. Care is required to ensure these experiences remain authentic and are not over developed.

Domestic visitors will be an excellent foundation for a Blueway, often providing welcome cash flow to businesses outside peak season.

	Tourism Northern Ireland	Fáilte Ireland
Overseas Visitors	Great Escapers – Primary Culturally Curious – Secondary	
Domestic Visitors	Open to Ideas Active Maximisers	Connected Families

Further details on the aforementioned visitor segments is available within Appendix 3: Visitor Segmentation

5.3.   Local Community

The attachment of the Blueway brand to a local waterway should act as a catalyst for local participation initiatives for example through school, youth organisations, clubs and sports partnerships.

An example of such an initiative was the Blueway 10K. Developed in 2016 by Waterways Ireland, Coca Cola, Canoeing Ireland and the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland developed this active fitness-based approach to canoeing and paddlesports in Ireland applied the couch to 5k model to the water. For more detailed information see

http://www.bluewaysireland.org/News%20%20Events%20Assets/Blueway%2010K%20Activity%20Provider%20Pack.pdf

As further explored in Section 7, the local community will not only be participants but also have the potential to be key ambassadors for their local Blueway.

5.4.   What about the enthusiasts?

Activity enthusiasts will typically undertake trips self-guided and with their own equipment. They will engage with Blueways but to a lesser degree than the aforementioned best prospect segments and should not be the key focus for development.

The development of a visitor focused Blueway may not be possible in certain areas due to a range of issues such as topography, lack of sheltered conditions, lack of support services etc. However, offerings such as waymarked ways, canoe trails and cycle touring trails may be more appropriate and therefore appealing to the enthusiast market.

6. Blueway Accreditation

6.1.   Rationale

An extensive review of international best practice (see Appendix 2) identified several excellent systems have been developed to externally inspect and accredit water trail and land trail networks. Under these systems, trails developed by a range of developers in different locations are inspected and accredited by an external body or bodies.

Accreditation has been identified by the Blueway Ireland Steering Group as fundamental to ensure a consistent high standard of Blueway development in Ireland.

6.2.   Roles & Responsibilities

The Blueway Ireland Steering Group has set the criteria required for Blueway accreditation and will also act as the awarding body.

The Steering Group is supported by a Blueways Accreditation Advisor who will support and facilitate the accreditation of Blueways in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The Steering Group and Blueways Accreditation Advisor is supported by a Blueways Technical Advisory Panel which provides direct guidance to Blueway Developers on technical and safety aspects of Blueway development / accreditation as required.

For example, a Blueway which:

- includes a significant volume of Snorkelling Trails will require specialist advice from the Irish Underwater Council
- has specific challenges around developing access infrastructure for canoeists will require specialist input from Canoeing Ireland or the Canoe Association of Ireland
- has specific challenges around providing access to open water in a public space may require specialist input from Irish Water Safety

Blueway Developers should contact these organisations directly. See

Appendix 4: Technical Advisory Panel - Key Contacts for contact details:

Remit	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Paddlesports	Canoe Association Northern Ireland	Canoeing Ireland
Snorkelling	Irish Underwater Council British Sub Aqua Club – Ireland Region	
Sailing & Windsurfing	Royal Yachting Association Northern Ireland	Irish Sailing
Water Safety	RNLI	
Water Safety		Irish Water Safety

Sport Ireland Trails will also be able to provide guidance relating to shared use, walking and cycling trails.

It is important to note that the awarding of Blueway Accreditation does not pass liability onto the Blueways Ireland Steering Group, Blueway or Blueways Accreditation Advisor. It will remain the responsibility of the Developer to ensure the Blueway is managed in accordance to operating procedures and standards as inspected.

The table below provides an overview of responsibilities:

Blueways Ireland Steering Group	Blueways Accreditation Advisor
• Oversight and accreditation of Blueways • Recruitment and management of a Blueways Accreditation Advisor • Custodians of the Blueway brand and brand guidelines • Raise awareness of Blueway accreditation to funding bodies • Establish a Blueway Technical Advisor Panel • Stakeholder communications relating to Blueways	• Promote the Blueways Development & Management Guideline as developed by the Blueway Steering Group. • Convene and support a Blueways Developers Forum and a Blueway Technical Advisory Panel • Develop and implement a Blueways accreditation process in conjunctions with the Blueways Steering Group and Blueways Technical Advisory Panel partners. • Review applications from new Blueways and make recommendations to the Blueways Steering Group for accreditation • Undertake Blueway Registration Inspections on new and existing Blueways and make recommendations to the Blueways Steering Group for accreditation • Manage and update information and advice for Blueways online • Ensure that the Blueway Brand Guideline is applied consistently to all Blueway projects.

	• Attend Blueway Steering Group meetings
	• Make recommendations for modification and updates of the Blueway Development and Management Guide and accreditation system to the Blueway Steering Group as necessary.
Blueways Technical Advisory Panel	**Blueways Developer**
• Assist & support Blueway Developers with technical and safety related aspects of Blueway Development	• Blueway Development • Ongoing Management – Upholding Procedures • Marketing

The criteria and process for Blueway accreditation is explored in further detail within Section 7.

The award of accreditation by the Blueways Ireland Steering Group will bring the following benefits:

Brand

Brand Guidelines - An accredited Blueway will be afforded the opportunity to avail of the official Blueway brand which can be utilised within visitor information and signage.

For further information on brand guidelines – Blueway Design & Brand Guidelines – include link to revised guidelines

Brand Recognition – Further to the pragmatics of brand guidelines, external accreditation will also provide enhanced consumer recognition of the proposition. Blueways remain a relatively new concept on the island of Ireland, therefore a critical mass of accredited Blueways which follow the same high standard will help raise awareness. This is turn will generate a cross sell effect, particularly within the domestic market i.e. visitors who have a positive experience on one accredited Blueway will be attracted to visit another.

Quality Standard – External accreditation will help reassure key stakeholders that a best practice approach is being implemented. This may include:

- Key decision makers within your organisation
- Key funders
- Local community and business

In addition, an approved brand is more marketable.

Private Landowner Insurance (Republic of Ireland only) - Sport Ireland maintains a public liability insurance policy with Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Ltd which indemnifies private landowners who give permission for trails to be developed on their property. Accreditation will also reassure landowners of the quality of the Blueway development.

Support – Those engaging in the accreditation process will be able to avail of the support of the Blueways Accreditation Advisor, Blueways Technical Advisory Panel and also best practice knowledge sharing from other Blueway developers / managers through an annual Blueway Forum meeting.

Promotion – Whilst it will ultimately remain the responsibility of the Blueway Manager to effectively promote their Blueway, accreditation will provide additional promotional benefits.

BluewaysIreland.org http://www.bluewaysireland.org/ will provide a web portal for all Blueways in Ireland. This portal will provide an overview listing with a link to each Blueway's own website. Blueways will also receive a listing on IrishTrails.ie http://www.irishtrails.ie/Home/ (Republic of Ireland only).

In addition, the National Tourist Boards will provide prominence to accredited Blueways within relevant campaigns, website listings, FAM trips etc.

Funding – The Blueways Ireland Steering group will continue to engage with the relevant funding bodies to ensure the recognition of the importance of accreditation within funding measures.

7. Accreditation Criteria

Extensive international benchmarking (see Appendix 2) has identified the external assessment of high quality recreation trails utilise a holistic criterion encompassing all aspects of the visitor experience.

As such, the Accreditation Criteria for Blueways in Ireland combines a visitor focused approach with fundamental safety, technical, access and environmental components. All of these are underpinned by sustainable management techniques and processes.

In summary:

Experience – Are the visitors' expectations met?

Safety – Is risk being appropriately managed?

Technical – Does trail infrastructure and signage follow best practice?

Conservation / Environment – As a minimum does the Blueway avoid any negative impact on the environment or ideally how does it add to or improve the environment e.g. through education and access?

Access – Will the Blueway be open for public use for at least ten years following accreditation?

Sustainability – Are they management structures / partnerships, plans and processes in place to ensure the Blueway can continue to meet the required standard?

In order to achieve accreditation, a Blueway must demonstrate how it meets the following criteria.

Experience	
Engaging Landscape / Culture and Heritage	Offers an opportunity to appreciate and explore an attractive landscape and engage with the unique heritage and culture of the area
Multi-activity	Offers a combination of water and land based trail (with connectivity to water) options
Capacity Building	A programme is in place to develop 'Eat / Stay / Go' and 'Activity / Experience' opportunities
Eat / Stay / Go	Bars, Cafés, restaurants and attractions are easily accessible from trail heads and / or trails
Activity / Experience Providers	Guided activity experiences appropriate for 'dabblers' are available and can be booked in advance
Length of time	Offers an experience duration of between half a day to one day
Visitor Information	The visitor can access information to allow them plan and enjoy their Blueway experience
Technical	
Walking Trails	Walking Trails are compliant with the Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails
Cycling Trails	Cycle Trails are compliant with the Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails
Shared Use Trails	Shared Use Trails are compliant with the Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails
Snorkel Trails	Snorkel Trails follow the guidelines of the Irish Underwater Council
Paddling Trails	Paddling Trails follow the Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines
Sailing & Windsurfing Sites	Sailing & Windsurfing Activities will be compliant with Irish Sailing and/or RYANI Accreditation standards.
Signage	All signage follows with Blueway Signage Guidelines
Trailhead Facilities	Trail heads are clearly identified and offer adequate parking. Toilet and changing facilities are available within close proximity of water based trail heads.

Managing user conflict	Consideration and identification of steps to mitigate against potential conflict with waterway / trail users has been undertaken
Accessibility / Inclusivity	Reasonable steps have been undertaken to provide disabled access
Access	
Landowner / Authority Agreement	Access is permitted by all landowners and relevant authorities – public and private for a minimum period of 10 years.
Insurance	Public liability insurance is in place providing indemnity for all infrastructure, land-based trails and water trails' access and egress points.
Safety	
Suitability	The experience is suitable for the 'dabbler / novice' with little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking adventure activities
Responsibility	Visitors are not exposed to hidden dangers. Visitors should be aware of the risks they will face and that safety is a shared responsibility between the visitor and the Blueway Manager.
Activity Providers / Experiences	A programme is in place for activity providers to demonstrate their safety credentials
Conservation and the Environment	
Statutory Approval	Evidence of consultation and approval with appropriate statutory bodies can be demonstrated
Biosecurity & Invasive Species	Proactive measures are in place to stop the spread of invasive species and harmful pathogens
Environmental Education	The Leave No Trace Ireland Principles have been incorporated
Litter	The Blueway is free from litter and fly-tipped waste
Sustainability	
Management Group	A Blueway Management Group is in place – led by a Local Authority or State Agency
Management Plan	A Blueway Management Plan is in place
Monitoring	A formal process is in place to monitor the impact of the Blueway

8. Achieving the Criteria

This section provides further details on the requirements for each criterion coupled with guidance as to how this can be achieved:

8.1.   Experience
Engaging landscape, culture and heritage

Offers the visitor an opportunity to appreciate and explore an attractive landscape and engage with the unique heritage and culture of the area

The importance of the setting was highlighted in recent research[2] undertaken by Waterways Ireland which demonstrated that 'tranquillity of location' and 'scenic beauty /pristine environment' were the two most important factors in choosing a waterway to undertake recreational activity.

It should be remembered the Blueway is a way of exploring the areas' culture and heritage and often viewing it from a different perspective. It is essential the Blueway proactively showcases and provides adequate interpretation of the area's assets, points of interest and attractions.

Multi-activity

Offers a combination of water and land-based trail (with connectivity to water) options

In order to meet the expectations of the visitor, a Blueway should offer a combination of water-based and land-based trail options. Land-based trails e.g. walking or cycling must have connectivity to the water i.e. were possible they should be adjacent to the waterway. At a minimum, the trail head should be adjacent to the waterway with a significant section of the trail either adjacent to, or providing views of, the waterway.

The land-based trails do not have to run parallel to water-based trails, for example walking trails may be available at various separate locations along the waterway.

Capacity Building

A programme is in place to develop 'Eat / Stay / Go' and 'Activity / Experience' opportunities

The product development will provide a skeleton on which to build the Blueway experience. It is essential that a capacity building programme with activity providers and tourism service providers is delivered both prior to and following the launch of the Blueway. This will be key to:

- Ensuring key stakeholders are aware of the Blueway proposition
- Ensuring key stakeholders are empowered to promote and champion the Blueway
- Developing a range of engaging visitor experiences
- Developing a range of themes and itineraries

The optimum scenario is for Blueways to have a holistic visitor experience in place in advance of launch. However, it is realised that such capacity building can take time and often capital development is a necessary foundation on which to build trade engagement. Therefore, accredited Blueways must

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[2] Waterways Ireland Users Survey 2017

demonstrate a robust capacity building programme is in place to develop the sub criteria below within a reasonable period following launch.

Bars, Cafés, restaurants and attractions are easily accessible from trail heads and / or trails

Visitors should be able to access eateries and attractions preferably at trail heads and along the Blueway. As a minimum they should be available within short walking distance. These should be clearly identified within visitor information.

It may be appropriate for trail heads located in a more rural setting to offer mobile catering options. Although these should be sensitive to their setting.

The service provider engagement knowledge programme further discussed below should provide best practice advice as to how to tailor their offering to Blueway visitors e.g. bike racks, Blueway friendly picnics, non-fabric chairs etc.

Guided activity experiences appropriate for 'dabblers' are available and can be booked in advance

Activity experiences which are appropriate to 'Dabblers' are essential. Walking and cycling (with bike hire) can be self-led although guided tours will always enhance the experience. Trail cards, themed guides and interpretation should ensure the visitor can explore and engage with the culture and heritage.

