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Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

of the Draft Waterford Destination and Experience Development Plan

March 2025



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Plan**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the non-technical summary of the strategic environmental assessment detailed in the Environmental Report (ER). It has been prepared by Roughan & O'Donovan (ROD) on behalf of Fáilte Ireland (FI) as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process of the proposed Draft Waterford Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP), referred to hereafter as “the Draft Plan”.

The purpose of the ER is to:

- Inform the development of the Draft Plan
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment resulting from the implementation of the Draft Plan and reasonable alternatives;
- Provide appropriate mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and offset any significant negative effects on the environment, if any, from implementing the Draft Plan insofar as possible; and
- Consult with statutory authorities and the public to provide an opportunity for submissions on the Draft Plan and the SEA process.

This ER has been prepared in accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No.200 of 2011. This non-technical summary (NTS) should be read in conjunction with the SEA ER and the Draft Plan.

2. CONTENTS OF THE DRAFT PLAN

The Draft Plan is a five-year tourism strategy plan prepared for County Waterford. The Draft Plan has been prepared by a range of stakeholders including Waterford City and County Council and Fáilte Ireland with a view to expand and improve all aspects of tourism in Waterford. It integrates current projects with new ones to ensure a cohesive approach to tourism development. The WDEDP details a number of strategic goals and objectives, as well as catalyst project to help realise the tourism industry's potential in Waterford.

The target outputs from the Draft Plan are to grow the value of tourism as a key economic sector in Waterford, growing tourism employment, disperse visitors across the destination and increase the length of stay. The key target is to achieve sustained revenue growth and return to 2019 levels of tourism income by 2026. Equally, the development focus within the Draft Plan is to ensure Waterford as a destination plays an integral role in growing the regional share of the market.

The Plan concentrates on developing three spatial categories namely: Waterford City, Coastal Communities, and Rural Waterford experiences (as illustrated in Figure 2-1) and how these each integrate with each other to enhance the Waterford Visitor Experience.

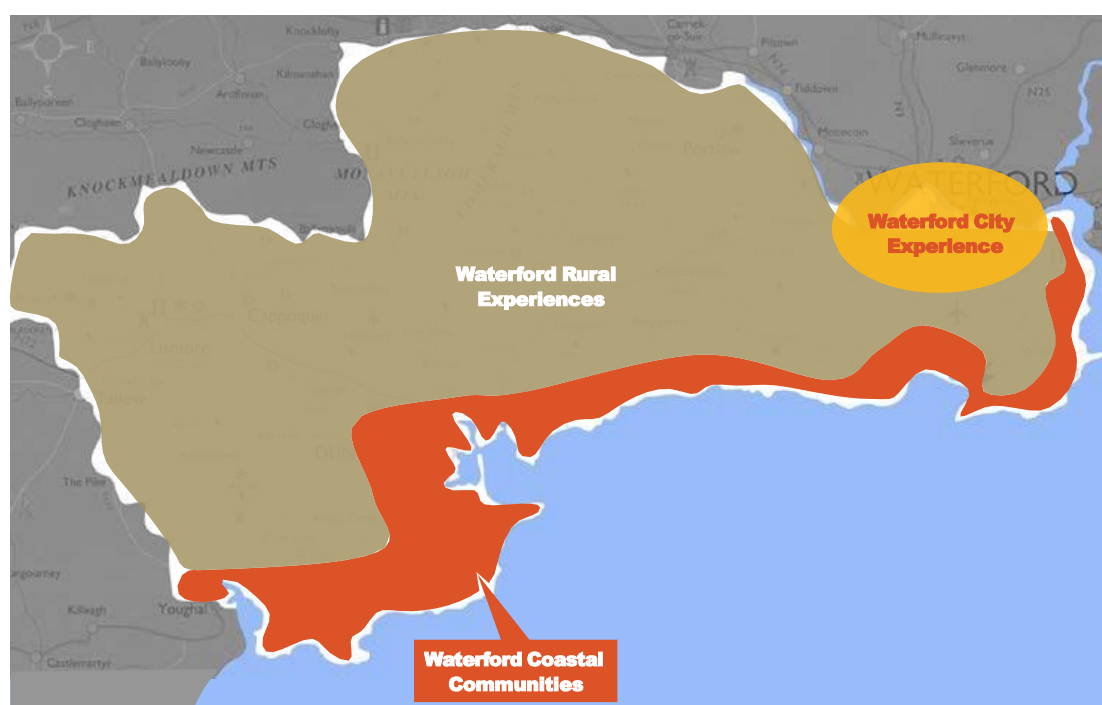


Figure 2-1 Visitor destination experiences identified for County Waterford DEDP
(Source: Fáilte Ireland Draft Plan)

The key objectives of the Draft Plan are:

- Ensure local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of hero and ancillary tourism products that attract visitors and retain them for longer in the destination.
- Unlock the economic growth potential of an area by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate tourists to explore the wider destination.

- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development centred on creating strong signature, supporting and ancillary experiences that are commoditized through the creation of saleable experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to attract leisure visitors on a year-round basis to Waterford to immerse themselves actively in the community, through interaction with local people.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

The implementation of the WDEDP is based on stakeholder commitment to project delivery over the course of the five-year plan. A steering group will be formed to implement the WDEDP with key stakeholders responsible for project ownership and / or partnering in the delivery of the agreed actions have been identified within the Draft Plan.

3. SEA PROCESS


Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt a plan or programme, or in this case the Draft Plan. The stages of the SEA process are outline in Figure 3-1 below.



Figure 3-1 Key Stages of the SEA Process

The key stages of the SEA process are summarised in Table 3-11 below as it relates to the preparation of the Draft Plan.

