

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

APPENDIX IV – NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

FOR THE

CLEW BAY DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

for:

Fáilte Ireland

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Dublin 1



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Section 1 Introduction and Terms of Reference

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

What is an SEA?

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

Why is it needed?

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

How does it work?

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

The SEA was scoped in consultation with designated environmental authorities.

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

The Environmental Report contains the following information:

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

Difficulties Encountered during the SEA process

No significant difficulties were encountered in undertaking the assessment.

What happens at the end of the process?

An SEA Statement will be prepared that will summarise, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

Section 2 The Plan

2.1 Overview

The **Vision** of the Clew Bay Destination and Experience Development Plan is to extend the season, increase overnight visitation and visitor spend, and attract visitors to Clew Bay while seeking to promote, sustain and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

The **Key Objectives** of the Plan are to develop compelling experiences for this stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way that will:

- Position Clew Bay as a 'must do' destination and motivate visitors to stay overnight and spend more;
- Extend the length of the season;
- Improve the overall economy of communities through strengthening individual businesses, creating new entrepreneurial opportunities sustaining and increasing job creation and increasing the attractiveness of the area for other forms of economic growth;
- Align to the Wild Atlantic Way brand and target markets;
- Support community values and aspirations, and strengthen community appreciation of local culture and intangible heritage;
- Support sense of place enhancement;
- Promote collaboration and partnership, support engagement of businesses, and build lasting links between national and regional partners, local agencies and associations, and local tourism experiences;
- Protect the natural heritage and special environmental character of the region; and
- Protect and celebrate the region's cultural heritage.

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

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

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance¹ with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

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

2.2 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

The Plan sits within a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These documents have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction for the next 22 years. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSES for the Northern and Western Region sets out objectives relating tourism development that have been subject to environmental assessment, including those relating to: enhancing provision of tourism and leisure amenity; promoting tourism activity; developing a road network and public transport services, facilitating improved visitor access and longer

¹ Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.
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dwelling times; developing walking and cycling trails, opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes; and facilitating appropriate tourism development, including that relating to greenways, blueways and peatlands. When adopted, the RSESs will inform the review of existing, assessed Development Plans and Local Area Plans, which already include various provisions relating to land use, tourism and infrastructure. Such reviews will also be subject to environmental assessments.

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

Section 3 The Environmental Baseline

3.1 Introduction

The summary of the environmental baseline of the Clew Bay area² is described in this section. This baseline together with the Strategic Environmental Objectives, which are identified in Section 3.11, is used in order to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan and in order to determine appropriate monitoring measures.

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

The likely evolution of the environment in the absence of a plan would resemble the environmental effects that are described for Alternative 1 (Business as Usual) – refer to Section 4.

3.3 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Key ecological sensitivities across the area to which the Plan relates include those relating to:

- Rare species, such as freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, bottle-nosed dolphin, geyser's whorl snail, white-clawed crayfish, sea lamprey, brook lamprey and otter
- Rare habitats, such as wet heath, dry heath, machair, blanket bogs, coastal lagoons, marram dunes and fixed dunes;
- Numerous blanket bog areas and their associated ecology;
- Aquatic and riverine ecology associated with the Bay's various streams, rivers (such as Newport, Erriff and Altaconey) and lakes (such as Glencullin, Moher and Acorrymore); and
- Coastal areas and marine waters and associated aquatic ecology.

The most dominant land cover types in the area to which the Plan relates are peat bogs and pastures (as shown on Figure 3.2).

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

- Special Areas of Conservation³ (SACs), including candidate SACs; and
- Special Protection Areas⁴ (SPAs).

There are number of SACs and SPAs designated within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates, including: Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC; Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs SAC; Doogort Machair/Lough Doo SAC; Corraun Plateau SAC; Newport River SAC; West Connacht Coast SAC; Lough Cahasy, Lough Baun and Roonah Lough SAC; Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC; Bellacragher Saltmarsh SAC; River Moy SAC; Brackloon Woods SAC; Oldhead Wood SAC; Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC; Cross Lough-Killadoon SPA; Bills Rocks SPA; Clare Island SPA and Doogort Machair SPA; Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA; and Owenduff/Nephin Complex SPA.

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

² The area to which the Plan relates covers western parts of County Mayo.