Watersports must be guided by reputable activity providers (further guidance is provided in the Section 8.4). Whilst the participants will be required to learn the basics to enjoy the experience in a responsible manner, it is important activity providers offer more than a 'splash and dash' watersports session. Guides should not only be technically competent but also able to confidently provide insights into the culture and heritage of the area.

It is important all activities are bookable in advance and not restricted to bookings by large groups.

Length of time

Offers an experience duration of between half a day to one day

The visitors' optimum time commitment to a Blueway will be between half a day to one day, therefore the activity experiences delivered should cater to this. The entire Blueway proposition may offer several half day to one day options but these should be easily identified through visitor information such as itineraries. Remember a 'Dabbler' will cover less ground in half a day than an enthusiast, so less is more.

As an approximate guide:

Mode	Average Travel Speed	Half Day Experience
Canoeing	3 kilometres per hour	3 – 6 kilometres
Walking	5 kilometres per hour	5 – 10 kilometres
Cycling	10-15 kilometres per hour	10 – 25 kilometres
Sailing & Windsurfing	Introductory sessions typically last 2-3 hours.	

Average Travel Speeds - are dependent on fitness levels, competence, wind strength etc.

Half Day Experience - It is important to remember participants are not seeking a lung busting challenge. A sense of achievement and exploration are important, but time should be left for relaxation, picnics, experiencing local culture and capturing the perfect Instagram shot.

Visitor information

The visitor can access information to allow them plan and enjoy their Blueway experience

Pre–Trip - It is important to remember the visitor experience begins at the decision making and booking stage therefore online information should be available to allow those planning to engage with a Blueway to:

- Understand the Blueway Concept
- Appreciate the unique selling points of the Blueway and component trails
- Assess which trail(s) are suitable for their ability and interests
- Gain information on activity / experience providers
- Gain contact details for further information
- Download appropriate trail cards & guides
- Update trail closures / diversions

Visitor Collateral – As a minimum the Blueway should be accompanied by a hard copy trail card. Depending on the scale of the Blueway this may be separated into a number of print pieces in order to provide an appropriate scale.

8.2. Technical[3]

Shared Use Trails

Shared Use Trails are compliant with Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails

Shared Use Trails should be compliant with Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Management_Standards_Access.pdf

Further guidance is provided within Sport Ireland - Classification and Grading of Recreational Trails

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development/Classification_Grading_of_Recreational_Trails.pdf

Walking Trails

Walking Trails are compliant with Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails

Walking Trails should be compliant with Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Management_Standards_Access.pdf

Trails will be inspected and assessed in accordance with **Sport Ireland Checklist for Walking Trails**

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development/Sport%20Ireland%20Trails_Checklist_for_Trail_Registration_Walking_Trails_-_Octobert_2015.docx

Trails should be appropriate to the needs of the Blueway Visitor and therefore the majority of walking trails should be Class 1 or Class 2 Walking Trails as per **Sport Ireland - Classification and Grading of Recreational Trails**. However, Class 3 trails may also be incorporated.

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development/Classification_Grading_of_Recreational_Trails.pdf

Cycling Trails

Cycling Trails are compliant with Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails

Cycling Trails should be compliant with Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Management_Standards_Access.pdf

Trails will be inspected and assessed in accordance with **Sport Ireland - Checklist for Cycling Trails**

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development/Sport_Ireland_Checklist_for_Trail_Registration_-_Cycling_Trails_-_Ver_5_October_2015.doc

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[3] All walking, cycling and shared use trails will be assessed using Sport Ireland – Classification and Grading of Recreational Trails. The key rationale for this is to ensure a consistent approach across the island of Ireland i.e. all trails are assessed using the same criteria. At the time of writing, the standards and procedures followed by Sport Ireland are at a more advanced stage than any such scheme in Northern Ireland.

Trails should be appropriate to the needs of the Blueway Visitor. Off-road cycling trails should be Class 1 or Class 2. Road Based Cycling Trails should be 'Easy' i.e. on dedicated or segregated cycle tracks as per **Sport Ireland -Classification and Grading of Recreational Trails**

http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development/Classification_Grading_of_Recreational_Trails.pdf

Snorkel Trails

Snorkel Trails follow the guidelines of the Irish Underwater Council

Snorkel Trails should follow best practice guidelines as developed by the Irish Underwater Council. See Appendix 5: Snorkel Trail Guidelines

A Blueway which incorporates a snorkel trail(s) should be able to demonstrate how they have consulted and taken guidance from the Irish Underwater Council. Trails should be appropriate to the needs of the Blueway Visitor and therefore should be 'Grade 1'.

Paddling Trails

Paddling Trails Follow the Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines

Paddling Trails should follow the Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines. See

Appendix 6: Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines

A Blueway which incorporates a paddling trail should be able to demonstrate how they have consulted and taken guidance from Canoeing Ireland / Canoe Association for Northern Ireland. Trails should be appropriate to the needs of the Blueway Visitor (see Section 8.4).

Sailing & Windsurfing Sites

Sailing & Windsurfing activities will take place in centres that have either Irish Sailing or RYANI accreditation.

Signage

All signage is compliant with the Blueway Signage Guidelines

The Blueway should be compliant with Blueway Signage Guidelines and the relevant elements of the aforementioned trail standards / guidelines. See Appendix 7.

Once potential Blueways have successfully passed the Preliminary Application Stage (see section 10.4), they will be in a position to utilise the brand in order to enable the design of signage and collateral. Final approval will be required on all artwork to ensure compliance to brand guidelines.

Trailhead Facilities

Trail heads are clearly identified and offer adequate parking

Toilet and changing facilities are available within close proximity to water-based trail heads

Each of the aforementioned trail standards and guidelines provide requirements relating to trail heads.

Managing User Conflict

Consideration and identification of steps to mitigate against potential conflict with waterway / trail users has been undertaken

The aim of Blueway development is to enhance recreational opportunities therefore it is important that consideration is given to the impact development may have on existing formal or informal recreation. For example:

- A local gun club may have shooting rights within a forest being considered trail development
- A local motorsports club may hold events within a forest being considered trail development
- A section of waterway proposed for the paddling trail development may be a popular angling beat

Through proactive engagement, the majority of issues can be addressed to provide an amicable outcome.

Accessibility / Inclusivity

Reasonable steps have been undertaken to provide disabled access

Blueway developers should avail of the opportunity provided by developing a new outdoor recreation experience to undertake reasonable steps to provide disabled access through policies and practice.

Design

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) base their guidelines[4] on the principle of 'Universal Design' i.e.

'...designing products, buildings, services, facilities and exterior spaces to allow the maximum number of people to use them without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Physical, sensory, cognitive and language needs are taken into account during the initial design phase. Universal Design eliminates the necessity for specific disabled access provision, while at the same time reducing barriers and promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities.'

A copy of the new 'Access Outdoors' publication provides guidance to developers on this subject and can be obtained from https://www.iwa.ie/information/publications

The Fieldfare Trust[5] provides further pragmatic advice i.e. 'In most countryside networks all the paths and trails cannot and should not be made fully accessible. The two questions that arises are:

- what level of accessibility can be reasonably expected by all users?

and

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[4] Best Practice Access Guidelines – Designing Accessible Environments – Irish Wheelchair Association (July 2014)

[5] A Good Practice Guide to Countryside Access for Disabled People – Fieldfare Trust

- what level of accessibility can be reasonably provided by access managers?

The task of the countryside service provider is to balance these two questions and come up with a practical answer.

The Fieldfare Trust defines an accessible network as one which:

- gives all disabled people choices in the experiences they can enjoy in the wider countryside, the countryside immediately around settlements and urban green spaces
- gives disabled people the same range and quality of choices as everyone else
- includes fully accessible paths (i.e. to BT Countryside for All Standards)
- includes paths where the least restrictive access has been achieved;
- has all development and maintenance work leading to increased accessibility.

It is not a network which:

- has to have all its paths fully accessible;
- has just those routes which were easy to make accessible as the only ones available to disabled people;
- has generally good accessibility but not at the most popular or special sites

Blueway Developers are therefore encouraged to incorporate best practice during development. Useful references include:

- Sport Ireland – Classification and Grading of Trails
  http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Management_Standards_Access.pdf
- Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland - Principles and Standards for Trail Development in Northern Ireland
  http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/publication/outdoor-recreation-ni/best-practice/guidelines/principles-and-standards-for-trail-development-in-northern-ireland/
- Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland – Accessible Walks Scheme
  http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Toolkit-to-Success-Accessible-Walks-Scheme-_ORNI-2012.pdf
- Irish Wheelchair Association - Best Practice Access Guidelines – Designing Accessible Environments
  https://www.iwa.ie/downloads/about/iwa-access-guidelines.pdf
- Irish Wheelchair Association - Access Outdoors https://www.iwa.ie/information/publications
- Fieldfare Trust - A Good Practice Guide to Countryside Access for Disabled People
  http://www.fieldfare.org.uk/countryside-for-all/countryside-for-all-good-practice-guide/?phpMyAdmin=a83c17410f95a34fc45353e75deec0d6
- Disability Sports Northern Ireland – Accessible Sport Facilities Design Guidelines
  http://dsni.co.uk/files/Guide_1_Accessible_Sports_Facilities_Design_Guidelines_2016.pdf

Activity Delivery

There are a number of key considerations that outdoor activity providers need to be aware of when planning and running outdoor recreation activities for people with disabilities. The following toolkit provides practical guidance to assist providers to offer a safe, meaningful and enjoyable experience.

- Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland – Making Outdoor Activities Accessible

http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Toolkit-to-Success-Making-Outdoor-Activities-Accessible_ORNI-2012.pdf

Further guidance and support is available CARA the national organisation in the Republic of Ireland which promotes and supports sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities. CARA offer specific training on Inclusive Adventure Activities. https://caracentre.ie/training/

Landowner / Authority Agreement

Access is permitted by all landowners and relevant authorities – public and private for a minimum period of 10 years.

The Blueway developer must provide documented evidence of permitted access from all landowners and relevant authorities.

Water and Land Ownership Considerations

Knowledge of land ownership and the land owners' requirements is crucial to Blueway Development. The official agreement of all the relevant landowners, sporting rights and navigation authorities is required to develop and in turn publicise a Blueway.

Identification of Land Owners

Public land - GIS has become an invaluable tool for identifying public land ownership. Many public agencies have provided land ownership data via sources such as www.heritagemaps.ie and https://www.spatialni.gov.uk .

Private land – Private landownership can be identified via a combination of

- Land registry searches – although the lack of registration does not necessarily mean the land is not owned by anyone
- Local consultation – with well-informed residents or local authorities
- Registry of deeds search – this often has to be conducted by a solicitor and should be a last resort

Other Considerations

Sporting Rights – A landowner may have sold or lease shooting rights e.g. for Pheasant.

Riparian Rights – This is a system allocating water amongst those who own land along its path, typically either side of a river or water body.

Harbour and Navigation Authorities – They are responsible for navigation and landing rights. It should be noted that existing navigation channels have priority over any subsequent water based trail

Fishing Rights – These can be owned by private individuals, state agencies or groups such as angling clubs. Useful sources on information include:

- Inland Fisheries Ireland https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/State-Fisheries/state-fisheries.html
- NI Direct https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/angling/where-can-i-fish-northern-ireland
- National Governing Bodies and Local Angling Clubs

Identification and engagement with the fishing rights owner is key for three main reasons:

- Paddlers can become entangled in an angler's line
- Anglers should not be hindered in or prevented from exercising their fishing rights. Inappropriate actions by the water trail users such as splashing, loud noise or passing too close to the anglers or their lines can scare off fish and also undermine the angler's enjoyment of their activity
- Canoes often at low states of water can damage spawning beds

In many cases visitor information and activity provider education can reduce the potential for such conflict. In some cases, anglers and canoeists have amicably agreed to restrict their respective activities to set periods of the year.

Consultation and Agreement

Ideally consultation with landowners should take place before any trail route is communicated in detail to the general public. This occurrence has the potential to damage any future relationships with these stakeholders.

Whilst all landowners alongside the trail should be consulted out of courtesy (often this opportunity is provided through a public consultation or workshop), it is essential to consult and gain agreement with land owners and rights holders on which physical development will take place.

It is recommended that the agreement is documented and signed by the relevant parties. Public bodies will often have their own processes which will have to be followed. Agreements can often be established on a 'permissive' basis. This means the landowner gives permission for the trail to pass through their property. This permissive access means:

- the trail can be used by the public with the permission of the landowner in a way the landowner has specified and subject to any conditions he or she has agreed
- the landowner can withdraw this permission should they so wish, subject to reasonable notice
- the owner retains the right to divert or close the trail if they so wish, subject to reasonable notice

Insurance

Public liability insurance is in place providing indemnity for all infrastructure, land-based trails and water trails' access and egress points.

The Blueway developer must be able to provide evidence to demonstrate all infrastructure, land-based trails and water trail access points are indemnified under a public liability policy or policies.

In terms of a paddling trail the indemnity for private landowners is required for access and egress points and not for lands adjacent to the waterway.

In the Republic of Ireland, Blueway developers should liaise with Sport Ireland who in conjunction with Local Authorities retain a public liability insurance policy with Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Ltd (IPB). This policy provides indemnity to private landowners and occupiers whose property/land is crossed or adjoins the trails listed on this policy.

Cover under this policy provides an indemnity to private landowners in respect of legal liability arising from claims involving personal injury or property damage sustained by persons whilst on landowners' land. The indemnity is valid whether the walker is on the trail or has strayed off it.