Table 3-1 Summary of the Key Stages of the SEA Process

SEA Stage	Role within the SEA Process	Status Waterford DEDP
Screening	Determines whether there would likely be significant environmental effects and if an SEA is required to be undertaken. In accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive and transposing Regulations S.I. 435/2004 (as amended), Fáilte Ireland undertook an SEA Screening having regard to the criteria in Schedule 1 "Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment".	Fáilte Ireland undertook an SEA pre-screening in March 2024 and determined that an SEA is required and to proceed directly to Scoping stage.
Scoping & Consultation	The purpose of Scoping is to scope the SEA environmental factors that will be assessed in the ER. It also provides any opportunity to consult with the relevant environmental authorities to draw an opinion on the scope and level of detail of the environmental information to be included in this ER. The scoping consultation feedback will inform the preparation of the ER and the Draft Plan as appropriate.	The Scoping Report was issued in June 2024 for a period of 4 weeks to the statutory environmental bodies.
Environmental Assessment and Environmental Report	The purpose of this stage is to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment as a result of the implementation of the Draft Plan as well as the consideration of alternatives. The ER records this assessment and is published with the Draft Plan for public consultation.	This Report is the output of this stage of the SEA process and is informed by the Scoping stage and in turn informs the Draft Plan.
Consultation	The Draft Plan and the SEA ER are issued for public consultation for a period of no less than 4 weeks.	Current stage in the process. 

SEA Stage	Role within the SEA Process	Status Waterford DEDP
SEA Statement & Monitoring	The purpose of this stage is to identify how environmental considerations and consultation feedback has been taken into account in finalising the Draft Plan and the SEA process including finalisation of the monitoring programme. The output of this stage is the SEA Statement.	The SEA Statement will be published following the finalisation of the Draft Plan.

4. KEY RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

The development of the Draft Plan and this SEA is informed and carried out in the context of hierarchy of legislation, plans and programmes. Every effort has been made to ensure the SEA and in turn the Draft Plan is aligned with and contributes to the achievement of the environmental protection objectives set in these key plans and programmes. Some of the key legislation, plans and programmes are summarised in Appendix A of this ER.

The Draft Plan is a non-statutory document and does not form a framework for development consent.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's spatial planning policy direction up to 2040. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and lower tier county development plans and associated local area plans (LAPs) local area Plans. The development and implementation of the Waterford DEDP is required to be consistent with and conform with these higher-level plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these plans.

The Draft First Revision to the NPF updates the targets set in the NPF in 2018 to take into account the changes that have occurred between 2018 and 2024 such as continuing requirement to address the challenges of climate change, regional development, demographics, digitalisation and investment and prioritisation.

The revised draft retains the original NPF commitment to the promotion of city-based population and employment growth with a target of 50% of future population and employment growth to be focused in the existing five cities and their suburbs including ambitious growth targets for the cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. Greater investment and jobs-led growth in the cities will support a stronger urban structure and enhanced economic performance and investment for the respective wider regions.

The National Policy Objectives (NPOs) contained in the NPF informs the policy context for the future development of the tourism sector including coastal management, green and blue infrastructure development, circular economy, supporting the preservation of heritage and culture and enhancement of biodiversity supported by an integrated planning and development system.

5. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This section of the ER examines the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment or the baseline environment. Establishing the environmental baseline assists with the identification, evaluation, and monitoring of the likely significant effects of the Draft Plan on the environment. Much of the baseline has been compiled using the latest (2024) iteration of the EPA report '*Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024*', as well as other up-to-date resources, datasets and indicators.

5.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Within County Waterford there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC. There are 10 SPAs and 9 SACs within the County. The Nationally Designated Sites in Waterford include 26 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) which are detailed in the SEA ER.

A number of protected areas, under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) are present in Waterford, such as

- WFD Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – Middle Suir Estuary (IE_SE_100_0550) and Blackwater Estuary Lower (IE_SW_020_0100).
- Salmonid Rivers - The River Bride (IE_SW_18B051000) and the River Blackwater (IE_SW_18B022700)
- WFD Shellfish Areas - Waterford Harbour (IE_SE_100_0100) and Dungarvan Harbour (IE_SE_140_0000)

Under the EU habitats directive, there are three Freshwater Pearl Mussel Margaritifera Sensitive Areas within County Waterford; Munster Blackwater, Clodiagh and Licky.

There are three wetland sites in County Waterford that are recognised as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. These are Tramore Backstrand (Ramsar ID: 835), Dungarvan Harbour (Ramsar ID: 839), Blackwater Estuary (Ramsar ID: 836).

The key pressures and threat in relation to biodiversity are as follows:

- Tourism based infrastructure can impact designated sites during both construction and operation. The development of the infrastructure required to increase visitor numbers to Waterford and to promote outdoor activities linked to natural heritage areas could lead to the loss of habitat, including habitats that are Qualifying Interests of European Sites, and also habitats that support Qualifying Interest habitats and species.
- Direct species mortality is possible as a result of site clearance, tree felling and vegetation removal as part of any infrastructure construction required to promote visitors to Waterford.
- Disturbance can occur during construction and operation of infrastructure as a result of noise, both within and outside the footprint of the development. Increased visitor numbers and events can result in disturbance to wildlife.

- Water quality impacts arising from both the construction and the operation of the required infrastructure have the potential to directly and indirectly affect a wide range of habitats and species. Accidental pollution events can result in sediment and pollutants entering sensitive watercourses resulting in a deterioration in water quality.
- Invasive species pose a threat to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and could inadvertently be introduced or spread through increased visitor numbers or construction plant and vehicles during construction works.

5.2 Population and Human Health

The 2022 Census reports the population of the Republic of Ireland is 5.3 million (CSO,2023a). The population of County Waterford was 127,363, an increase of approximately 10% from the 2016 Census, Waterford City comprised 47% (60,079).

The National Planning Framework (NPF) projects that between 2022 and 2040 that approximately one million additional people will be living in the country. The NPF contains a target to deliver 50% of future population and employment growth to be focused in the five cities of Ireland, one of which is Waterford City. It also contains a target to deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the five Cities and suburbs.

Population distribution and growth forecasts are important indicators of potential pressure on resources and infrastructure as well as potential exposure to pollution and risk.

Human health is linked to several environmental factors including water, air, noise and soil through which there is potential for negative interactions. Hazards and impacts that can arise from these factors have been considered separately in their respective sections of the Environmental Report, with regard to their current baseline and any likely effect or change given the implementation of the Plan.