³ SACs have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)(Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

⁴ SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

Existing Fáilte Ireland Environmental Monitoring

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

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

Existing Problems

Previous changes in land uses arising from human development have resulted in a loss of biodiversity and flora and fauna however, legislative objectives governing biodiversity and fauna were not identified as being conflicted with.

The Plan includes measures to contribute towards the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna and associated ecosystem services.

3.4 Population and Human Health

Using the 2016 Census data, the population of the to which the Plan relates was estimated to be c. 18,000 persons. The population of Westport, the biggest settlement in the area to which the Plan relates, was identified as being 6,198 persons.

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

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

3.5 Soil

Ombrotrophic (rain-fed) peat soils and luvisols⁵ are the two most dominant soil types across the area to which the Plan relates. Much of the peat soils areas are subject to ecological designations. Outcropping rock is found mainly in the coastal and upland areas to the north and also throughout the islands scattered across the Clew Bay area.

There are number of County Geological Sites across the area to which the Plan relates. The highest concentration of these sites occurs along the coastline, occupied by an archipelago of postglacial drumlins and along the peat cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

The area to which the Plan relates has several locations with a history of landslide events. There is a concentration of frequent landslide events recorded in the upland areas in the south and north of the area to which the Plan relates. Many of these events are associated with the peatland areas.

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

⁵ Luvisol soils are generally fertile, widely used for agriculture and associated with significant accumulation of clay.