The experience is suitable for the 'dabbler / novice' with little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking adventure activities

The Blueway should be suitable to the needs of the 'dabbler' i.e. those that have little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking adventure activities.   See Section 5.1.

Section 8.2 provides clear guidelines relating to the technical suitability of trails.

These are summarised in the table below:

Activity / Trail	Grade	Guideline
Paddling Trails	River • 'Grade 1 Flat Water' Inland Waterways • 'Very Sheltered Inland Waterways' • 'Sheltered Inland Water' Sea • 'Sheltered Tidal Areas'	Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines – Appendix 6
Snorkelling Trails	Grade One	Snorkel Trail Guidelines – Appendix 5
Walking Trails	Class 1 or Class 2[6]	Sport Ireland - Classification and Grading of Recreational Trails
Cycle Trails	Off-road cycling trails • Class 1 or Class 2 Road Based Cycling Trails • 'Easy'	Sport Ireland - Classification and Grading of Recreational Trails

[6] Trails should be appropriate to the needs of the Blueway Visitor and therefore the majority of walking trails should be Class 1 or Class 2. However, Class 3 trails may also be incorporated.

Visitors are not exposed to hidden dangers.

Visitors should be aware of the risks they will face and that safety is a shared responsibility between the visitor and the Blueway Manager.

As outlined by the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group[7]

'Visitors should be aware of the risks they will face. They also need to understand that although they have the right to appropriate protection they also have a responsibility to behave sensibly and take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others. Safety is a shared responsibility between the visitor and the land owner / manager.'

The signage guidelines in Appendix 7: Blueway Signage Guidelines provide further guidance regarding providing awareness of risk. Further guidance on Visitor Safety Management is included with Section 8.6.

To demonstrate the shared responsibility between the visitor and the Blueway Developer / Manager the Responsibility Statement within Appendix 10 provides a useful basis for adaptation by individual Blueways.

Activity Providers / Experience

A programme is in place for activity providers to demonstrate their safety credentials

Blueway developers should establish and administer an activity provider permit system. Only those with permits should be included in Blueway promotional activity.

Many of the National Governing Bodies already provide robust external accreditation systems for activity providers within their discipline (See Appendix 8) and therefore these should be utilised were relevant. For those activities that do not provide external accreditation, it is recommended as a minimum the provider should provide evidence of:

- Relevant Technical Qualifications
- First Aid Qualifications
- Public Liability Insurance
- Risk Assessment
- Emergency Response Plan

In addition, Blueway developers may wish activity provider to demonstrate:

- Attendance at capacity building workshops
- Knowledge of the culture and heritage of the area
- Customer Service Experience

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[7] Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside – Principle and Practice (2011), Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group

8.5. Conservation and the Environment

Blueways provide a unique way to engage with natural and built heritage assets. It is therefore essential that as a minimum Blueway development and management avoids any negative impact on the environment. Fundamentally, the maintenance of a high level of water quality is vital to the success of a Blueway. In addition, the Blueway can add to or improve the environment e.g. through education and appropriate access.

It is essential to take a proactive approach to the potential impact of Blueway development on the environment for the outset of project planning. The following initial steps are recommended to guide project planning, design and mitigation:

- Ensure local ecological and heritage expertise is included within the Project Development Group - further discussed in Section 10.2
- Undertake an appraisal of 'constraints'. It is important to commission the relevant expertise, for example, an ecologist constraints study conducted by a reputable ecologist will ensure the project is in an informed position
- Engage in pre-planning consultation with the local authority
- Consult and comprehend actions and recommendations with District River Basin Management Plans (Northern Ireland) and Areas for Action for the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021 (Republic of Ireland)
- Engage with Local Authority Water and Communities Office (Republic of Ireland) and DAERA Catchment Officers (Northern Ireland)

Statutory Approval

Evidence of consultation and approval with appropriate statutory bodies can be demonstrated

The nature of Blueways means that it is likely that development proposals may impact on sensitive sites and species of nature conservation. It is therefore essential Blueway developers take cognisance of the ecological assessment, project authorisation (e.g. planning permission) and ongoing project management considerations at an early stage.

It is essential to consider the impact of the Blueway in its entirety rather than only focusing on sections in or close to natural and built heritage assets. It is important not only to consider the direct impact of physical developments such as access points but also the impact of an increased volume of visitors using the entire Blueway route. For example, whilst an access points may not be developed within a sensitive site, its placement may increase the volume of people passing a nearby sensitive site e.g. seal haul out.

Natural Heritage Designations

The impact on following natural heritage designations should be considered during planning, design and development:

International

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are designated under the EU Habitats Directive. These are the prime wildlife conservation areas in the country and are considered to be important on a European as well as an Irish level. Most SACs are in the countryside, although a few sites do reach into town or city landscapes e.g. rivers. SACs include – rivers woodlands, raised/blanket bogs, sand dunes, machairs, lakes, estuaries, sea inlets, etc.

- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** are designated under the EU Birds Directive. Because birds migrate long distances it is not sufficient to protect them over just one part of their range, and hence the EU Birds Directive provides for a network of sites across all the Member States which protects birds at their areas of breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering. It also identifies species which are rare, in danger of extinction or vulnerable to changes in habitat, and which thus need protection. Wetlands are particularly important habitats for these species.

- **RAMSAR** - The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) is an intergovernmental treaty whose mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world". As of January 2016, 169 nations have joined the Convention as Contracting Parties, and more than 2,220 wetlands around the world, covering over 214 million hectares, have been designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Republic of Ireland Specific

- **Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)** are designated under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2010. NHAs are so designated because they are considered important for the habitats present, or they contain species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. There is a wide range of NHAs – raised bogs, blanket bogs, roosting sites for bats, woodlands, lakes, etc. Some sites are afforded designation as proposed Natural Heritage Areas e.g. Royal and Grand Canals.
- **Nature Reserves** are areas of importance for wildlife which are protected under Ministerial Order, in accordance with the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2010. Most are owned by the State, however, some are owned by private landowners or organisations.
- **National Parks** are designated in accordance with the criteria set down by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The purpose of National Parks is to conserve plants, animals and scenic landscapes which are both extensive and of national importance, and under conditions compatible with that purpose, to enable the public to visit and appreciate them. There are six National Parks in the country, all of which are State owned and managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Northern Ireland Specific

- **Marine Conservation Zones** safeguard vulnerable or unique marine species and habitats of national importance in the Northern Ireland inshore region based on an ecosystem approach. These MCZs fulfil the obligations of The Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (the "Act") to contribute to an ecologically coherent UK network of MPAs as well as wider biodiversity commitments at European and global level.

- **Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)** are protected areas that represent the best of our wildlife and geological sites that make a considerable contribution to the conservation of our most valuable natural places. The law relating to ASSIs is contained in the Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002

Natural Heritage Designations can be identified by:

- National Park and Wildlife Service (Republic of Ireland)
  http://webgis.npws.ie/npwsviewer/
- NIEA Natural Environment Map Viewer (Northern Ireland)
  https://appsd.daera-ni.gov.uk/nedmapviewer

Other Protections

In addition, the aforementioned Natural Heritage designations there are a range of other habitats/ species of high conservation value which must be considered.

- NIEA Guidance (Northern Ireland)
  https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/plant-or-animal-species-protected-by-law
- NPWS Guidance
  https://www.npws.ie/development%20consultations

Biosecurity / Invasive Alien Species

The quality of the local water environment and the need to protect it is paramount. At an early stage Blueway developers should consult with River Basin Management Plans and engage with the following:

- DAERA District Catchment Officers
  https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/delivery-and-public-participation
- Water and Communities Office – Community Water Officers
  http://watersandcommunities.ie/community-water-officers

Due to the importance of this issue, further detail is outlined in a separate section below.

Consultation

The following organisations should be consulted and guidance of the appropriate is available below:

National Parks and Wildlife Service

https://www.npws.ie/development%20consultations

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/when-niea-consulted

Built Heritage

The impact on built heritage within the following designations should also be considered

Republic of Ireland

The impact on the following designation should be considered:

- Monuments protected in the following ways:
  o Recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places
  o Registered in the Register of Historic Monuments
  o National monument subject to a preservation order (or temporary preservation order).
  o National monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a Local Authority.
  o Guidance is provided at https://www.archaeology.ie/monument-protection

- Archaeological sites listed under Archaeological Survey of Ireland's Site and Monuments Database https://www.archaeology.ie/contact-us/archaeological-survey-ireland

- Protected Structures – these are listed in each Local authority area within the Register of Protected Structures http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/building_or_altering_a_home/protected_structures.html

Northern Ireland

The impact on the following designation should be considered:

- Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes
- Scheduled Sites or Monuments
- State Care Site or Monuments
- Scheduled Zones
- Listed Buildings

These and other relevant considerations can be viewed via the Historic Environment Map Viewer

https://dfcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6887ca0873b446e39d2f82c80c8a9337

Consultation

The following organisations should be consulted and guidance is available below:

Historic Environment Division (Northern Ireland)

https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-division-structure-and-contacts

National Monuments Service (Republic of Ireland)

https://www.archaeology.ie/contact-us

Other Permissions and Permits

Trail developments may require a number of other permissions from State Agencies, depending on the type and location of the development.

Inland Fisheries Ireland (Republic of Ireland) https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/

Where any trail development works are proposed alongside, or close to, a river, lake or watercourse, consultation should take place with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). A new slipway, quay or canoe step at a watercourse should also be discussed with IFI, who can advise on precautions to be taken to prevent any discharges of silt or soil.

Inland Fisheries Ireland has developed a Guidance Document to the IFI Environmental Assessment Process describing the process and procedures in place within IFI to facilitate development and conservation works within Irleand's inland and coastal waters.

https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/NSAD/environmental-assessment-process.html

Rivers Agency (Northern Ireland) https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/rivers-and-watercourses

Rivers Agency maintains and inspects watercourses in Northern Ireland to make sure these are free flowing. This helps prevent flooding and improves land drainage.

Discharging into a watercourse, or doing works that will affect the free flow of a watercourse, requires consent to be applied for from Rivers Agency.

Planning Permission

Car park and buildings planning permission is typically required for the construction of a new car park, or a building such as a toilet/shower block. However, slipways, canoe steps and quays are also likely to require planning permission. Early consultation with the planning section of the relevant local authority is recommended where any doubt exists about planning requirements.

Proactive measures are in place to stop the spread of invasive species and harmful pathogens

Invasive Species Ireland highlights that invasive non-native plant and animal species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide after habitat destruction. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. Fundamentally, they can be highly detrimental to the key asset on which the Blueway is dependent i.e. water quality.

Unfortunately, waterways both Northern Ireland and the Republic Ireland have been significantly impacted by biosecurity issues (e.g. Crayfish Plague) and aliens invasive species (e.g. zebra mussel) in recent years.

It is essential Blueways undertake proactive measure to stop the spread of invasive species and harmful pathogens. A biosecurity plan is therefore an essential part of Blueway accreditation and should be incorporated within a Blueway Management Plan (see Section 8.6). It is worth noting that the Blueway development is unlikely to be the only factor impacting on the management of biosecurity and alien invasive species within the water catchment. For example, other recreation users such as anglers, marina operators, aquaculturists and horticulturists with also be part of the solution, therefore successful management with require an integrated approach.

It should be recognised that the typical Blueway visitor are mobile i.e. small kayaks, canoes, windsurfers, bikes etc are more likely to cross between catchments and various water bodies on a much more regular basis than general waterways users. It is also recognised that kayakers, canoeists, stand up paddle boarders have direct contact with the water and this can result in them inadvertently becoming a carrier of aquatic invasive alien species.

The overriding principle regarding biosecurity is that prevention is better than cure therefore awareness, education and training are key to successful biosecurity action planning within water catchments. This is an area that requires relevant expertise, an initial contact point for advice and guidance should be:

- DAERA District Catchment Officers
  https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/delivery-and-public-participation
- Waters and Communities Office – Community Water Officers
  http://watersandcommunities.ie/community-water-officers

Appendix 9 provides a further example guidance developed by Local Authority Waters and Communities Office of how preventative measures can be communicated the Blueway visitors.

Leave No Trace Ireland Principles have been incorporated

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is an outdoor ethics programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. The programme is delivered throughout the island of Ireland by Leave No Trace Ireland.

At the heart of Leave No Trace are 7 principles for reducing the damage caused by outdoor activities.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

2. Be Considerate of Others

3. Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife

4. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground

5. Leave What You Find

6. Dispose of Waste Properly

7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

As a minimum Blueway developers should incorporate the Leave No Trace Principles within information boards. However, it is recommended Leave No Trace Awareness Sessions should be offered to service provider. These can be tailored according to the waterway, for example Leave No Trace Ireland has recently developed a 'Coast' edition of the Leave No Trace Ireland Skills and Ethics series to complement the original mainstay edition.

The Coast edition explains how you can best enjoy the coast and its wildlife, without causing harm. The original Leave No Trace Ireland Skills and Ethics programme is applicable for many situations and contains additional information. The practices in the booklet are appropriate for all coastal locations in Ireland. By following the code, and showing it to other people, will ensure that this part of Irish heritage survives for all to appreciate in years to come.

For more information see http://www.leavenotraceireland.org

Other relevant well-resourced and robust schemes include:

The Green Blue – Making the environment second nature https://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/

The Green Blue is an innovative environmental programme developed by British Marine and the Royal Yachting Association. The programme provides practical advice and information to help recreational boaters, watersports participants and marine businesses to think and act in an environmentally conscious way. The overall aim of the programme is to work towards promoting a sustainable boating community which will help to save money, avoid red tape and safeguard the waters and habitats for the future.