Existing pressures and threats to population include:

- Effects to residential accommodation (availability and affordability);
- Pressure on critical infrastructure (refer to material assets) if not planned and managed appropriately;
- Exacerbating effects of climate change (refer to climate section)
- Effects on all other environmental factors depending on nature of tourism activity e.g. water environment, air quality, land use change, etc.

5.3 Water

The Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EU (WFD) outlines the standards and practices for monitoring the health of waterbodies within the EU. The objective of the WFD national monitoring programme is to provide a national picture of the water status in accordance with the WFD criteria and identify water bodies at risk of failing to achieve the objectives of the WFD.

Water quality that meets the requirements set by the WFD is an important standard to keep if the plan is to succeed in drawing tourists. At the same time, the increased pressure from the tourist industry and the associated development to support it could threaten to diminish this quality, if unmanaged.

Waterford contains three water catchments, (1) Colligan-Mahon, (2) Suir and (3) Blackwater. Within these catchments are eighteen smaller sub catchments. Bathing waters have historically been an asset within County Waterford for their ability to attract tourists. For this reason, their management and maintenance within the county are of significant concern to the plan. The most recent EPA report on bathing water quality indicated that all bathing water areas in Waterford met the minimum requirements to be considered 'sufficient', while the majority were of 'good' or 'excellent' quality. Within the plan area, the majority of ground waterbodies throughout County Waterford have 'Good' status.

Historic flood events are identified across County Waterford, particularly along impermeable urban areas, along the River Suir, Blackwater, Tay, Mahon and Colligan. There is also evidence of coastal flooding events within the towns of Tramore and Dungarvan. Flooding events are expected to become more frequent and intense due to climate change related factors, including new rainfall patterns; rising sea levels; and erosion.

Changes in land use and development is putting pressure on water quality, which can include tourism activities. Other significant pressures on the aquatic environment (in terms of number of bodies at risk of not achieving good status) is from agriculture, hydro-morphology, urban wastewater, forestry, urban runoff, anthropogenic activities. Tourism is likely to have many cross-sector interactions with these pressures and may influence water quality and quantity during peak periods.

5.4 Air Quality

Air quality regulations in Ireland are based on EU legislation and S.I. No. 739/2022- Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulation 2022, which incorporate the ambient air quality limits set out in Directive 2008/50/EC. The Clean Air Strategy for Ireland First Progress Report 2024 (Government of Ireland, 2024b) indicates that transport is a key sector which requires additional focus to ensure continued improvement in air quality. Transport related air emissions are the most likely interaction between tourism and air quality. There are currently two active national air quality monitoring stations in Waterford. The Plan supports sustainable transport options including walking, cycling and public transport that have lower emissions than private car travel.

5.5 Climate

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021 builds on the 2015 Climate Act and commits Ireland, in law, to move to a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by 2050 in alignment with the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal. The first Climate Action Plan (CAP) was published in 2019 and is reviewed and updated annually. Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) has six vital high impact sectors where the biggest savings can be made: renewable energy, energy efficiency of buildings, transport, sustainable farming, sustainable business and change of land-use. CAP24 reports that Ireland has expended 47% of its carbon budget for the period of 2021-2025 in the first two years. CAP24 provides a corrective path for Ireland to meet its national emissions targets through the introduction of corrective measures across all industries.

A new *Tourism Policy Framework* was published by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in November 2024. In relation to the climate related high-level targets to 2030, these include:

- Fáilte Ireland will establish a baseline figure for tourism associated emissions and subsequent shorter term Tourism Action Plans will contain tourism specific emission reduction and biodiversity targets.
- measures will be put in place to ensure that the average carbon emissions associated with each visitor bed night is reduced by 60% by 2030.
- in relation to overseas visitors, the focus will be on those markets generating greatest revenue for lowest carbon footprint. The target will be to achieve an average annual 5.6% year- on- year growth in the revenue generated by overseas visitors in the period to 2030.

As a result of the Climate Action and Low Carbon (Amendment) Act 2021 every Local Authority (LA) in the country is required to develop a Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) that will be in effect for five years. The LACAP will ensure a coordinated local response to climate change and bring together critical stakeholders across local government, communities, and businesses to build a vision for a climate neutral and resilient future. The Waterford City and County Council's *Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* sets out how the Council will work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their operations and in the services that they provide to the people of Waterford. The plan includes a number of actions including:

- Identify and deliver a Decarbonizing Zone within the local authority area to act as a test bed for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures in a specifically defined area through the identification of projects and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the National Climate Objective.
- Preserve and promote the cultural heritage and biodiversity of Ireland's oldest city and the wider county area.

In order to align the activity of businesses in the tourism industry with government emissions targets, Fáilte Ireland have developed the Climate Action Programme. The programme provides businesses with expert mentoring and guidance in reducing carbon emissions energy and water usage, and waste production. The tourism sector is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and as such the programme aims to drive change in business in line with Ireland's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Tourism is a cross-cutting sector that depends on several other sector developments. (e.g. water, agriculture, transport) therefore, adaptation in this sector will require significant collaboration.

Threats to the tourism sector arising from climate change include coastal erosion and flooding. Coastal tourism is at greater risk from climate change than other areas therefore coastal communities, including those in Waterford, will face significant threats and will require significant adaptation and resilience measures. Increased flooding and extreme weather events can damage tourism attractions, access to attractions and supporting infrastructure, agriculture and food production and in turn negatively impacting businesses, transportation and infrastructure affecting the tourism sector.

Tourism and nature are also often closely linked. Nature protection will be an important adaptation measure which is most important for the tourism sector. Tourism areas might also benefit from climate change as visitor may select cooler areas in summer or seasons may be extended due to an increase in favourable weather conditions.

5.6 Land and Soils

Consideration of land and soil management is essential to sustainable planning and development as these resources support the built environment, food production processes, water, resources for development and other ecosystem services. The EPA's 'An Integrated Assessment 2020' report states that the dominant pressures on land and soils are: soil sealing, erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, salination and landslides.