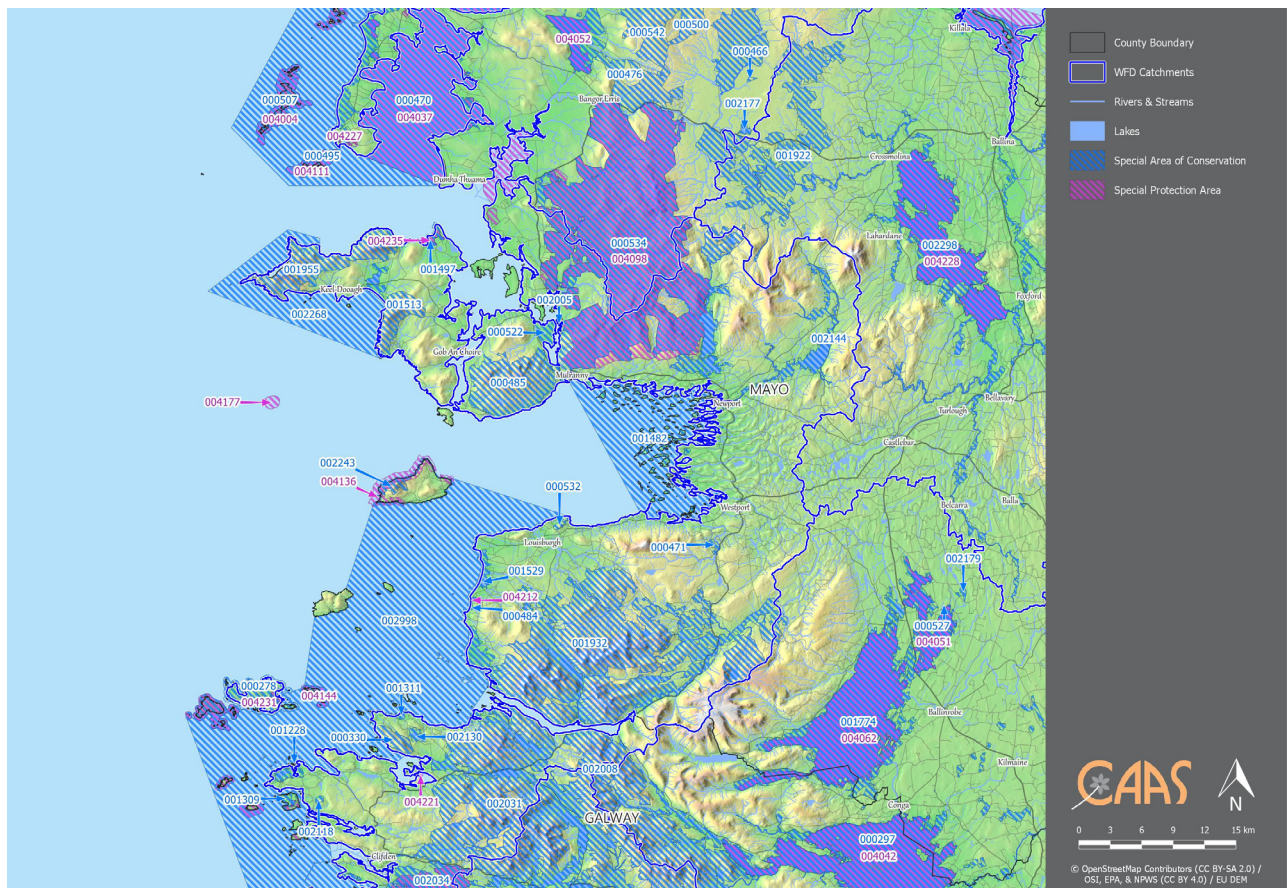


Figure 3.1 European Sites within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates

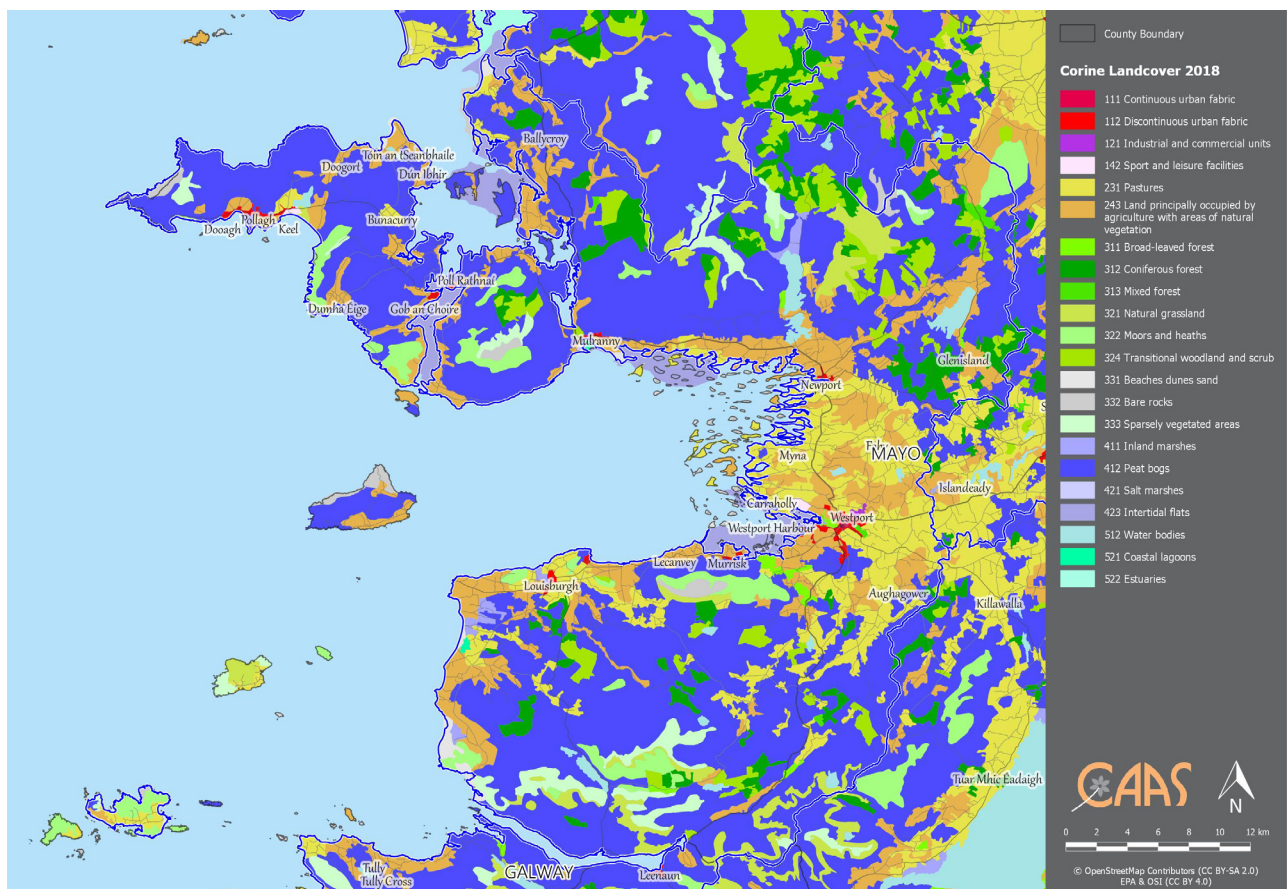


Figure 3.2 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018

3.6 Water

Surface and Ground Water Status

Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD). The WFD requires that all Member States implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all waters - surface, ground, estuarine and coastal - and protect, enhance and restore all waters with the aim of achieving *good status*. All public bodies are required to coordinate their policies and operations so as to maintain the *good status* of water bodies which are currently unpolluted and improve polluted water bodies to *good status*.

The main rivers in the area to which the Plan relates are the: Milltown River; Feohanagh River; Garfinny River; Owenanscaul River; and Owenalondrig River. The WFD status of most of the surface waters in the area to which the Plan relates is classified as *good* and *high*, however, sections of rivers and streams including Owengarve, Glenisland, Castlebar, Moyour and Altaconey are identified as being of *poor* due to unsatisfactory ecological/biological and/or physio-chemical status.

The WFD surface water status (2013-2018) for rivers, lakes, coastal and transitional waters, within and surrounding the area to which the Plan relates is shown on Figure 3.3.

The WFD groundwater status (2013-2018) of all groundwater underlying the area to which the Plan relates is identified as being of *good* status, meeting the objectives of the WFD, apart from an area of *poor* groundwater status located to the east of Newport.

Aquifer Vulnerability

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The vulnerability of aquifers underlying the area to which the Plan relates are generally classified as being of:

- *High, moderate and low vulnerability*, in most of the area to which the Plan relates; and
- *Extreme vulnerability and extreme (rock at or near surface or karst)* mainly in the upland and coastal areas in the south and north of the area to which the Plan relates.

Bathing Waters

For bathing waters, Mandatory and Guide Values are set out for bathing waters in the 2006 EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Regulations. Mandatory Values are values that must be observed if the bathing area is to be deemed compliant with the Directive. Compliance with Guide Values exceeds guidance with Mandatory Values and can be regarded as quality objectives which bathing sites should endeavour to achieve.

Bathing waters are now classed into four quality categories: *excellent*, *good*, *sufficient*, or *poor* with a minimum target of *sufficient* required to be achieved for all bathing waters.

The most recent available data from the EPA⁶ shows that all bathing waters within the area to which the Plan area relates reported on are of *good*⁷ and *excellent*⁸ water quality.

Flooding

Certain areas across the area to which the Plan relates are at risk from coastal, groundwater, pluvial⁹ and fluvial¹⁰ flooding. Historical flooding is documented at a number of locations, including: Louisburgh; Newport; Westport; Mallaranny; and Dooagh.

Predictive flood risk mapping is available from the Office of Public Works (OPW) for rivers and coastal areas across the area to which the Plan relates.

A number of settlements in County Mayo were identified by the OPW in 2012 as requiring detailed assessment of flood risk (Areas for Further Assessment), including settlements in the area to which the Plan relates: Louisburgh; Newport; Westport; and Westport Quay.

⁶ EPA Report on *Bathing Water Quality in Ireland 2019*

⁷ Carrowniskey, Louisburgh; Golden Strand Achill Island; and Old Head Beach, Louisburgh.

⁸ Bertra Beach, Murrisk; Carrowmore Beach, Louisburgh; Clare Island, Louisburgh; Dooega Beach, Achill Island; Dugort Beach, Achill Island; Keel Beach, Achill Island; Keem Beach, Achill Island; and Mulranny Beach.

⁹ Resulting from high intensity rainfall events where run-off volume exceeds capacity of surface water network.

¹⁰ Watercourse capacity is exceeded or the channel is blocked and excess water spills from the channel onto adjacent floodplains.