WiSe Scheme

The WiSe (Wildlife Safe) is the United Kingdom Standard for commercial marine wildlife watching. It aims to promote responsible wildlife-watching, through training, accreditation and awareness-raising.

The core element to WiSe, is a modular training and accreditation course aimed primarily at operators of passenger pleasure craft, wildlife cruise operators, dive and service boats, and yacht skippers. These individuals are most likely to come into contact with marine wildlife, as they are out on the water on a regular basis.

WiSe training consists of instruction in how to responsibly watch wildlife, whilst at the same time minimising any potential disturbance. All WiSe accredited operators received instruction in how to handle their craft whilst in contact with any of these animals, how they may react to the presence of boats, and how to leave them room to carry on with their lives unimpeded.

All WiSe operators receive instruction into their local and national laws relating to wildlife. They will receive instruction on species identification, life history and behaviour of a range of species they may encounter in their local waters. All WiSe operators agree to abide by Codes of Conduct for all of the species covered by WiSe, as well as all relevant local or national laws and bylaws.

WiSe Instructors have been specially selected in all areas around the UK for their years of experience in the field, their knowledge of the species likely to be encountered in their locality, and local conservation issues relating to marine wildlife that are of particular relevance.

Litter

The Blueway is free from litter and fly-tipped waste

This aspect will be assessed under the technical standards relating to specific trails.

Management Group

A Blueway Management Group is in place – led by a Local Authority or State Agency

Partnership will be key to the successful development and ongoing management of a Blueway.

The establishment of a Blueway Management Group should formalise the partnership via a mechanism such as a Partnership Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

A Partnership Agreement or MOU will typically include the following:

- Aims and Objectives
- Spirit of the agreement i.e. collaboration
- Synopsis of overall activities
- Term, Termination and Review
- Specific Agreements – these may include:
    o Key Responsibilities of each party
    o Key Contacts / Representatives
    o Financial obligations / budgets
    o Branding
    o Intellectual Property

To ensure ongoing sustainability the group should be led by a local authority or state agency

Management Plan

A Blueway Management Plan is in place

Every Blueway project should include the development of a Management Plan. This is good practice for a range of reasons that include:

- Blueway management that ensures the safety of users is considered and that trail standards are maintained at a consistent level
- Blueway management that relates directly to the liability of the Blueway Provider. Proper evidence of an implemented Management Plan will reduce the likelihood of the Blueway Provider being found at fault should a claim resulting from injury on the Blueway arise
- Funding – many funders will require evidence of a Management Plan that clearly shows how the Blueway Management Group will ensure that the trail(s) project will be managed for a specified period of time, normally the duration for which their Letter of Offer is valid. This provides evidence that there is a procedure in place to ensure that the Blueway is maintained at the standard and for the purpose for which the project was funded
- Partner buy-in – a Blueway Management Plan ensures that all project partners are clear about the commitment required to managing the project, once completed. The Plan will also clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners.

The Blueway Management Plan should:

- Clearly relate to the requirements of the members of the Blueway Management Group
- Be developed by individuals who have an understanding of Blueway management, provision and development within the context of the area
- Clearly reflect the development process for that Blueway to date

The Trail Management Plan should include (but is not limited to):

- Visitor Safety Management Policy and Plan
- Biosecurity Plan
- Blueway Product Inventory
- Maintenance Plan
- Risk Assessment
- Marketing Plan

Visitor Safety Management Policy and Plan

The best practice in this area is outlined within Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside – Principles and Practice. http://vscg.org/publications/ . The Blueway Steering Group encourages the adoption of these risk management techniques.

Developed by the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group[8] the guiding principles and risk management techniques have been developed and implemented by all of its members. They have provided their worth in practice and have been recognised by enforcing authorities and courts, as the basis for sensible risk management.

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[8] The Ireland Branch was formed in 2013 and is focused on the issues facing the Irish members such as the visitor risk assessment process and a common approach to information and signage. A number of Irish organisations have been members of the VSCG since the 2013 launch and this continues to grow year on year.

Plan	• Policy and Strategy Development • Planning and Organising
Do	• Implemenation and Operation
Check	• Performance Monitoring
Act	• Learn and Improve
Review	• Against Guiding Principles

Protocols and Procedures

The Visitor Safety Management Plan should clearly set out the protocols and procedures that will be followed to ensure that the Blueway Provider is meeting the Duty of Care. This will include:

The number and content of inspections:

- Inspections will include formal e.g. once a month, or informal e.g. after a storm, an event, or provided via feedback from a user.
- All inspections should be recorded including the date, time, who completed the inspection and the action to be taken following the inspection.

Who will complete the inspections:

- Consideration should be given as to who will complete the inspections. This may include a paid member of staff, volunteers or a company contracted to deliver the service. It is important to consider the skills and experience required to complete inspections and ensure that the person completing the inspection has the necessary skills.

Actions resulting from inspections:

- The reporting structure of any inspections must be clearly set out to ensure that action is taken where required. The action required can be prioritised in terms of urgency. For example –
  - Priority 1 - within a day
  - Priority 2 - within a week
  - Priority 3 - within a month
  - Priority 4 - within 3 months
  - Priority 5 - within 6 months

For example:

- Missing/ damaged waymarkers/ information or warning signs - Priority 1/ 2
- Fallen trees/ branches across trails - Priority 1

- Waymarkers/information or signs partially obscured by vegetation – Priority 2 /3
- Damage to trail tread – Priority 1 to 5, depending on level of damage

In some cases, for example if a tree has fallen across a section of trail (Priority 1), the section of trail will need to be closed and a suitable diversion put in place. This section of trail should remain closed and users informed of this until the tree has been safely removed. A suitable diversion route will need to be put in place and this will also need to be inspected as part of the normal inspection regime of the trail for the duration of the diversion.

Informing Users:

- The procedure for informing Trail Users of any diversions/ trail closures or other trail related issues must be clearly set out in the Management Policy. This should include clear and appropriate signage/ information at the trailhead, online, and at the start of the relevant section. This information should remain in place until the necessary works have been carried out to address the problem. The Management Plan should also identify who is responsible for ensuring the relevant trail information is put in place and removed again once the issue has been resolved. A clear record of the action taken should be kept.

Blueway Product Inventory

The purpose of this is to establish an inventory for all parts of the Blueway product once it is completed. This will form the baseline standard for inspections. The aim of the Blueway Provider should be to maintain and manage the product consistently at this baseline standard. The Trail Product Inventory should include the following key elements:

- Infrastructure Inventory
- Trail Inventory
- Waymarking Inventory
- Signage Inventory
- Information Inventory
- Product Literature Inventory
- Counter Inventory

Maintenance Plan

A crucial part of the Management Plan is the Maintenance Plan. Records of all maintenance must be kept including the date, time, detail of work completed and by whom. A pro forma should be established to record all maintenance.

The maintenance plan should include –

When maintenance takes place:

There will be regular maintenance required, for example – Clearing back encroaching vegetation on a regular basis especially throughout the growing season

There will also be ad hoc maintenance requirements e.g. repairing trail features. The ad hoc maintenance will be identified during the formal and informal inspections and a clear protocol and procedure for this should be established

The amount of maintenance required will be influenced by a range of factors including level of use, the weather, time of year and the type of trail features. For example, extra maintenance may be required after a busy bank holiday weekend, after an event or following a storm.

The standard to which the trails should be maintained

As previously discussed, it is recommended the standards are based on the Blueway Product Inventory baseline

Who will complete maintenance?

It is important the roles and responsibility for maintenance is clearly defined. Different aspects may be maintained by different partners. It is important that the person(s) completing maintenance have the necessary skills/ experience/ qualifications required to complete the works.

Risk Assessment

As per the Visitor Safety Management Policy and Plan, the best practice in this area is outlined within Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside – Principles and Practice. http://vscg.org/publications/ . The Blueway Steering Group encourages the adoption of these risk management techniques.

The following five step approach is recommended:

1. •**Identify** the hazards

2. •**Consider** who might be harmed and how

3. •**Evaluate** the risks and decide whether the existing risk control measures are adequate or whether more should be done

4. •**Record** your findings and implement them

5. •**Review** your assessment and update if necessary
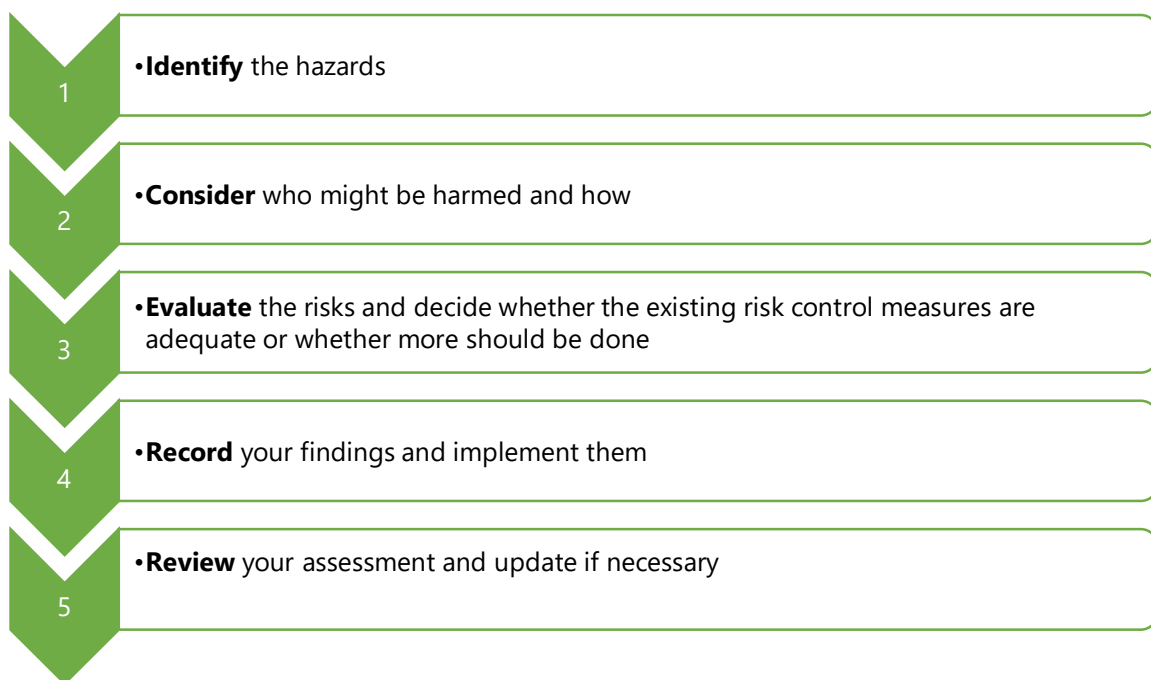
Hazard **-** is anything with the potential to cause harm

Risk - is the likelihood, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard, the severity of the harm and the number of people who might be hurt

Risk Control Measures - are precautions to make an incident less likely to occur and / or the results less severe

Marketing Plan

To ensure that the Blueway is effectively promoted, a marketing professional should create a targeted Marketing Plan. This should clearly identify the relevant target market(s) and how they will be attracted to the Blueway.

A range of factors including the objectives of the Blueway and the marketing budget available will influence the level of marketing activity. It should also be clearly identified who is responsible for implementing the Marketing Plan.

Monitoring

A formal process is in place to monitor the impact of the Blueway

It is essential to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Blueway in terms of both economics and participation levels.

In addition, it is essential to monitor visitor feedback in order to manage, maintain and improve the Blueway offering. Visitor feedback can relate to immediate issues such a damaged infrastructure but it is also important to monitor visitor experience feedback. Techniques may include:

- Electronic Visitor Counters
- Email / Telephone
- Social Media / Review Sites
- Questionnaires (e.g. Survey Monkey) via tourism operators

9. Accreditation Process

Process for the accreditation of Blueways:

1	•**Preliminary Application** •Application Screening & Recommendations	**Blueways Accreditation Advisor**
	•Ratification of recommendations	**Blueways Steering Group**

2	•Review of detailed submission •On the ground inspection •**Recommendation to Steering Group**	**Blueways Accreditation Advisor**

3	•**Ratification of inspection report** •**Award of accreditation**	**Blueways Steering Group**

4	•**Ongoing management and maintenance**	**Blueways Developer**

Preliminary Application

Preliminary applications will provide the opportunity for a review of the potential for a proposed Blueway to meet the requirements within the holistic accreditation criteria. The review of a concise preliminary application form at an early stage in the process will allow the Blueway Steering Group to provide direction to Blueway developers before further money, time and resource are invested. The feedback may provide an endorsement of the current proposal, advice on areas for improvement or determine if the proposal is viable in its current form.

Recommendation to Steering Group - Detailed Submission & External Inspection

Following the preliminary application and assessment, the developers will have the opportunity to take on board any feedback before preparing and submitting the final detailed application against the holistic criterion. A key element of this application process will involve an on the ground inspection of the proposed Blueway by the Blueway Officer.

Ratification of inspection report recommendations

The Blueway Accreditation Advisor will prepare a detailed inspection / assessment report which will recommend if a Blueway has achieved accreditation. This will be ratified by the Blueway Steering Group who will be recognised as the awarding body for Blueway accreditation.

In certain circumstances the Blueway Accreditation Advisor and Blueway Steering Group may require specialist advice from a Technical Advisory Panel.

Ongoing management and maintenance

Once the Blueway has received accreditation it will be the responsibility of the Blueway Management Group /developer to ensure it continues to meet the standards set out in the Blueway Accreditation Criteria.

Blueways wishing to retain accreditation will be re-inspected every three years. This will be conducted by the Blueways Accreditation Advisor and ratified by the Blueways Steering Group.