Corine 2018 land cover mapping indicates County Waterford is predominantly composed of pastureland. Approximately 43km² or 2.3% of the total land cover in County Waterford is made up of sealed or artificial surfaces.

Geological heritage is the valuable geological features of an area, like landforms (natural landscape), rocks or fossils. These are important for understanding an area's history and hence worthy of safeguard for the benefit of present and future generations. Geological Survey of Ireland has a Geoheritage programme and works to protect and promote sites of national and international geological importance in Ireland.

The Copper Coast of Waterford is also identified as a UNESCO Global Geopark for its rich mining history, one of three geoparks in Ireland.

The EPA's (2024a) states that the dominant pressures on land and soils include soil sealing, erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, salination and landslides. Tourism can also create pressure on land and soil due to direct land use change creating soil sealing and/ or impacting geological heritage sites.

5.7 Material Assets

Material assets are considered to include the material use of land and any assets that enable settlements to function. Material assets can include utilities, transport infrastructure, coastal and water resources, agriculture, and energy.

The tourism industry in Waterford is valued at over €100 million, (Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028) with significant benefit to businesses and communities. Environmental management is essential to the continued attraction of visitors to Waterford's tourism assets.

A significant opportunity nationally, and within the plan area is the reuse of the numerous brownfield sites and regeneration opportunities. The Draft Plan also seeks to engage with key tourism assets to help promote sustainable tourism practices at each destination. Tourism industry offers potential positive opportunities to provide for social and economic benefits including supporting and diversifying the rural economy and ecosystem services.

The EPA (2024a) reports that the tourism sector has resulted in significant pressure on the water, waste and road infrastructure in many popular tourist destinations. Other pressures and threats include:

- Access to, and management to natural assets such as forests, mountain areas and beaches;
- Inadequate provision and access to sustainable transport infrastructure continuing to result in dependency on road-based transport infrastructure;

- Increased tourists can put pressure on water and waste management systems, including water supply and wastewater treatment facilities particularly during peak period;
- Pressure on existing utility services including water, wastewater and waste management in certain areas, essential for local population, tourism and business development;
- Climate change, rising sea levels, and increased natural disasters will put pressure on all material assets, both natural and man-made particularly in coastal and sensitive ecological areas.

5.8 Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

The Architectural Heritage and Historic Monuments Act 1999 (as amended) provides protection status to buildings and monuments which are of historical or cultural interest, which are listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPSs) with the local authority development plan. Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) denote zones or groups of structures of cultural or historical significance which contribute to the appreciation of protected structures. The Waterford City and County Development Plan identifies 1625 protected structures, 677 of which are within Waterford City and numerous ACAs across the County.

Waterford City is the oldest city in Ireland, founded in 914 AD, and is significant from an architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage perspective. Sites of archaeological or architectural significance are both invaluable and irreplaceable and can define the fabric of settlements. Waterford has a large amount of archaeological and architectural sites and attracts significant visitors due to these assets. Cultural heritage does not solely refer to physical objects and places but rather practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills.

Development is the greatest threat to archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage. Sites and features of historical and cultural significance can be lost through development on or adjacent to sites or affect their setting. Climate change also poses a direct and indirect threat to these historic sites. Increases in tourism numbers may also put additional strain on historic sites, which can intensify the threat of recreation damage to these sites and monuments.

5.9 Landscape

Article 1 (a) of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe, 2000) states that a landscape is “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.

Waterford City & County Council (WCCC) has prepared a Landscape & Seascape Character Assessment as part of the Waterford City & County Development Plan (2022-2028) which includes characterisation of the landscape and has indicated 15 Scenic Routes and 28 Protected Views in the county. These natural areas are very often a source of recreation and tourism. Inappropriate change of land use or management of these areas could threaten the natural beauty and tourism value.

Development including tourism development has the potential to change the landscape character of County's distinct landscapes. Developments in a manner which is inconsistent with the landscape character or type can impact its sensitivity and in turn can impact tourism.

5.10 Interactions

Due to the breadth of activities associated with tourism, there is potential for all environmental factors to interact with each other, either positively or negatively. Key interactions identified for this Plan are likely to be between tourism/visitors interacting with local populations and human health, biodiversity, climate, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage, landscape and material assets. The likely potential interactions are summarised in Table 5-1 below.

Table 5-1 Interactions between Environmental Factors

Environmental Factor	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Water	Air Quality	Climate	Land & Soil	Material Assets	Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Heritage	Landscape
Biodiversity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Population & Human Health	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Water	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Quality	✓	✓			✓				
Climate	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Land & Soil	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
Material Assets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Architectural, Archaeological, & Cultural Heritage	✓	✓					✓		✓
Landscape	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	

5.11 Likely Evolution in the Absence of the Plan

In the absence of the Plan, development in County Waterford is likely to follow the policies and objectives detailed in the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028. Plans and developments will continue to be mitigated under existing statutory planning and consent frameworks.

It is anticipated tourism would continue to grow in an ad-hoc and uncoordinated manner across the county, with the most substantial development in popular destinations and peak seasons.

6. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The assessment of the Draft Plan is undertaken using the environmental factors contained within the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC namely: biodiversity, flora and fauna, population and human health, water, air quality, climate, land and soils, material assets, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage, landscape and the interaction between the above factors, considering the geographical area to which the Plan relates. Each project or action contained within the Draft Plan has been assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) based on the environmental factors named above. A full description of the SEOs is provided in Section 6 of the main SEA ER.

The assessment of likely significant effects on the environment is carried out using the assessment criteria in Table 6-1 below, which are measured against the SEOs for the Draft Plan. Where likely significant effects are identified, additional mitigation measures are recommended to the plan team and incorporated into the Draft Plan, where appropriate.