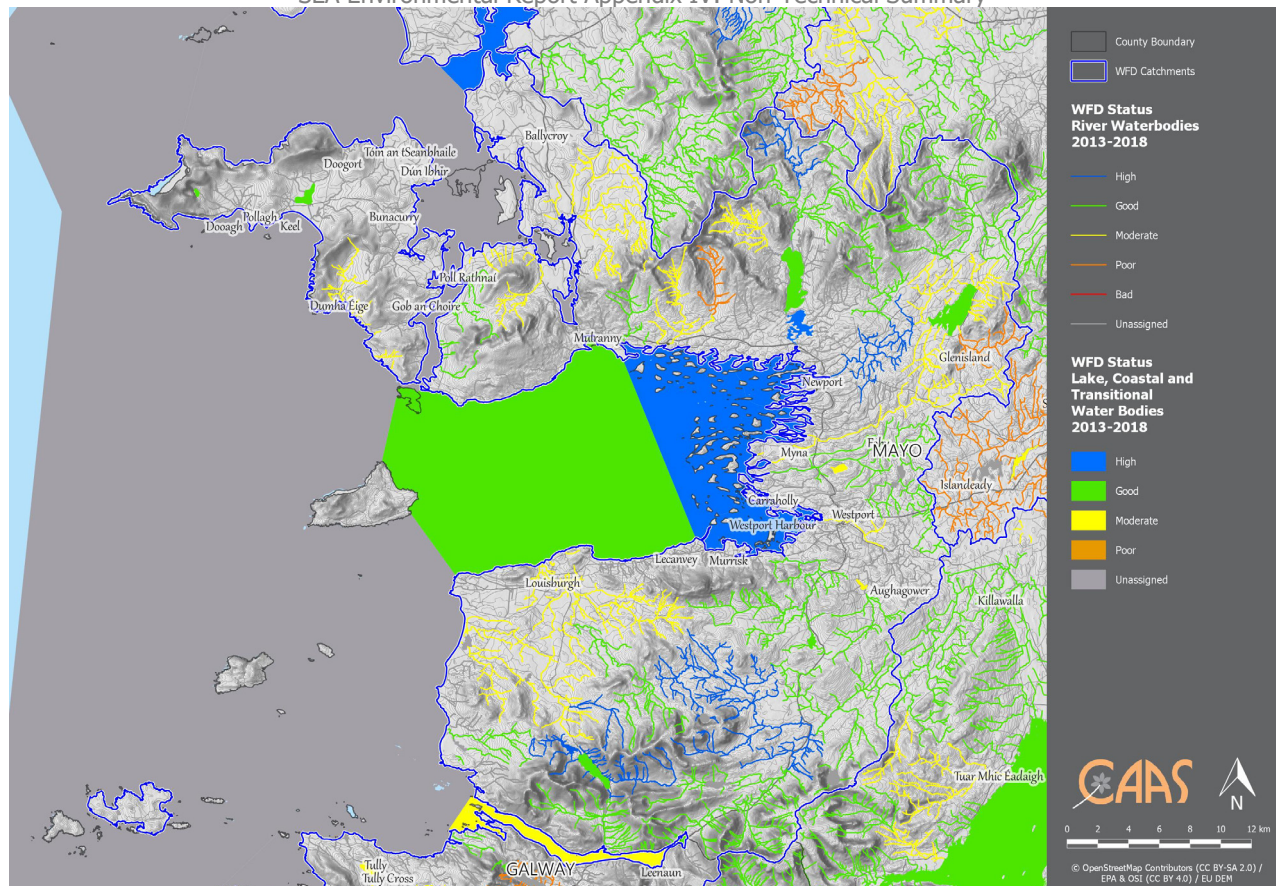


Figure 3.3 Surface Water Status (2010-2015)

3.7 Air and Climatic Factors

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

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

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

Total emissions of greenhouse gases by humans come from various sectors including transport, agriculture, energy industries, manufacturing combustion, industrial processes, residential developments, commercial services developments, waste management processes and fluorinated gases equipment (such as refrigeration and fire protection systems). Ireland's National Policy position is to reduce CO₂ emissions in 2050 by 80% on 1990 levels across the Energy Generation, Built Environment and Transport sectors, with a goal of Climate neutrality in the Agriculture and Land-Use sector. The 2016 emissions for all of these sectors were identified as being rising, making achievement of long-term goals more difficult.