The costs for undertaking Blueway assessments and accreditations inspections are as follows – insert link

10. Blueway Planning Process

This section outlines the recommended process for successfully planning and developing Blueways in Ireland. The reality of outdoor recreation means the steps in this process may not be delivered in a linear fashion i.e. there will inevitably be overlap, however, it is important each step is delivered.

1 •Scoping - Concept Generation

2 •Establish Development Group / Frame of Reference

3 •Feasibility Study & Development Action Plan

4 •Preliminary Application

5 •Refine Development Plan

6 •Secure Funding

7 •Plan and Complete Development Work

8 •Final Application & Inspection

9 •Launch & Promote

10 •Manage and Monitor
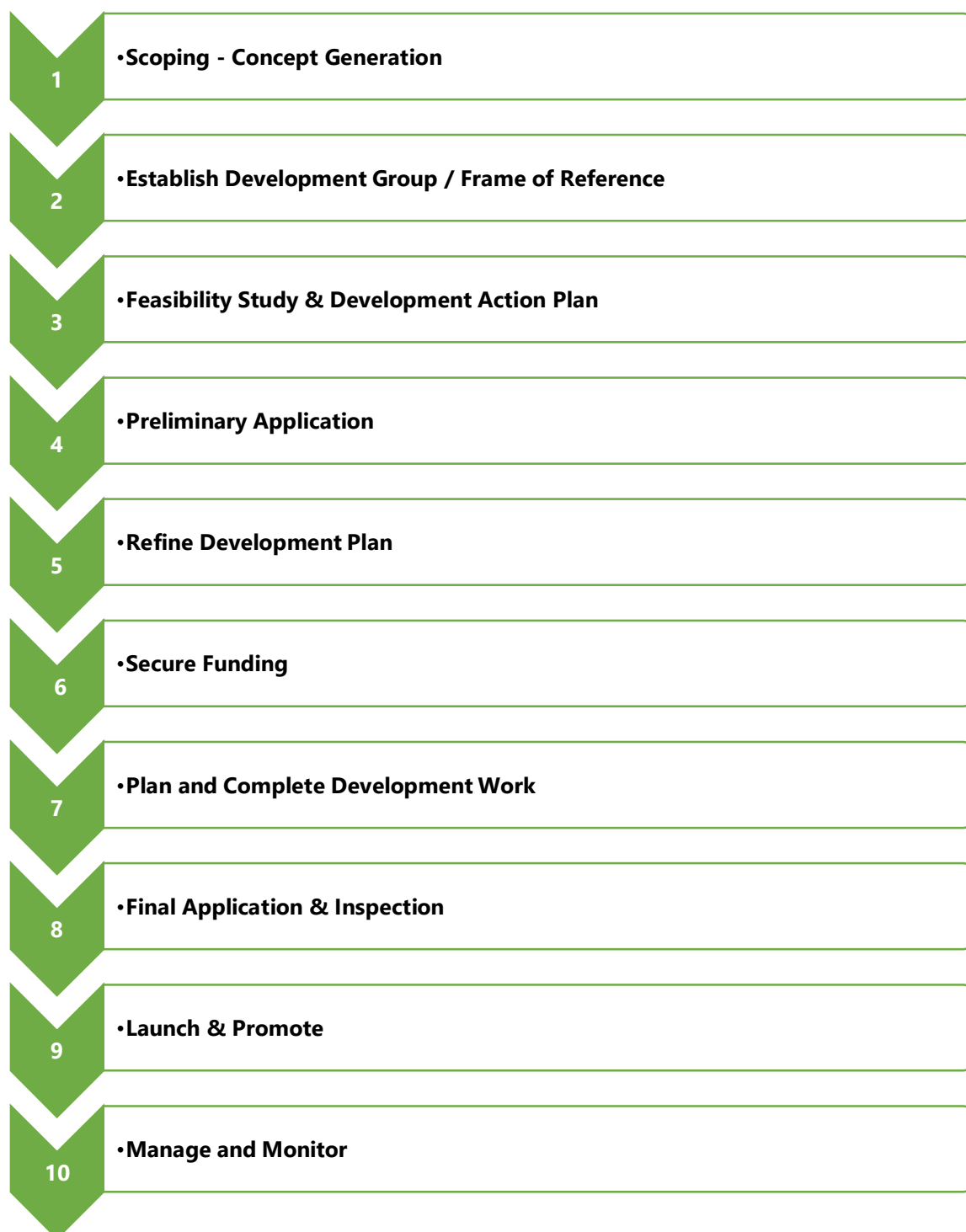
10.1. Scoping – Concept Generation

A high-level scoping exercise is important to establish an overview concept for a potential Blueway. This concept document will be key to encouraging the necessary partners to engage with the remaining stages of the planning process.

It should be made clear the concept is a discussion document on which input is welcomed. This will ensure stakeholders feel they have a key role from the outset. The initial concept document can be quite brief; however, it is recommended it includes the following:

Aims & Objectives – see 10.2

Scope and Scale – see 10.2

Concept Map

A concept map is a useful tool to spatially present the opportunities and challenges. Although care should be taken to ensure its confidentiality so as not to upset any potential stakeholders (e.g. private landowners) that have not yet been made aware of the project.

The most effective method of Concept Map development is via GIS in order to:

Identify:
- Public / Private land boundaries
- Existing recreation infrastructure / trails
- Connectivity of towns and villages
- Statutory designations
- Council boundaries
- Relevant attractions

Annotate
- Proposed Trails / Trailhead
- Proposed water access / egress point

Calculate
- Length of trails

Analysis of strengths and weaknesses vs accreditation criteria

This should include a snapshot analysis of the proposed Blueway's potential to meet the accreditation criteria (See section 7). Engagement with relevant experts may be required. There will inevitably be 'unknowns' identified at this stage, however, it is important they are outlined along with indicative methods of address.

Initial guidance and feedback from the Blueways Accreditation Advisor will add value and direction at this stage. **Engagement with the Blueways Accreditation Advisor is essential prior to making any applications for funding.**

Key Stakeholder Identification

Successful Blueway development will require a partnership approach. It is therefore important to identify the relevant bodies, organisations and individuals that will add the required resource and expertise to bring the project to fruition. A key stakeholder workshop is a useful technique to begin engagement. This process should begin to identify those:

- Responsible for the delivery of the Blueway
- Responsible for the ongoing management of the Blueway
- Who will have a key role in the delivery

10.2.   Establish Development Group / Frame of Reference

Project Development Group

The aforementioned key stakeholder engagement should identify the most relevant representatives to add value to a Project Development Group. It is important from the outset to state clearly the commitment expectations of group members. The group should be formally established with a designated chairperson from the lead organisation

Key stakeholders may include:

- Local Authority
- Local Development Company
- Tourism Organisations
- Local Sports Partnership
- National Governing Bodies of Sport
- Public Landowners / Managers
- Navigations authority
- Non-Governmental Environment Groups
- User groups – e.g. local canoe club

Frame of Reference

The development of a formal Frame of Reference will guide and inform the project throughout. It is also essential to secure partner buy-in and ensure that everyone is working to the same agenda.

The Frame of Reference should identify:
- Scope and Scale
- Aims and Objectives
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Concept Plan

Scope and Scale

Establishing the intended scope and scale means agreeing the significance and the size of the project. This is essential if the right outcomes are to be achieved.

Establishing the scope and scale of any trail development involves answering key questions such as:

- Who is the target market? e.g. is this for local community, day visitors or tourists?
- What is the significance of the trail project within the area in terms of existing or other planned provision? e.g. is this the only trail or is it one of many in the local area/ region?
- What is the desired economic and social impact of the trails? e.g. to create jobs, lead to increased visitor spend, provide a place for local people to get active outdoors, to increase participation in the sport, etc.
- Is the project of community, regional, national or international significance?
- How many people and communities is the development likely to affect/ impact upon?

Aims and Objectives

Clearly defined project aim(s) and objectives are important to ensure all partners are in agreement about what the Blueway will achieve.

Generally, there is one clear overall aim for the project; this is the main reason why the project is taking place. The objectives should then all relate to the achievement of this aim. These will be shaped by the project scope and scale, as previously identified. The project aim(s) and objectives can be extremely varied and can relate to the following:

- Creating a tourism facility of regional, national or international importance
- Creating a community recreation resource
- Managing the impact of current recreation on land use
- Managing the impact of recreation on a landscape or habitat
- Managing safety and liability
- Managing user conflict

In order to provide the necessary clarity, it is advised to employ either

- SMART Goal Setting – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-Bound

Or

- **O**utcome **B**ased **A**ccountability (OBA) – stating Outcomes, Indicators of Success and Measures of Success

Define Role and Responsibilities

It is essential to define roles (including project lead) and responsibilities for the development of the project. This will initially relate to the development of the project; however, it is also essential to identify the roles and responsibilities for ongoing project management.

10.3. Feasibility Study and Development Action Plan

This detailed feasibility study will undertake a critical review of the proposed Blueway against the Blueway Accreditation Criteria outlined in detail within Section 7 i.e.

- Experience
- Technical
- Access
- Safety
- Conservation and Environment
- Sustainability

For each of the sub-criteria, the feasibility study should identify:

- Current position
- Potential to meet the criteria
- Recommended action(s) to move from current to required position

It may be necessary to commission external expertise to assess some of the criteria e.g. Technical Criteria. It is essential to be realistic at this stage, if the Blueway is unlikely to meet some the criteria then it is important to alter the proposal whilst remaining in line with the Frame of Reference or cease

the process. The recommended actions should be formed within a Development Plan with defined responsibilities against relevant stakeholders.

Indicatives costs and delivery timelines should also be identified at this point.

10.4.   Preliminary Application

The aforementioned Feasibility Study and Action Plan will form the basis of the Preliminary Application submitted to the Blueways Accreditation Advisor. Preliminary application form / questionnaire to be developed by Blueways Accreditation Advisor.

The Preliminary Application will be assessed by the Blueways Accreditation Advisor. The feedback and recommendations from the assessment will be ratified by the Blueways Ireland Steering Group.

The Preliminary applications will provide the opportunity for a review of the potential for a proposed Blueway to meet the requirements of the accreditation criteria.   The review of a concise preliminary application form at an early stage in the process will allow the Blueway Steering Group to provide direction to Blueway developers before further money, time and resource is invested. The feedback may provide an endorsement of the current proposal, advice on areas for improvement or determine if the proposal is not viable in its current form.

10.5.   Refine the development plan

Following feedback from the Blueways Ireland Steering Group it may be necessary to refine the development plan accordingly.

It will then be necessary to deliver on the actions required to place the project in a position for a funding application. For example, this may include:

- Securing Formal (written) Agreement with landowners
- Preparation of detailed design Detailed trail / infrastructure
- Preparation of signage concepts
- Preparation of detailed costs
- Securing of planning permission
- Securing statutory approvals – commission additional environmental studies required

10.6.   Secure Funding

The aforementioned steps will place the project in a 'shovel – ready' position which is an attractive position for funders seeking a safe return on investment.

Applying for funding requires energy, time and commitment. Prior research and engagement in relation to your project's eligibility against funding criteria is increasingly encouraged by funders.

10.7. Plan and Complete the Development Work

Once all the necessary funding is in place, the project can move to development phase.

Capital

Depending on the capacity and expertise of the project partners, this may involve securing the services of external contractors. In this scenario the appointment of an experienced Consultant Project Management (CPM) Team is recommended to oversee the tendering process. The CPM Team will be able to provide advice on the type and form of contract(s), prepare necessary documentation, assess tender submissions, appoint contractors and oversee works.

Capacity Building

With a timeline identified for capital works, it is important that the capacity building programme is delivered to:

- Ensure key stakeholders are aware of the Blueway proposition
- Ensure key stakeholders are empowered to promote and champion the Blueway
- Develop a range of engaging visitor experiences
- Develop a range of themes and itineraries

Marketing / Visitor Information

The development of visitor information such as website and supporting visitor collateral should also be developed at this stage.

10.8. Final Application and Inspection

Blueway Developers will be required to prepare and submit a final detailed application against the Blueway Accreditation Criteria. Final application form / questionnaire to be developed by Blueways Accreditation Advisor.

A key element of this stage will be an on the ground inspection of the proposed Blueway by the Blueways Accreditation Advisor. A representative of the Blueway Development Group, who is familiar with the route must accompany the inspector during the on-the-ground inspection.

The Blueways Accreditation Advisor will prepare a detailed inspection / assessment report which will recommend if a Blueway has achieved accreditation. This will be ratified by the Blueways Ireland Steering Group who will be recognised as the awarding body for Blueway accreditation.

In certain circumstances the Blueways Accreditation Advisor and Blueways Ireland Steering Group may require specialist advice from a Technical Advisory Panel.

Where a Blueway does not apply with the accreditation criteria, a listing of any corrective actions will be provided. Once these actions are addressed and confirmed, the Blueways Accreditation Advisor, the trail will receive accreditation. Further inspection may be required.

10.9. Launch and Promote

Following accreditation, the Blueway can be officially launched and promoted to the public.

10.10. Manage and Monitor

Once the Blueway has received accreditation it will be the responsibility of the Blueway Management Group /developer to ensure it continues to meet the standards set out in the Blueway Accreditation Criteria. <mark>Working group to provide further guidance of measures.</mark>

Blueways wishing to retain accreditation will be re-inspected every three years. This will be conducted by the Blueways Accreditation Advisor and ratified by the Blueways Steering Group.

Appendix 1: Blueways Ireland Steering Group

The Blueways Ireland Steering comprises

Sport Ireland – Sport Ireland Trails http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails

Sport Ireland Trails is the unit within Sport Ireland that coordinates the recreational trails programme.