Table 6-1 Assessment Criteria

Symbol	Description of potential environmental effect
+	Potential positive environmental effect
-	Potential negative environmental effect
+/-	Potential positive and negative environmental effects
0	Neutral or no significant environmental effect
?	Uncertain environmental effects (depending on development of the project)

7. ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

7.1 Assessment Methodology

The assessment of the alternatives described in Section 7-1 was done with regard to the SEOs from Section 6 and the baseline established in Section 5. The environmental assessment accounts for all potential significant effects across all environmental factors. The overall aim of the environmental assessment of the alternatives considered is to identify and compare the likely significant effects on the environment thereby and identify which alternative greatest potential to maximise the achievements of the plan objectives.

7.2 Description of alternatives

Reasonable alternatives were considered by taking into account the objectives and geographic scope of the Draft Plan. The alternatives considered by Fáilte Ireland are:

1. Alternative 1: Do-nothing – Continue without the development of a plan.
2. Alternative 2A: Do-something – Prepare a plan without environmental consideration.
3. Alternative 2B: Do-something – Prepare a plan with environmental consideration.

7.3 Assessment of alternatives

The target outputs from the WDEDP are to grow the value of tourism as a key economic sector in Waterford, growing tourism employment, disperse visitors across the destination and increase the length of stay. The key target is to achieve sustained revenue growth and return to 2019 levels of tourism income by 2026. Equally, the development focus within the WDEDP is to ensure Waterford as a destination plays an integral role in growing the regional share of the market.

When comparing the alternatives, Alternative 1 is likely to have a blend of some positive and negative environmental impacts. However, as there is no plan, it is assumed tourism growth will continue in the current ad-hoc pattern and expand, primarily in areas of high tourism, increasing pressure in existing tourism sites and pressure on supporting infrastructure in these areas leading to potential for negative impacts on the environment.

The development of a tourism plan presented by Alternatives 2A and 2B will result in a more co-ordinated approach to tourism development. Alternative 2A without the additional environmental mitigation and management is likely to deliver on the DEDP objectives by promoting tourism development and economic growth, but as it does not explicitly consider environmental protection or management it has the potential to result in more significant negative effects on the environment than the other alternatives and/or lead to delays in the implementation phase or the delivery of the plan itself at planning stage.

Alternative 2B is likely to deliver a more effective and sustainable tourism development approach in County Waterford, providing both the necessary economic growth and environmental protection. On that basis Alternative 2B has been selected as the preferred option. Alternative 2B meets the DEDP objectives, contains the most environmental mitigation opportunities and is likely to result in more significant positive effects and fewer negative effects than Alternatives 1 and 2A.

Table 7-1 Assessment of Alternatives

Alternative	Description	Environmental Assessment of All SEOs	Environmental Evaluation
Alternative 1: Do-nothing	No plan is developed, tourism development would continue business as usual. Tourism development would follow the WCCC Development Plan.	+/- ?	<p>This alternative would lead to uncoordinated tourism development across the county. With no plan, the objectives of the plan and the full economic potential for tourism across the county and throughout the year would likely not be realised.</p> <p>Furthermore, the potential environmental effects of this alternative are expected to result in more negative environmental effects than positive.</p>
Alternative 2A: Prepare a plan without Environmental Considerations	Tourism in Waterford City & County will be actioned through the preparation of a plan, without environmental considerations.	+/- ?	<p>Alternative 2A will address deliver on many aspects of the DEDP objectives, especially those related to expanding regional tourism, creating new experiences and opportunities for visitors and encouraging longer stays.</p> <p>This alternative may also give rise to unexpected environmental effects, uncertainty, positive or negative effects from a lack of consideration to the environmental effects.</p> <p>It is likely there will be more negative effects on the environment than the other alternatives and or result in delays to new proposals in areas that may not be suitable or prepared for development without mitigation.</p>
Alternative 2B: Prepare a plan with Environmental Considerations	Tourism in Waterford City & County will be actioned through the preparation of a plan, with environmental considerations.	+/-	<p>Alternative 2B supports the objectives of the DEDP by encouraging the sustainable growth of tourism and economic potential of Waterford.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Alternative 2B will result in more positive than negative environmental effects. This is due to the considerations of environmental effects as part of the preparation of the Plan and opportunity for mitigation and monitoring of any negative effects. Alternative 2B is the preferred option from an environmental perspective and delivery of the plan objectives.</p>

8. ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT PLAN

Section 8 of the ER evaluates the potential significant environmental effects as a result of implementing the Draft Plan on the SEOs. The likely significant positive, negative or neutral or unknown effects as defined in Table 6-2 of the ER. Following an assessment of the projects in the Draft Plan, the SEA team recommended text amendments. The plan team reviewed these recommendations, proposed edits, and decided whether to incorporate them into the plan. These changes, known as embedded mitigation, were reassessed, and the assessment was updated accordingly. A summary of the assessment is provided in Table 8-1 below. Where likely significant effects remain, Section 9 includes the proposed mitigation. Section 10 identifies the proposed environmental monitoring measures.

Table 8-1 Summary of likely significant effects of the Draft Plan

Environmental factor	Potential Positive	Potential negative	Unknown Effects
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ecological corridors due to development of greenways, trails, etc. The redevelopment of brownfield sites with biodiversity considerations and nature-based solutions. Development of ecosystem services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss, damage, disturbance or fragmentation of ecological resources in designated and non-designated sites. Tourism development along river and coastal areas affecting water quality and/or effects on aquatic species. Disturbance of sensitive habitats and species from increased visitors. Loss of biodiversity including native species due to development of new projects and the spread of invasive species, diseases, and pathogens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in climate affecting biodiversity and in turn influencing tourism behaviour visitors' numbers affecting biodiversity. Unknown effects to ecologically sensitive sites due to year-round tourism activity. Unknown effects to ecosystems.
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism development supports the social and economic development of the county and local communities. Opportunity to regenerate and diversify rural economies. The promotion of outdoor activities supports healthy lifestyles. Improvements to infrastructure including development and access to greenways supports wider sustainable transport options and quality of life factors for tourists and residents alike. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased tourism could increase demand for accommodation and reduce long-term housing availability for local communities. The current housing shortage reduces availability of tourist and local accommodation and also affect affordability. Tourism can increase traffic congestion in certain areas particularly during peak (seasonal) periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism may increase road traffic and congestion levels, especially in smaller settlements. Future tourism development impacting capacity critical infrastructure which may affect human health.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan is likely to maintenance or improve bathing water quality due to focus on blue flag beach status Co-ordinated management of tourism activities across water bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased eutrophication from urban development, agriculture which can be associated with tourism sector/expansion. Increasing flood risk from inappropriately sited existing tourism development in existing flood plains and/or flood risk zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in bathing water quality from increased year-round visitor numbers. Cumulative impacts from additional pressure on waterbodies.