The Climate Change Advisory Council's Annual Review 2019 identifies that the most recent projections demonstrate that, under different assumptions, Ireland will not meet its emissions reduction targets, even with the additional policies and measures included in the National Development Plan. The projections also show that progress on reducing emissions is sensitive to the future path of fuel prices. A significant and sustained rate of emissions reduction of approximately -2.5% per year is required to meet objectives for 2050. However, it must be noted that additional measures within the recent Climate Action Plan are not included in the analysis to date.

In order to comply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at locations across the

country. The current¹¹ air quality in the Rural West Air Quality Region, including the area to which the Plan relates, is identified by the EPA as being *good*.

3.8 Material Assets

Waste Water

There is one Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) partially serving the area to which the Plan relates (located at Newport) listed as one of two priority areas in County Mayo, where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues.

Settlements and rural areas across the area to which the Plan relates are served by a combined sewer network, including number of Urban Wastewater Treatment Plants (including locations at: Westport; Mallaranny; Achill Island; Doogort; and Louisburgh), sewerage schemes and septic tanks.

The most recent Irish Water compliance reports for the wastewater treatment plants serving the area to which the Plan relates provide information on the environmental performance and wastewater discharge licence compliance of the following WWTP¹²:

- Westport WWTP (licence no. D0055-01) - non-compliant with the Emission Limit Values (ELVs) set in the wastewater discharge licence.
- Achill Island Central WWTP (licence no. D0072-01) - non-compliant with the ELVs set in the wastewater discharge licence due to failed total Oxidised Nitrogen parameters.
- Achill Sound WWTP (licence no. D0511-01) - fully compliant with the ELVs set in the wastewater discharge licence.
- Mallaranny WWTP (licence no. D0218-01) - fully compliant with the ELVs set in the waste water discharge licence.
- Louisburgh WWTP (licence D0220-01) non - compliant with the ELVs set in the wastewater discharge licence due to failed ammonia parameters.
- Doogort WWTP (licence no. D0367-01) - non-compliant with the ELVs set in the wastewater discharge licence due to failed ammonia parameters.

Irish Water, working in partnership with Mayo County Council, is investing one million euro to undertake essential upgrade works to wastewater treatment plants in towns and villages across County Mayo. These improvement works include upgrades to the inlet works, storm water management and sludge treatment and storage facilities. As part of the project, upgrade works are proposed to be completed in settlements including Mulranny, Ballindine, Ballycastle, Gweesalia and Shrulie. Capacity improvements will help to support new development in these areas, including tourism related development.¹³

Water Supply

Under Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, the EPA is required to collect and verify monitoring results for all water supplies in Ireland covered by the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. The EPA publishes their results in annual reports that are supported by Remedial Action Lists (RALs). The RAL identifies water supplies that are not in compliance with the Regulations mentioned above.

The most recent¹⁴ EPA Remedial Action List (Q3 of 2020) identifies two drinking water supplies serving the population within or partially within the area to which the Plan relates:

- Newport Public Water Supply (due to elevated levels of pesticides above the standard in the Drinking Water Regulations) – the proposed action programme includes Complete catchment-focussed engagement actions involving Irish Water and the relevant stakeholders to achieve compliance with the limits for pesticides by December 2021; and
- Ballycastle Public Water Supply (due to inadequate treatment for cryptosporidium) - the proposed action programme is a replacement of water supply with the Ballina - Lisglennon Public Water Supply by December 2020.

Public Assets and Infrastructure

Public assets and infrastructure that have the potential to be impacted upon by the development of tourism related infrastructure, if unmitigated, include: resources such as public open spaces, parks and

¹¹ 17/11/2020 (<http://www.epa.ie/air/quality/>)

¹² Irish Water (2019) *Annual Environmental Reports (AERs)*

¹³ <https://www.water.ie/projects-plans/mayo-wastewater-treatment/>

¹⁴ The Achill Public Water Supply Scheme, associated group water schemes and parts of the adjacent mainland, were affected by 'Do Not Consume' notice in August 2020 due to detectable higher levels of aluminum in the drinking water. (www.water.ie)

recreational areas; public buildings and services; and utility infrastructure (electricity, gas, telecommunications, water supply, wastewater infrastructure etc.). These resources are generally located within the immediate outskirts of urban/suburban areas.

Waste Management

Waste management across the area to which the Plan relates is guided by the Connacht Ulster Waste Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021.