Waterways Ireland https://www.waterwaysireland.org/

Waterways Ireland is one of the six North/South Implementation Bodies established under the British Irish Agreement in 1999. Waterways Ireland manages, maintains, develops and promotes over 1000km inland navigable waterways principally for recreational purposes. The waterways under the remit of the body are the Barrow Navigation, the Erne System, the Grand Canal, the Lower Bann, the Royal Canal, the Shannon-Erne Waterway and the Shannon Navigation.

Fáilte Ireland http://www.failteireland.ie/

Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority for the Republic of Ireland

Sport Northern Ireland http://www.sportni.net/

Sport Northern Ireland is the leading public body for the development of sport in Northern Ireland.

Tourism Northern Ireland https://tourismni.com/

Tourism Northern Ireland is responsible for the development of tourism and the marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination to domestic tourists, from within Northern Ireland, and to visitors from the Republic of Ireland.

Appendix 2: Review of International Best Practice

The preparation of this document requires a robust review of international best practice to:

- review standards used for water based trails in other countries
- review systems in place to verify that trails comply with standards
- review how water trails are monitored and managed
- document how activity providers are approved / accredited to provide visitor experiences on water trails in other countries

The following methodology was employed:

Identification of Suitable Case Studies:
Desk research & consultation with client

Case Studies:
Desk research & one-to-one consultation

Accreditation Review:
Desk research & one-to-one consultation

Identification of critical factors of success:
Analysis

Development of recommendations:
Report Writing

Presentation & Report to Steering Group
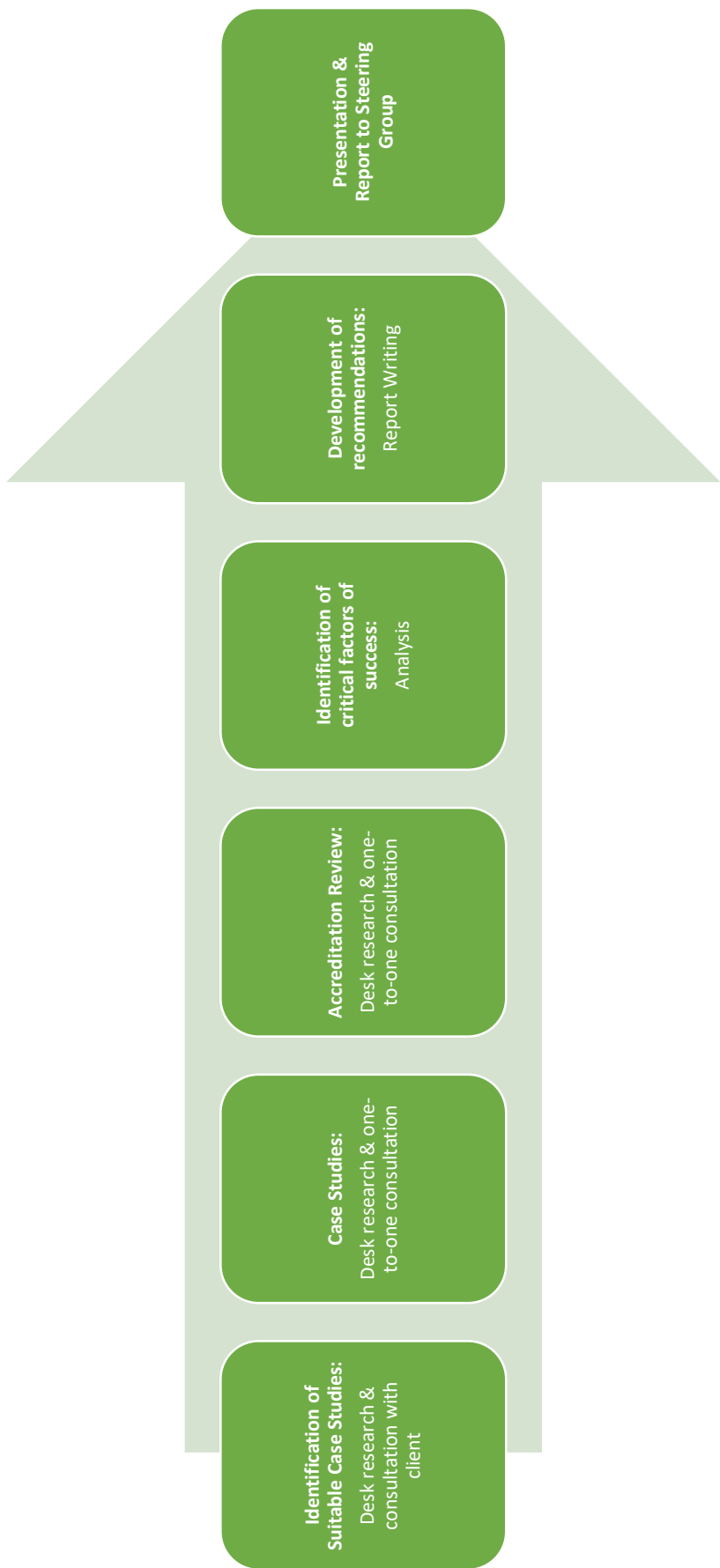
Water Trail Network Case Studies included:

- National Water Trails System – United States of America
  https://www.nps.gov/watertrails/
- Outdoors Finland
  http://www.outdoorsfinland.com/
- Scottish Canals
  https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/
- Great Glen Canoe Trail
  http://greatglencanoetrail.info/
- Scottish Wildlife Trust Snorkel Trails
  https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/snorkel-trails/

Walking Trail Network Case Studies included:

- European Ramblers Association – Leading Quality Trails
  http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/programs/lqt/
- Green Flag Trails
  http://greenflagtrails.org/

The review also considered accreditation schemes for activity provider including:

- An overview of the current position of Statutory and Voluntary Accreditation Schemes in Northern Ireland / Ireland
- National Governing Body Schemes relevant to Northern Ireland / Ireland
- Tourism Board Schemes – Visit Wales / Visit Scotland and Tourism Northern Ireland

Detailed recommendations relating to the critical factors of success were identified. A summary is outlined below:
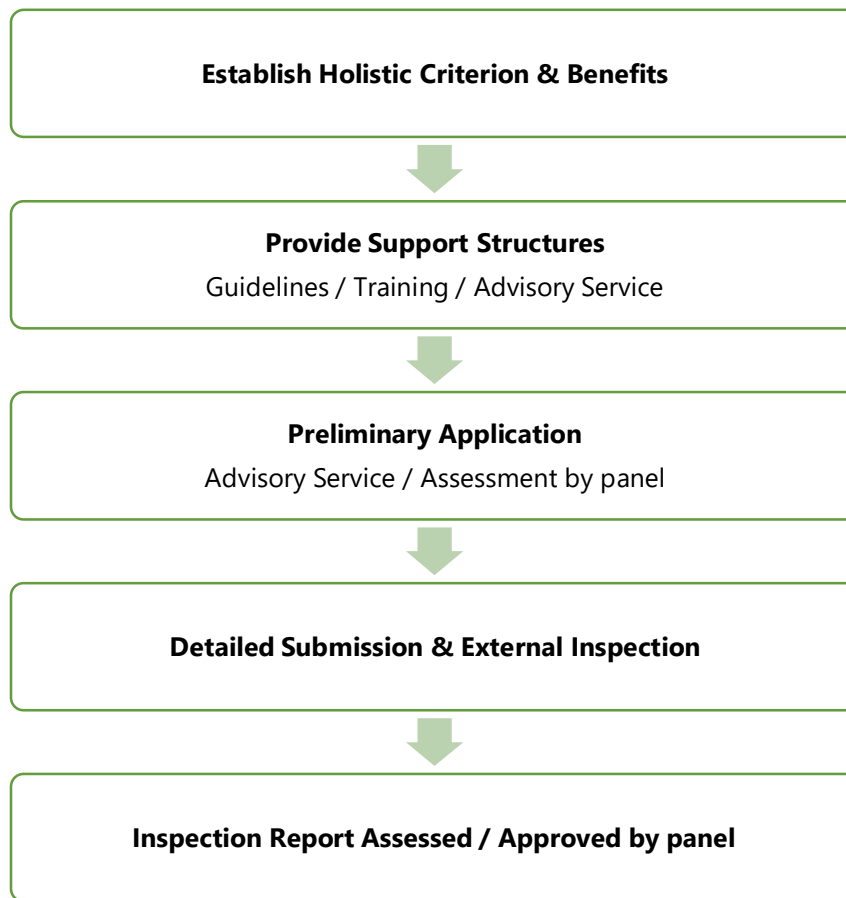
Recommendation 1:

Holistic criterion is developed to assess the quality of Blueways in Ireland.

The review of International Best Practice has identified holistic criteria should combine a visitor focused approach with fundamental safety, technical, access and environmental components. All components are underpinned by sustainable management techniques and processes.

Recommendation 2:

Refine and adopt the following system for ensuring trails comply with standards / criteria

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Establish Holistic Criterion & Benefits      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Provide Support Structures               │
│         Guidelines / Training / Advisory Service      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Preliminary Application                │
│         Advisory Service / Assessment by panel        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Detailed Submission & External Inspection    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Inspection Report Assessed / Approved by panel│
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Recommendation 3:

Adopt the following approach in terms of systems for activity provider accreditation:

Minimum:

- Establish Activity Provider Permit Guidelines for administration by Trail Developer / Promoter

Future:

- Recognise / Adopt a National Safety Accreditation Scheme
- Recognise / Adopt a Tourist Board Visitor Experience Assurance Scheme

Appendix 3: Visitor Segmentation

Overseas Visitors

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland have identified the following overseas segments as best prospects for engagement with a Blueway in Ireland:

Primary – Great Escapers

They are often couples, approximately 30 years old, some with babies or quite young children. Most are in serious need of time out from busy lives and careers. They are specifically interested in rural holidays and travel very much as a couple or family. Great Escapers are on holiday for a break, to get physical with nature, and to reconnect with their partner. More likely to take part in slightly more strenuous, but not extreme, exploration. More interested than other segments in getting connected to nature especially the more remote and exciting places.

Further detailed information is available at http://www.failteireland.ie/International-sales/International-sales/Great-escapers.aspx

Secondary – Culturally Curious

They choose their holiday destinations carefully and are independent 'active sightseers' looking to visit new places, and expand their experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture. They are unlikely to return for some time once they have visited a new place, and often travel in a couple or as individuals and rarely in a family group. The age group for this demographic is 40 plus.

Further detailed information is available at http://www.failteireland.ie/International-sales/International-sales/Culturally-Curious.aspx

Domestic Visitors

The respective national tourism authorities have identified the following best prospect segments for their respective domestic markets.

Fáilte Ireland – Connected Families

Connected Families make up 23 percent of the domestic market, the single largest segment. They are made up of relatively young families. They are made up of parents in their thirties and early forties and children generally under the age of ten. For Connected Families, family holidays are the best weeks of the year and a special opportunity to spend quality time together, creating memories to last a lifetime.

Further detailed information is available at

http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/3_Marketing_Toolkit/9_International_Sales_Toolkit/Connected-families-brochure.pdf

Tourism Northern Ireland – Open to Ideas

- Conduct a lot of research online
- Consider reviews and influenced by media
- Open-minded and interested in the outdoors, sport, music and history
- Seeking organised 'active' but not adventurous activities; motivated by nature/outdoors
- Like to plan and have an itinerary

- Value for money important and influenced by deals
- Like 'easy to get to' destinations and scenic natural surroundings

Further detailed information is available at

https://tourismni.com/globalassets/events/misc/603102-roi-taskforce-brochure-st6-spreads.pdf

Tourism Northern Ireland - Active Maximisers

Like to squeeze in as much as possible on a short break

- Enjoy energetic activities (but not extreme sports) and have a strong sense of adventure
- Passion for outdoors and the natural environment
- Looking for unique and mind broadening experiences
- Digital a very significant influence
- Focused on getting a good deal
- Actively research online
- Need to be connected (Wi-Fi etc.)

Further detailed information is available at https://tourismni.com/globalassets/events/misc/603102-roi-taskforce-brochure-st6-spreads.pdf

Appendix 4: Technical Advisory Panel - Key Contacts

Organisation	Website	Email	Phone
British Sub Aqua Club – Ireland Region	https://www.bsac.com/this-is-bsac/bsac-team/regional-coaches/ireland-region/	irl.coach@bsac.com	
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland	http://cani.org.uk/	office@cani.org.uk	+44 (0)28 9543 8094
Canoeing Ireland	https://canoe.ie/	info@canoe.ie	+353 (0) 1625 1105
Irish Sailing	https://www.sailing.ie/	info@sailing.ie	+353 (0) 1280 0239
Irish Water Safety	http://www.iws.ie	info@iws.ie	+353 (0) 9156 4400
Irish Underwater Council	http://diving.ie/	info@diving.ie	+353 (0) 1284 4601
Royal Yachting Association Northern Ireland	https://www.rya.org.uk/rya-regions/rya-ni/Pages/hub.aspx	ryani@rya.org.uk	+44 (0)28 9182 7154
Sport Ireland Trails	https://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/	cmacdonnell@sportireland.ie	+353 (0) 1860 8823

Appendix 5: Snorkel Trail Guidelines

The following are suggested criteria for a coastal snorkel trail, as provided by Comhairle Fo-Thuinn (CFT), also known as the Irish Underwater Council. These guidelines assist in the promotion of snorkelling trails amongst all participants, however the focus for Blueways should be Grade One Trails.