Environmental factor	Potential Positive	Potential negative	Unknown Effects
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and promotion of sustainable transport infrastructure and modes across the county will indirectly improve/ maintain air quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased flights, road-based traffic and congestion from higher tourist numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown effects due to changes in technology influencing the tourism sector.
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to: Walking and cycling. The protection and preservation natural/scenic areas can contribute to climate resilience as these areas are often biodiverse and contribute to natural carbon sequestration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of international and domestic tourists is likely to increase GHG emissions associated with aviation, maritime and road-based transport potential affecting climate reduction targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown effects to areas in the plan experiencing coastal erosion, flooding and increase in extreme weather events which is also likely to influence tourism behaviour overtime creating new impacts in different areas.
Land and Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for the reuse/regeneration of brownfield sites and soil materials. Regeneration of natural areas such as woodlands for tourism and recreational purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development for tourism in County Waterford that is spread across the region and may contradict EU Soil Strategy land take targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential for the discovery of contaminated land during DEDP related projects. The NPF strategy and EPA State of the environment note the need for compact development planning to limit soil sealing from sprawling developments.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan supports the continued investment in the infrastructure, services and facilities that support the tourism industry. Continued promotion of tourism industry supports economic development of the county. The plan supports the development of infrastructure such as walking, cycling, public realm enhancements and museum, festivals etc that support the economic development of the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels. Pressure on existing utilities, wastewater systems, energy and drinking water capacity. Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from increased visitors. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. The promotion of sustainable transportation and travel options may cause overcrowding on public transport, greenways, if not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure on utilities and services if numbers during peak season increases unexpectedly, and through year-round tourism expansion. Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate it is expected that such risks will be mitigated through the regulatory and planning system.

Environmental factor	Potential Positive	Potential negative	Unknown Effects
		managed appropriately during peak and through year-round tourism.	
Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase connectivity to cultural heritage and historical destinations in Waterford via public transportation and/or active travel. • Preservation and restoration works of sites and monuments. • Potential to discover unknown artifacts and sites of significant archaeological, architectural or cultural value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential damage to unknown archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage sites and monuments, as items may be lost or damaged during development. • Growth of visitor numbers can degrade sensitive historic sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss and/ or discovery of previously unknown archaeological or cultural heritage artefacts as part of project development.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development including greenways, public realm improvements etc. have potential to improve access and appreciation of landscape. • New development can offer new viewpoint to appreciate landscape and visual amenities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development and supporting infrastructure at existing sites can change the existing landscape and visual amenity and negatively impact sensitive sites during both construction and operational phase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the landscape of the area, impacts on landmark sites or the experience/perception at landmark sites.

9. MITIGATION

Mitigation measures are measures to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any potentially significant negative effects of implementing the Draft Plan on the environment.

9.1 Embedded Mitigation

Changes to the plan made during the SEA process are known as embedded mitigation - mitigation that is incorporated into the text of the plan to prevent, reduce, offset and monitor any significant environmental effects. The Draft Plan has benefitted from iterative feedback with stakeholders and the SEA team providing feedback to inform the draft as presented for public consultation. It is acknowledged that further changes to the text in the Final Plan and integration of mitigation will continue during the statutory consultation period as stakeholder feedback is received.

9.2 Integration of environmental protection

The DEDP is a non-statutory plan, it does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

Projects stemming from the DEDP are required to be consistent with and conform with the higher-level plans and policies including the land use plans such as NPF, RSES and county level land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents.

In order to be realised, projects included in the DEDP (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with appropriate legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for project level assessments including Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent framework.

A review of the key mitigation measures contained in the Waterford City and County Council Development Plan has been undertaken and is detailed in the SEA ER. The SEA team are satisfied that it contains the necessary policies and objectives that can be relied upon to ensure environmental protection and sustainable tourism approach is adopted as part of the planning process.

9.3 Recommended mitigation measures

As a result of undertaking the assessment of the Draft Plan, potential significant negative effects as a result of implementing the plan requiring mitigation include:

- Reduced availability and affordability of housing accommodation affecting local populations and visitors.
- Increasing international and domestic tourists will likely result in increase in GHG emissions affecting ability to meet climate targets.

While the existing legislation, plans and policies included in the Development Plan policies and objective address many of the identified likely and significant environmental effects at project level. It is considered that the Plan and projects stemming from the plan will need to consider the potential negative effects as a result of the projected increase in tourists and/or growth of the tourism sector, as appropriate.

The plan team will concurrently address the additional mitigation measure and queries raised by the SEA team during the statutory consultation period. The proposed additional mitigation measure outlined in Table 9-1 necessitates a collaborative effort involving stakeholders at all levels, from national policy to local project implementation.