Existing Problems

The provisions of infrastructure and supporting services for development, particularly water and wastewater services, is critical.

2018 saw long dry spells, which Met Éireann compared to 1976 when similar drought conditions were experienced across the country. The prolonged hot weather during the summer caused a huge increase in water usage across the country. As demand for water rose to critical levels, Irish Water's supplies were put under severe stress as more water was being used than could be produced.

Irish Water is currently preparing a National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) to address issues with the supply and demand for drinking water in Ireland over the short, medium and long term. Measures have been integrated into the DEDP that will ensure that those receiving funding from Fáilte Ireland will not direct additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure have been identified.

3.9 Cultural Heritage

Archaeological Heritage

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

The archaeology of the area to which the Plan relates ranges from standing stones, megalithic tombs, fulacht fiadh and prehistoric rock art to more recent remains including medieval castles relics, priories, industrial maritime ports, and marginal lands once ravaged by famine. There are also a number of National Monuments in State Care, including: Clare Island Abbey; Carrickildavnet Castle; Murrisk Abbey; and Burrishoole Abbey. These monuments are mapped on Figure 3.4.

Architectural Heritage

Records of Protected Structures are legislated for under Section 12 and Section 51 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Protected structures are defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view.

Similar to the general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within settlements, such as Westport, Newport and Louisburgh. Protected Structures within the area to which the Plan relates include Delphi Lodge, Delphi, Newport House, Ardagh Lodge, Trafalgar Lodge and Clare Island Lighthouse. Protected structures designated across the area to which the Plan relates are mapped on Figure 3.4.

In addition to Protected Structures, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The ACA designation requires that planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure in the ACA that might alter the character of the structure or the ACA. There are many ACAs designated across the area to which the Plan relates, including those located in Westport.

3.10 Landscape

Topography

The Clew Bay area comprises an attractive and varied landscape and seascape with rivers, lakes, boglands, pastures and mountains, stretching into the Atlantic Ocean on Ireland's west coast. The Bay is dominated by glacially formed drumlins that have been partially submerged, creating many offshore islands. Clew Bay is situated between the upland areas of Croagh Patrick to the south and the Nephin Beg Range to the north. Some of Ireland's highest rocky sea cliffs are found adjacent to the Bay, on Achill Island and Clare Island. The cliffs on Achill Head (650 m high) drop vertically into the sea forming steep sublittoral reefs.

Landscape Character Assessment

The area to which the Plan relates is identified as being situated within the Landscape Character Units as listed below¹⁵:

- Area A: Achill, Clare, Inishturk and related Coastal Complex;
- Area B: North-West Coastal Moorland;
- Area C: North-West Coastal Bog;
- Area E: North Mayo Mountain Moorland;
- Area J: Clew Bay Glacial Drumlins;
- Area N: South-West Mountain Moorlands;
- Area O: Croagh Patrick Association; and
- Area P: South-West Coastal Basin.

Character units with similar visual landscape elements were grouped according to four categories of 'Principle Policy Areas' in County Mayo' (also shown on Figure 3.5):

- Policy Area 1: Montaine Coastal;
- Policy Area 2: Lowland Coastal;
- Policy Area 3: Uplands, moors, heath or bogs; and
- Policy Area 4: Drumlins and lowlands.

Areas designated as 'vulnerable' within Landscape Character Units include the coastline, the banks of rivers, the shorelines of all lakes, the skylines of upland areas and headlands and promontories. These areas are protected by the current Mayo County Development Plan.

County Galway is adjacent to the south of the area to which the Plan relates and the current Galway County Development Plan includes landscape protection and management policies. Landscape Character Areas identified in this part of County Galway include Killary Harbour and Joyce's Country, both of which are identified as being of outstanding value and both of which contain areas of elevated landscape sensitivity.

Scenic Routes Protected Views and Highly Scenic Vistas

The area to which the Plan relates contains many sites, areas and vantage points from which views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, may be obtained.

The landscape designations provided for by the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020 (as varied) and Local Area Plans in force in the area to which the Plan relates¹⁶ must be considered when assessing planning applications. These designations (mapped on Figure 3.5) include: Scenic Routes; Viewing Points; Scenic Views; and Highly Scenic Views.