These guidelines assume that best use will be made of existing infrastructure, rather than incurring significant expense in new-build or costly investment.

Snorkelling Trail Grades

The following are guidelines regarding the potential grading of a snorkelling trail:

- Grade One – Less than 1km, >2m, no currents (Beginner)
- Grade Two - Less than 3km, >5m, some tidal movement (Intermediate)
- Grade Three – More than 3km, >10m, tidal currents (Advanced)

Access and Egress

- Entry and exit to and from the water should be possible at all stages of the tide, either via steps, a slip or across a beach.
- Entry and exit to and from the water should also be possible at all stages of water flow conditions for river or lake snorkels.
- Avoid using entry and exit points that pass over seaweed covered rocks.
- If a working pier is being used, entry and exit should be well away from the working area of the pier or harbour.

Design and Length

- Because snorkelling attracts mixed age groups, ensure that the trail is suitable for all levels of experience in the first instance, or if possible identify shorter routes for those less experienced.
- Ideally the trail should be circular – thus avoiding long walks in wetsuits. However linear 'out-and back' trails, such as snorkelling along the coast to a point and back, or up to a marker buoy and back, are also feasible. The advertised trail length of these types of linear trails must include both the out and back elements.
- Because snorkels involve complete emersion, the time spent snorkelling will be very much dependent on temperature conditions. It is best to plan for snorkels that last no longer than 45 minutes.
- The typical trail should be no longer than 1km.
- Longer snorkelling opportunities can be identified for more experienced snorkelers, and advice on the appropriateness of these routes should be sought from CFT.
- Exit points along the trail should be clearly identified, both on promotional material, and through the use of appropriate trail signage.
- The trail should avoid crossing deep water areas (>2m), and areas prone to tidal movement.
- Ideally there should be a good range of marine life observable along the trail.
- Try to identify entry and exit points that have interesting features close by, this is to keep up interest while getting ready.
- Identify and describe the main plants and animals that are likely to be seen along the snorkel in supporting information materials.

General

- If the trail makes its way through and around islands and islets, consider preparing a simple sketch map to show the main topographical features along the route.
- Where the trail is being developed for a festival or a similar event, consider buoying-off the trail to mark the way.
- Each snorkel trail will require a risk assessment.

Legislation

- Ensure that all entry and exit points are on public land.
- Ensure that snorkel trails are not close to or over sites that are protected for archaeological reasons, or sites that require a license to explore.

Parking

- All trails should have ample parking on public space at the trailhead. Ideally this should be a public car park or a pier, with public toilet facilities.

Appendix 6: Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines

Grading & Suitability

Blueway Paddling Trails should be appropriate for the 'dabbler' or 'novice' i.e. those that have **little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking adventure activities.**

Therefore, paddling trails should only be developed according to the following definitions within Canoeing Ireland guidance. For further information see https://canoe.ie/river-grading-and-area-definitions/

Waterway Type	Definition	Description
River[9]	Grade 1 – Flat Water	Water stationary or extremely slow moving and without any obstructions[10]
Inland Waterways[11]	Very Sheltered Inland Water	Rivers – Specific sites on slow moving rivers
		Canals – Canals with bank side access and egress which have a minimum of commercial traffic
		Lakes – Small lakes which do not have difficult landing areas and which are not large enough for problems to occur if there is a sudden change in conditions
	Sheltered Inland Water	Rivers – Flat slow moving rivers without weirs or rapids
		Lakes - Discretion and common sense must apply when considering the use of lakes. This definition includes lakes with a diameter of no more than 250 metres from shore to shore.[12]

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[9] The grading system is meant as a general guide with regard to river grades. The river grading scheme is based upon Canoeing Ireland and British Canoeing interpretation. The final decision, however, as to the grading of a river's conditions is ultimately the responsibility of an Instructor who must make decisions based upon experience, knowledge, ability, and level of qualification.

[10] While grade 1 rivers can be prone to blockages after storms. Tree, branches and debris can cause rivers to become unnavigable. A robust monitoring and maintenance scheme is therefore required

[11] These definitions imply weather conditions, which are not in themselves likely to cause problems. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low.

[12] Further guidance on the use of lakes / loughs is provided by the British Canoeing Terms of Reference for Coaches and Leaders. 'Suitable lagoons or sections of sheltered bays or larger lakes can sometimes be designated 'sheltered' or even 'very sheltered' water by careful and sensible selection.' The Blueway Technical Advisory Panel will be able to guide such decisions.

		To paddle in offshore breezes on large lakes requires the same degree of caution as for the sea
Sea[13]	Sheltered Tidal Areas	Enclosed harbours with a minimum of commercial traffic, enclosed on three sides. Where there is minimal possibility of being blown off shore. Small enclosed bays where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore. Defined beaches (a short section of beach with easy landing throughout, no tidal races, or overfalls) – winds not above Force 3. Force 2 if offshore, when the greatest of caution should be exercised. The upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving, estuaries.

Route / Trail:

- A Blueway paddling trail must have a series of defined access / egress points
- Distance between access and egress points should be no more than 3km.
- All sections of the waterway must be unobstructed and passable
- Any significant hazards or obstructions must have a clear portage option with associated access and egress points

Access / Egress Points:

Trailheads

These will be the formal of entry and the main locations at which visitors are encouraged to access / egress the waterway

- On a linear river trail this will often be at the most logical upstream and downstream location – bookending the other access points.
- On coastal and inland lake trails – the majority of Blueway excursions will be circular. However, there may be a number of trailheads from which to begin and end a journey.

These trailheads will therefore have the highest volume of use and should adhere to the following minimum criteria (further guidance is provided in Appendix 6.1):

- Parking
  - o Off-road parking for a recommended minimum of 10 spaces (including space for trailers)[14]
  - o No Parking / Loading Bay in close proximity to water
- Information Panel – see Signage
- Toilets and Changing Facilities
- Fresh water tap
- Formal staging area i.e. a hard surface staging area (min 3m x 3m) out with the car park to allow gathering of equipment and preparation
- Unrestricted and easy access from parking to water access

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[13] In all cases the wind and weather conditions must be favourable

[14] The Blueway Developer is tasked with determining the scale of the trailhead required

- Water access infrastructure should be fit for purpose, robust and safe at all points of water level
- Consideration of the requirements of activity operators

Access and Egress Points

Secondary access and egress points should adhere to the following minimum criteria (further guidance is provided in Appendix 6.1:

- Parking
    - Off-road parking for a recommended minimum of 5 spaces (including space for trailers)[15]
- Information Panel – see Signage
- Formal staging area i.e. a hard surface staging area (min 3m x 3m) out with the car park to allow gathering of equipment and preparation
- Unrestricted and easy access from parking to water access
- Water access infrastructure should be fit for purpose, robust and safe at all points of water level

Signage

See Appendix 7

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[15] The Blueway Developer is tasked with determining the scale of the trailhead required

Appendix 6.1 Paddling Trailhead Guidance

Car Parking

Car parking at trailheads should be within designated parking i.e. off the public highway.

It is the task of the Blueway Developer to determine the scale of the trailhead. If an existing car park / amenity is being used it is important to consider the current volume of use, for example if the car park is already full on most weekends then additional provision will be required.

When developing new car parks, consideration should be given to the surface most appropriate to the setting. Products such as TRUCKPAVE provide useful alternatives to tarmac or gravel.

http://www.terram.com/projects/truckpave-grass-paver-install-in-liverpool.html

When designing a car park consider the following:

- the space required for the parking and navigation of vehicles and canoe trailers as well as their loading and offloading 'flow' requirements
- the nature of paddling activities (canoes, kayaks, stand up paddleboards) require the need for generous parking bays
- car park height restriction barriers can prevent inappropriate use, however these barriers should take into account the requirement for cars carrying canoes on roof racks or mini buses with trailers. A minimum height of 2m is required for cars, however a management process should be considered for when barriers are likely to prevent access.

Toilets and Changing Facilities

Remember the 'dabbler' will have higher expectations for toilet and changing facilities than an enthusiast. Toilets and changing facilities should therefore be provided within close proximity.

Composting toilets offer an environmentally friendly solution and have lower construction costs with respect to power and effluent treatment, however care is required in their location and they require occasional management especially in high use areas of the trail.

Given their likely proximity to a watercourse, non-composting type toilets will require either an advanced waste water treatment system or a holding tank. The latter will require the on-going management of this waste water. Chemical toilets should be a last resort option.

Formal Staging Area

Formal staging areas are congregation spaces which facilitate the gathering of equipment in the trailhead close to the parking and en-route to the water access area.

Informal staging areas in the car park leads to the casual positioning of water-sports craft and equipment, the blocking of user flow as well as an increased potential for theft and slip, trips and falls. A three meter by three meter concrete or compacted gravel staging area should be sufficient.

Unrestricted and easy access from parking to water access

Passage between the water and the trailhead will typically require a short section of walking trail.

These trails should not act as drainage slopes as this can lead to erosion and the transfer of soil and other contaminants into the water trail. The following principles and criteria are suggested for such trails:

- The trail from the parking area to the launch should be a maximum of a 10% gradient
- Maximum trail cross slope 2%
- Resting intervals (max 3% slope), are required for trails in excess of 100 metres with a slope in excess of 5%. Especially at water egress trailheads
- No dips on trails or other features that increase the risk of ponding
- Minimum trail width of 2 metres
- Minimum overhead clearance of 2.5 metres
- Swing clearance on bends of 2 metres either side of the trail.

To prevent inadvertent entering into the water, fencing or margin vegetation planting between the trail/car park and the water may be required. Further guidance is available within Risk Control For Inland Sites – Irish Water Safety http://www.iws.ie/_fileupload/advice/risk_control_for_inland_water_sites.pdf

Launch points should be fit for purpose, robust and safe at all typical points of water level

Launch points or water access points will often require bespoke solutions to the exact location. The following guidelines provide some recommended approaches:

- Existing in-situ facilities (when possible) should be used to facilitate to trail. This is preferential to constructing additional new infrastructure. However:
    - It should not be assumed that current infrastructure such as a pier, slipway, pontoon or jetty implies access for all water users. It may have been developed for a specific use e.g. anglers, ferries, fishing craft. Consultation and permission is therefore required
    - Existing infrastructure may require adaptations – for example standard floating pontoons can be difficult to use to exit from a kayak as the height of the pontoon from the water can be excessive. Dropped pontoons positioned lower to water level can be attached to alleviate this.

- The design and positioning of water access points must take into account prevailing conditions such as wind, tide, flow direction, varying water levels. The launch site should offer a calm environment to begin a Blueway journey.

Recommended Access and Egress Infrastructure Criteria are as follows:

Infrastructure	Dimensions	Comment
Access and Egress – landing stage heights	• Ideal Height of the landing stage above water - 300 mm or less • Maximum Height of the landing stage above water - 700 mm	• Kayak steps are the most appropriate and cost effective where water levels fluctuate on rivers • A floating pontoon should be used where water levels fluctuate significantly[16] • Heights above 600 mm may need to be supplemented by hand-holds at a lower height • Where there is significant water flow at the landing stage, heights should be closer to the ideal than the maximum • Beaches and slipways also provide suitable access and egress points, where they are uncovered at all stages of the tide, or are at typical lake water levels
Access and Egress – landing stage platforms	• Ideal Height of the landing stage above water - 300 mm or less • Maximum Height of the landing stage above water - 700 mm • Minimum landing stage platform Length - 800 mm, width - 300 mm	• Landing stage platforms should allow for the placing of the participants paddle on the shore, and facilitate the relatively ungainly body movement required in accessing and egressing the canoe/kayak

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[16] Standard floating pontoons can be difficult to use to exit from a kayak as the height of the pontoon from the water can be excessive. Dropped pontoons positioned lower to water level can be attached to alleviate this.

	- Ideal landing stage platform Length - 3 metres, width - 1.5 metres - Slope to and from the landing stage - ideally no more than 1:3 - Risers - typically 250 mm	
Access and Egress – landing stage obstructions	- 3 metres of unobstructed riverbank is recommended	- Canoes/kayaks range in length from 1.6 to 2 metres
Access and Egress – landing stage surfaces	- The edge of the landing stage nearest the water should ideally be curved to a 50 degree radius	- Reduces fall injuries, and rubbing damage to canoe/kayaks
Canoe slides	- The tie-off point on lowering stanchions should be higher than the highest point on the slide - Canoe slides should ideally be set at 45 degrees, however the bank's slope will dictate this - Access to either side of the canoe at the end of the slide is preferred - Wood or durable plastic should be used as the sliding surface - Sharp corners are to be avoided on all sliding areas - Slide designs should not facilitate sliding by individuals - Appropriate description and safety signage is required	- Stanchions heights will typically be determined by the slide height - Canoes are primarily made of plastic and abrade readily on sharp surfaces - An overly shallow slope will require the pulling of the canoe downwards, due to the friction of the canoe on the slide surface - Open canoeists should be encouraged to carry painters (bow and stern ropes), each of which is at least the length of their boat, as painters facilitate the lowering of the canoe on slides
Portage	- A portage of less than 100 metres is preferred	- Unladen open canoes weigh circa 20 kilos - You may wish to consider providing trolley wheels

Portage dimensions	• Open canoes are up to 6 metres long and 1 metre wide. All turning points on a portage must accommodate this, or facilitate the lifting of the craft	• On land canoes can be raised at one end, in order to minimise their length when turning in tight spaces. However, their weight makes this manoeuvre difficult

Consideration of activity provider requirements

Given activity providers are essential to the Blueway experience, it is important to consider how their services can be incorporated within trailheads. Consideration is required in terms of:

- Physical space required by activity providers e.g. for point of sale, trailers, equipment etc
- The practical operation of a permit system to control the provision of commercial activities

Appendix 7: Blueway Signage Guidelines

Principles Relating to Signs

- A balance must be made between providing sufficient minimal signage to encourage and give practical support to the user while not undermining the aesthetic value of the trail through sign clutter and the urbanising of the unspoilt or wilderness experience.
- Signage should where possible animate the Blueway and encourage the participant to do more.
- Signage should confer quality and be consistent.
- Positive signs indicating what is possible should where practical be used in preference to signs which indicate limitations.