Table 9-1 Proposed mitigation measures

Negative effects	Proposed Mitigation	Lead & Stakeholders
Inadequate access and availability to sustainable modes of transport to access key destinations/sites particularly in rural or in remote areas.	Ensure the development of the tourist transport strategy/ plan (under Destination Enabling project 7) contains an inventory of the key destination sites in the county together with a plan to increase the available critical infrastructure capacity including access to transport infrastructure and services. Develop sustainable travel promotional material for each key destination site and work with stakeholders and partners to provide sustainable modes of transport to the site.	Project promoter including Fáilte Ireland, and local authority, as appropriate.
Potential for reduced availability and affordability of housing accommodation affecting local and tourist populations	Implement and review Fáilte Ireland's Short Term Tourist Letting (STTL) Register for all short-term tourist accommodation in Ireland, which will align with the EU regulation for Short Term Rentals. The national online registration system will require all proprietors who offer Short Term Tourist Lettings to register their property/properties annually. Fáilte Ireland will be able to provide a picture of all short-term tourist accommodation providers across the country, with a view to ensuring that adequate housing accommodation for tourists is balanced with the availability for residential accommodation for the general population.	Fáilte Ireland, local authority and the Department.
Climate change effects: increasing international and domestic tourists resulting in increase in GHG emissions affecting ability to meet climate targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the actions in the Climate Action Plan 2024 and the Local Authority CAP and subsequent updates. Improve access and availability of sustainable modes of transport and travel; Promote business to reduce carbon emissions; Promote visitors to offset carbon emissions. Work with partners to implement the relevant actions in the National Adaptation Framework. Implement the relevant actions in the Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Tourism Sector (once developed). 	Fáilte Ireland, project promoters, as appropriate.
Potential for festivals & events to impact the environment	All project promoters receiving funding from FI to demonstrate compliance with The <i>Sustainable Festival Guidelines</i> developed by Fáilte Ireland (2023) when planning festivals and large events.	Project promoters working in collaboration with local authority.

10. MONITORING

Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires monitoring to be carried out for significant effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan “*in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.*” It is a key part to ensuring the plan does not negatively impact the receiving environment, and to assess whether current mitigation measures are appropriately compensating any anticipated environmental impacts.

10.1 Indicators and targets

As far as practicable, monitoring is based on existing quantitative measures or indicators that can be recorded over time relating to the various SEOs. Each indicator that is monitored has an accompanying target.

While not a statutory document, the Plan has been prepared to compliment and be consistent with other national, regional and local planning and development plans including, but not limited, to the NPF, the RSES, the Waterford City and County Council Development Plan and Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy, all of which have been subject to SEA. Consequently, the SEA monitoring measures identified in those plans have been used as a guide in the development of this monitoring programme, with some being the same or have been modified to reflect the needs of this plan. This consistency across the hierarchy of planning documents will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 10-1 identifies the indicators and targets that have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

10.2 Reporting and responsibility

The monitoring process will be undertaken by Fáilte Ireland including preparation of evaluation reports and corrective actions, if required. The steering group that will be formed to implement the Plan (that includes key stakeholders responsible for project ownership and / or partnering in the delivery of the plan) will be a key source of monitoring data and any remedial measures, as appropriate.

Table 10-1 Draft Environmental Monitoring Programme

Environmental Factor and SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency	Remedial Measures
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna (BFF) Protect, actively conserve, prevent damage and, where possible, restore biodiversity, particularly European designated sites, other nature conservation sites, protected and threatened habitats and species (including transboundary priority habitats and species), and support ecological corridors (including riparian zones and coastal areas), green and blue infrastructure.	BFF1: Compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 sites and Annex I habitats and species and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.	BFF1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every six years) DHLGH National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every three years). Local authority/ An Bord Pleanála planning application project decisions relating to projects under the plan. Data from any relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programme relevant to the project/area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems or the Plan and make changes as necessary. Where adverse effects are identified undertake investigation as per the Fáilte Ireland Tourism Related Environmental Damage Resolution Procedure and act on recommendations based on the profiling of the environmental damage. Review or update the visitor management plan to address any ecological loss or degradation caused by tourism activities.
	BFF2: Decline in habitat (quantity or quality) and/ or loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from projects arising from the Plan.	BFF2: No habitats or ecological networks, or parts thereof to be impacted/ lost without remediation resulting from projects arising from the Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Mitigation Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). CORINE mapping resurvey (every five years). Local authority (LA) or An Bord Pleanála (ABP) planning application project environmental assessments & decisions. Data from any relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programme relevant to the project/area. Visitor management plan relating to project(s). National Biodiversity Data Centre, The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) 	
Population and Human Health (PHH) Protect, support and sustainably manage resources and tourism development, for the benefit of the society and the environment, and contribute towards the	PHH1(a): Percentage increase in visitor number to the site/ area over time. PHH1(b): Development and implementation of visitor management plan from projects arising from the Plan.	PHH1: Sustainably manage visitors to the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing). Visitor management plan relating to projects. Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, monitoring programmes, tourism research & reports. Central Statistics Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan. Promote sustainable tourism practices, at the site through the preparation of site-specific campaigns to assist in remedial action, if necessary.

Environmental Factor and SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency	Remedial Measures
economic development of the population supporting positive health outcomes.	PHH1(c): Reduction in safety incidences at sites under the Plan.			
	PHH2: Improved accessibility to recreational areas and public health amenities (e.g., parks, coastal areas, greenways, blueways, other trails).	PHH2: Ensure that visitors have appropriate access to recreational areas and public health amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing). Visitor management plan relating to project(s) Local authority/ ABP planning application decisions relating to projects developed under the plan. Local Authority reports (annual review). 	
Water (W) Protect, maintain and, where possible, improve water quality including surface water, groundwater, transitional and coastal waters and any wetlands, while preventing deterioration, supporting the achievement of good water quality status of all water bodies as required by the EU and national legislation, and increasing the resilience and adaptation of tourism sites/ activities to the effects of climate change including flood risk and coastal erosion.	W1: The change in water quality status of surface water, groundwater, transitional, and coastal waters (i.e. Water Framework Directive (WFD) water quality status).	W1: Objectives of WFD are met for all waterbodies in accordance with the latest River Basin Management Plan and Programme of Measures (POM).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFD monitoring data on ecological and chemical status of water bodies (RBMP) (every six years). Irish Water (annual review): Drinking water quality reports. Local Authority (annual review): Monitoring of local water bodies. EPA Remedial Action List (regarding drinking water quality). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan. Promote environmentally responsible tourism practices, and have campaigns prepared to assist remedial action, if necessary.
	W2: Overall trend in the mandatory and guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008).	W2: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve mandatory values and, where possible, guide values as a result of the Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA through Local Authority (annual review): Monitoring of local water bodies. EPA Water Quality in Ireland report (annual). 	
	W3: Compliance with regards to Flood Risk Management Guidelines.	W3: Compliance with statutory plans and decision-making process relating to developments in flood risk zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority/ ABP planning application decisions relating to projects developed under the Plan. 	

Environmental Factor and SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency	Remedial Measures
Air Quality (AQ) Contribute to the reduction of air pollution and improvement in air quality resulting from the effective operation and management of sustainable tourism activities.	AQ: Trends in emissions from ambient air quality monitoring (NO _x , SO _x , PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5}).	AQ: Maintain air quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA air quality monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote environmentally responsible tourism practices, and have campaigns prepared to assist remedial action, if necessary.
Climate (C) Support and promote the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from tourism activities and the development of a climate resilient and adaptive tourism sector.	C1(a): Demonstrate compliance with provisions relating to climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation have been integrated into the plan/project, as appropriate. C1(b): Evidence that beneficiaries of funding are working to reduce emissions e.g. promoting energy efficiency, water conservation, sustainable travel options to customers through marketing/ promotional material.	C1: Monitor and reduce emissions associated with tourism activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). EPA - GHG emissions data and projections. Government Climate Action Plan (annual review). Met Eireann (annual statistics). Transport for Ireland - Local Link network statistics. Local authority/ ABP planning application decisions relating to projects developed under the Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan. Promote environmentally responsible tourism practices, and have campaigns prepared to assist remedial action, if necessary.
	C2: Number of projects participating in Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme (FI CAP) or similar under the Plan.	C2: All tourism activities/ promoters to have a link to FI CAP (or similar) to demonstrate climate change resilience and adaptation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FI CAP accreditation (annual review). Waterford City and Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. FI Sustainable tourism programmes (annual reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan.
	C3: Improve provision of public transport links in the region and 'last mile'	C3: Reduction in transport emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fáilte Ireland – Ireland's Ancient East KPI 5. (Data from National Transport Authority & Local Link a strategic part of visitor orientation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan.

Environmental Factor and SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency	Remedial Measures
	transport links in partnership with National Transport Authority together with improved e-car charging infrastructure. ¹	emanating from the tourism sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterford City and Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. National Transport Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote environmentally responsible tourism practices, and have campaigns prepared to assist remedial action, if necessary.
Land and Soils (S) Safeguard existing land and soil resources, protect and improve soil quality, conserve soil, and prevent soil contamination and erosion.	S1: The area of soil that is sealed or artificialised in square km. ²	S1: Contribute to NPF target to limit the rate of increase of land that is sealed or artificialised and promote the reversal of this in suitable areas e.g., flood zones, high density areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CORINE land cover mapping (CORINE every 6 years (due 2024). Land use national land cover map (Fáilte Éireann - every five years). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the site selection process/ assessment of alternatives (if undertaken) where projects occur in greenfield sites in favour of infill/ brownfield sites.
	S2: Soil erosion/ degradation, landslides without remediation resulting from projects developed under the plan.	S2: No projects contributing to soil erosion, degradation or landslides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan.
Material Assets (M) Sustainably manage, maintain and develop the necessary tourism supporting infrastructure (including water, wastewater, energy supplies, transportation, internet connectivity and associated capacities) and support the development of the circular economy.	M1: Locations where additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas where critical infrastructure is adequate to sustainably provide for visitors (e.g. water, wastewater capacity, electricity, transport, carparking, etc.) resulting from projects developed under the Plan.	M1: Locations have adequate critical infrastructure available to sustainably provide for tourists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). Local authority/ ABP planning application decisions relating to projects developed under the Plan. Visitor management plan relating to projects. Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, any relevant monitoring programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan. Consult with Irish Water or the local authority regarding water and WWtF. Consult with TII local authority or transport providers regarding sustainable transport infrastructure.

¹ Note: C3 monitoring indicator is taken from (KPI 5 from Ireland's Ancient East RDS 2023-2027).

² Note S1 indicator and target stems from the Revised & updated National Planning Framework SEA ER Monitoring.

Environmental Factor and SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency	Remedial Measures
	M2: Incidences of significant negative effects on the use of, or access to, public assets and infrastructure from projects developed under the Plan.	M2: No significant negative effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure from projects developed under the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, any relevant monitoring programme. Local authority reports (annual review). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult utility and energy providers as appropriate.
Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage (AACH) Avoid, protect and/ or minimise impacts to designated archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage resources, including their setting and enhance and conserve heritage assets.	AACH: Changes to Record of Protected Structures (RPS), and Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) being protected and/ or negatively impacted resulting from projects developed under the Plan.	AACH: No negative or unauthorised effects on any entities listed on the RPS and RMPs from any projects developed under the Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority/ ABP planning application decisions relating to projects developed under the Plan. Visitor management plan relating to projects. Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, any relevant monitoring programme. Local Authority Development Plans record of protected structures (RPS) (updated every six years). Record of Monuments and Places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan. Promote environmentally responsible tourism practices, and have campaigns prepared to assist remedial action, if necessary Project promoter to consult with the Conservation Officer or Heritage Officer for Waterford City and County, if required.
Landscape (L) Avoid conflicts with the protection of designated and sensitive features of note in landscapes and sensitively manage landscape change through sustainable planning.	L: Number of negative landscape or visual impacts resulting from projects developed under the Plan.	L: Avoid negative landscape and visual impacts on the environment, particularly protected landscapes or protected views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor management plan relating to projects. Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, any relevant monitoring programme. Local authority/ ABP planning application decisions relating to projects developed under the Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Plan. Promote environmentally responsible tourism practices, and have campaigns prepared to assist remedial action, if necessary.

11. NEXT STEPS

The SEA ER, Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement will be published alongside the Draft Plan. These reports will be made publicly available for a consultation period of no less than four weeks. Feedback received from the public consultation will be reviewed and incorporated into the final plan as appropriate. The final Plan will then be published along with the SEA Statement which will include the final monitoring programme. The Plan will then enter the monitoring phase of the SEA process.