Further reference should be made to Blueway Design & Brand Guidelines – include link

Irish Language

The Official Languages Act (Republic of Ireland only) sets out the statutory requirements regarding the use of the Irish language by public bodies. Most Blueways will be developed or funded by public bodies and hence it is likely that these requirements will apply. The following is an excerpt of some of these requirements:

- Place names on information signs must be in both Irish and English except:
- In Gaeltacht areas, where the names of places should be in Irish only.
- Where the spelling of a place name is similar in both languages, in which case only the Irish form of the name should be shown
- All Irish text should be in italic print, in lower case lettering, with initial letters in capitals.
- Irish script should be inclined to the right at an angle of 15 degrees to the vertical. All English text should be in upper case roman letters

Note that the content of Blueway information panels must be presented in Irish and English, including Gaeltacht areas. To identify the correct spelling of a place-name in Irish, consult www.logainm.ie

The use of icons instead of text on signs reduces the difficulty in comprehending sign content for non-native speakers of Irish and English.

Directional Signs to the Blueway

- Directions to the main entry trailheads along the Blueway should be signed. Signing should commence at the nearest town, village or junction with the nearest national road. Thereafter all junctions from the first sign en-route to the trailhead must be signed.

- Minor trailheads may be signed similarly to the main trailheads if required. The main trailheads should be easy to find however it may not be appropriate to provide directional signs from centres of local population and national roads to all of the trailheads due to sign costs as well as the risk of confusion where there are signs to multiple Blueway entry points in the same area.

- Signs which are used on Public Roads in the Republic of Ireland should follow the guidelines within DTTAS Traffic Signs Manual – See Section 4.22 'Tourist Attractions and Facilities' 2010 http://www.dttas.ie/roads/publications/english/traffic-signs-manual-2010

- Signs which are used on Public Roads in Northern Ireland should follow the guidelines within Transport NI 'The Signing of Tourism Attractions and Facilities' 2014 https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/the-signing-of-tourist-attractions-and-facilities-rsppg-e029.pdf

Blueway Trailhead Signage

Trailhead Entrance / Identifier Sign

In many cases, a trailhead entrance or identifier sign may be required to identify the trailhead / access points. The requirement for a trail head information panel to be in close proximity to the water often means they can be hidden within busy car parks.

This trailhead entrance or identifier sign will therefore provide reassurance the visitor is in the right place. It should:
- be clearly visible to passing traffic
- not block visibility to those entering or exiting the site / car park
- never be used in place of a white on brown road sign / directional sign

Trailhead Information Panels

Trailhead information panels should be:

- clearly visible from the car park
- positioned so as not to impact visitor flow i.e. visitors reading the panel should not disturb the flow of vehicles or people throughout the site

If a trailhead combines water and land-based trails it is good practice to separate the information relating to the individual activities e.g. one panel for a paddling trail and one panel for a walking trail. An overview panel may be useful to provide insight into the spatial relationship of the component trails.

It is recommended that trailhead panels have a secure updateable section to update visitors on frequently changing aspects for example events, trail closures etc.

Water Based Trails - Trailhead Information Panels

For the majority of newly developed Blueways, the water-based trail will be the new element. Trailhead information panels should be placed close to the water. If the access point is not obvious from the location of the trailhead information panel then additional directional signage may be required. Trailhead signage for water-based trails should include:

Trail Description detailing:

- Named Access & Egress Point
- Distance Km
- Duration
- Difficulty
- Short Description

Map – a large simple trail map

- A clear legend of symbols
- A scale plus kilometre marker
- A north pointer
- The complete trail section[17]
- 'You are Here' pointer
- Start and Finish Locations
- All defined access & egress points
- Location of obstructions, hazards or increase in difficulty

Other

- Key contacts and emergency information
- Method for visitor feedback – website / email / phone number
- Responsibility Statement
- Invasive Species Messaging – See Appendix 9

Maps must be oriented to suit the map board location for trails next to open water (note this might not be North up)

Water Based Trails – On trail signage

Signage along water-based trails should be kept to a minimum so as not to ruin the natural aesthetic. However, the following signs may be required:

- Colour coded indicator markers – indicating the safe or navigable heights of water levels at access points on river Blueways. These indicators may make use of existing structures such as bridges or slipway walls
- Flags or Wind Socks – are useful to indicate wind strength/direction and also identify access/egress points from the water
- Confirmatory signs -are only to be used where essential, for example where there are multiple indistinct choices some of which have the potential to significantly undermine the Blueway experience – for example routes around river islands

Water Based Trails – Portages

Portages should be provided on inland trails where either the route on the Blueway is impassable for example the presence of a dam or if the route is beyond the ability of the target Blueway user, for example the presence of a weir or rapid on a placid water trail.

- The portage egress should be clearly identifiable from the waterway, either due to the visibility of infrastructure or if necessary appropriate signage. Where the egress for the portage is reasonably visible from the water, a small courtesy egress sign might be located at this site so as to provide reassurance to the Blueway user.

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[17] For paddling trails this should be a line however Blueway sites incorporating may indicate areas for snorkelling or kayaking

- The portage route should be safe, as short as possible, clearly identifiable, have a suitable surface and an appropriate egress and access point to the water. Portage is not preferable on Blueways.

Land Based Trails

Where Blueways incorporate land-based trails i.e. waking and cycling trails that are already in existence then is it acceptable to utilise existing trailhead information panels, signage and waymarking as long as they meet the Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

However, the development of the Blueway may provide an opportunity to refresh the trailhead panels to follow the Blueway brand and therefore be consistent with the water-based trails.

All new signage and waymarking on land based trails should conform to the requirements of the Sport Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

Appendix 8: Activity Provider Accreditation

National Statutory / Voluntary Accreditation Schemes

Northern Ireland

Although there is the provision for statutory licencing of activity providers in Northern Ireland through The Activity Centres (Safety of Young Persons) Northern Ireland Order 1997, the legislation to date has not been enacted. The Department of Communities has currently adopted **'Adventuremark'** as a suitable adventure activity accreditation scheme for activity providers in Northern Ireland in lieu of statutory licensing. This approach was identified following extensive consultation with the outdoor activity industry.

Adventuremark is a non-statutory safety scheme devised by the Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC)[18] for providers of adventurous activities that are outside the scope of AALA. Adventuremark allows providers to demonstrate to their customers or users that the provider's arrangements for managing the potential risks of adventure activities have been inspected and found to meet the necessary standards of good practice in the adventure activity industry. Independent external assessment is required.

See http://www.adventuremark.co.uk/

Adventuremark is often utilised by activity providers that offer a range of activities. It is particularly useful for those activities which do not have a National Governing Body or centre based accreditation scheme. However, many activity providers (especially those that only offer one activity) still chose to obtain accreditation via a robust National Governing Body scheme – see below.

Republic of Ireland

There is currently no voluntary or statutory accreditation scheme for outdoor activity providers in the Republic of Ireland.

Following an incident at Clogher Head, Co.Louth in 2011 (when six school girls were rescued from the water by a lifeboat whilst partaking in sea kayaking under the supervision of an instructor from an activity centre) the Marine Casualty Investigation Board recommended the relevant Minister consider the regulation of the provision of adventure activities.

In 2013, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Michael Ring T.D. asked the Irish Sports Council to examine the issues associated with safety and standards in the adventure activities sector and the development of a register of adventure activity providers.

The Irish Sports Council established the Adventure Activities Working Group 'to assist the Council to define the scope and application of the registration system, and the standards to be applied.' The Group's recommendations for a statutory 'Adventure Activities Registration Scheme for Ireland' were made to the Minister in mid-2014. At the time of writing the scheme is not in place and the timeline for delivery is not known.

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[18] AAIAC, the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee, is the sector's lead body for safety in adventure activities. It is representative of a wide range of stakeholders from the UK adventure activities sector and is supported by the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

The Irish Association of Adventure Tourism https://iaat.ie/what-we-do/ was launched in Spring 2018. In the context of accreditation the IAAT aims to:

'promote best practise in all areas of our businesses, including: a. The highest service and safety standards (but not to regulate them) in a practical way that is sustainable and workable for the industry'

Blueway developers may find close liaison with this body to be useful.

National Governing Bodies

National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have the responsibility for managing their specific sport. The table below demonstrates the activity provider accreditation schemes (relevant to activities undertaken on Blueways) delivered by NGBs in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Accreditation schemes included within the table apply to the underline centre / provider rather than the individual instructor.

Activity	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Canoeing	Not Available	**Canoeing Ireland** - Course Provider Registration https://canoe.ie/provider-registration/ - a new scheme is under development therefore this link will need updated in October 2018
Cycling	Not Available	Not Available
Sailing	**Royal Yachting Association** - Recognised Teaching Centre http://www.rya.org.uk/training-support/Pages/thinking-of-running-a-centre.aspx	**Irish Sailing** – Training Centre https://www.sailing.ie/Training/Clubs-Centres/Become-a-Centre
Snorkelling	Irish Underwater Council – Approved Snorkelling Centres http://diving.ie/	
Walking	Not Available	Not Available

As the table above identifies, there is not an option currently for activity providers to be externally accredited by National Governing Bodies for all the key activities anticipated to be offered by a Blueway.

Appendix 9: Biosecurity & Invasive Species

The Local Authority Waters and Communities Officer highlights that biosecurity best practice is critical to break such pathways and the need inspect, remove, wash and dry all equipment or clothing will help reduce the risk of spreading pathogens and invasive alien species. To help stop the spread of alien invasive species it is critical that users wash and dry their equipment especially when traveling between different catchments and water courses. It is also critically important that on every occasion a user leaves a watercourse or a catchment that canoes, kayaks and boards should be inspected for aquatic vegetation, mud, materials or living organisms / materials. All such materials should be removed on site.

As a minimum, Blueway developers should incorporate the 'Check – Clean – Dry' message within their visitor information.

It is recommended the following notice appears on information boards, publications and websites for all freshwater Blueways.

Check – Check vessels, equipment and clothing for living plants and animals. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect.

Clean – Clean and wash all vessels and equipment thoroughly with freshwater

Dry – When removing a vessel, trailer and other equipment drain water from every area that can hold water before leaving the site. Clothing / equipment should be thoroughly dried for as long as possible before it is used elsewhere.

Crayfish Plague Guidance

With specific reference to the outbreak of Crayfish Plague users are asked to remain within their own local area. If gear needs to be moved gear and boats should be thoroughly washed and dried for at least 48 hours before going to another catchment / water course.

Caution: Care should be taken when using hot water to avoid burns to the skin or eye contact.

- Drain water from watercraft.
- Inspect watercraft (inside and out) and other gear. Remove and safely dispose of all attached plant and animal material, mud or debris.
- Rinse and disinfect all gear thoroughly this should be followed by a 48-hour drying period. Milton can be used as a disinfectant, either make a solution or a spray or by washing gear in water over 40 degrees.
- Disinfecting kayaks/canoes/paddles with (Virkon / Milton Solution) or power hose with hot water over 60 degrees Celsius this should be followed by a 48-hour drying period.
- Try to avoid paddling in the water bodies inflected with Crayfish Plague if they are not your local river. This will help prevent the spread of Crayfish Plague to other waterways.
- For anyone travelling to compete in any competition or event, please wash and dry your gear before competing and make use of wash stations at events before you leave.

Appendix 10: Responsibility Statement

To demonstrate the shared responsibility between the visitor and the Blueway Developer / Manager the following Responsibility Statement provides a useful basis for adaptation by individual Blueways.

This statement relates to water based trails:

Your safety on Blueways

We aim to provide an enjoyable Blueway experience and will ensure that our actions do not jeopardise your safety and health. We view the responsibility for your safety as one that is shared between you and us. We have taken reasonable measures to minimise but not eliminate all risks. Water sports are adventure sports and as such should be treated with respect.

New to Water Sports?

Paddling trails on Blueways have been designed with the novice in mind, however, <u>those with limited skills and experience should use a local operator / guide</u>. They will be able to provide:

- Appropriate safety equipment and clothing
- Appropriate itinerary
- Expertise relating to weather and water conditions
- Tuition / coaching

In addition, they will be able to add real value to your Blueway experience through their insight into local culture and heritage, places to eat and visit.

Prior Experience

If you are undertaking the Blueway without a local operator guide, you can help ensure your own safety by:

Take Advice – Make sure you have the necessary skills and experience for the location and the activity, and are aware of your limitations. Consult (website) or local operators / guides.

Plan – Plan your trip well in advance. Tell a responsible adult of your intended route and estimated time of return.

Group – It is not recommended to canoe alone – 3 boats is the minimum required for most rescues

Conditions – Consult weather forecasts, tides / water levels in advance of your trip. Ensure you are properly equipped for changes in weather.

Equipment – Carry essential safety equipment – spare clothes, extra food, warm drink, form of shelter, First Aid kit, means of communication (VHF radio / mobile phone in a water proof case), torch and whistle. Always wear a buoyancy aid. Canoe/ craft buoyancy should be enough to keep it afloat if you capsize.

Emergencies - In the event of emergencies contact 99 or 112 for emergency services. Use VHF Radio Channel 16 to contact Coastguard.