¹⁵ *Landscape Appraisal*, Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020 (as varied)

¹⁶ Including Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2019 and Castlebar and Environs Development Plan 2008-2014.
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Map of County Mayo showing Scenic Routes and Views

Legend:

- County Boundary
- Rivers & Streams
- Lake
- Scenic Routes and Views**
 - Scenic Route
 - Highly Scenic View
 - Scenic View
 - Viewing Point
- Landscape Policy Areas**
 - Policy Area 1
 - Policy Area 2
 - Policy Area 3
 - Policy Area 3A
 - Policy Area 4
 - Policy Area 4A

Map Labels: Doogort, Ioin an tSeamhaile, Dan Ibhí, Ballycroy, Bunacory, Poll Rathnaí, Dúmh Eige, Gob an Chloí, Mulranney, Glenisland, Newport, Myna, Carraghally, Westport, Islandeady, Louisburgh, Lecanvey, Murrisk, Westport Harbour, Aughagower, Killawalla, Tully Tully Cross, Lecaun, Tuar Mhic Eadaigh.

Scale: 0 2 4 6 8 10 12 km

Source: © OpenStreetMap Contributors (CC BY-SA 2.0) / EPA & OSI (CC BY 4.0) / EU DEM

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3.11 Strategic Environmental Objectives

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

Table 3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	Code	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1	To contribute towards compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species ¹⁷
	B2	To contribute towards compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species
	B3	To contribute towards avoidance of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites ¹⁸ and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act
Population and Human Health	PHH1	To contribute towards the protection of populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses
Soil	S1	To minimise land take and loss to extent of soil resource
Water	W1	To contribute towards the maintenance and improvement, where possible, of the quality and status of surface waters
	W2	To contribute towards maintaining and improving, where possible, the chemical and quantitative status of groundwaters
	W3	To contribute towards compliance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines
Air and Climatic Factors	AC1	To contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation
Material Assets	M1	For development to be served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health
	M2	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, including that relating to recreation and leisure, transport, utilities and marine areas and fisheries
	M3	To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse
Cultural Heritage	CH1	To contribute towards the protection of archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context
	CH2	To contribute towards the protection of architectural heritage including entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context
Landscape	L1	To avoid conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans

¹⁷ 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

¹⁸ The definition of a 'wildlife site' provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, includes Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs.

Section 4 Alternatives

4.1 Description of Alternatives

Alternative 1: Business as Usual

As identified in the Plan, there are various strengths associated with the current tourism development situation include:

- Nationally significant hiking and cycling trails network
- Pristine natural environment and scenic beauty, including diversity of islands
- Distinctive shape
- Croagh Patrick spiritual asset
- Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and Dark Skies recognition
- Rich cultural scape strong themes
- Pearl of settlements diversity of towns and villages
- Recognition for local food, arts and craft, writers, adventure and well being
- Westport direct rail to Dublin

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

- Public infrastructure transportation services, toilets, parking
- Insufficient non peak season experiences
- Lack of funding for development particularly in key historical sites
- Seasonality
- Trail erosion on Croagh Patrick
- Insufficient investment in marine tourism
- Accommodation varied needs
- Sustainability of island life
- Marketing and promotion of Clew Bay as a destination
- Lack of a coordinated regional approach to tourism development

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

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

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

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

- Motivating visitors to stay overnight and spend more;
- Extending the length of the season;
- Improving the overall economy of communities through strengthening individual businesses, creating new entrepreneurial opportunities sustaining and increasing job creation and increasing the attractiveness of the area for other forms of economic growth; and
- Promoting collaboration and partnership, supporting engagement of businesses, and building lasting links between national and regional partners, local agencies and associations, and local tourism experiences.

Under Alternative 2 there are two separate alternatives:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2 Detailed Consideration of Alternatives

Alternative 1: Business as Usual

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Plan would also help to promote new experiences – including those relating to land use activities and developments. These would also have the potential to increase adverse effects. Notwithstanding this, there would be three layers of mitigation, through:

- The existing statutory planning and consent framework;
- Visitor management strategies; and
- Additional environmental requirements for environmental protection and management, under this alternative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 4.1 Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives against SEOs

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

4.3 Selected Alternative for the Plan

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

Section 5 Summary of Effects arising from Plan

Table 5.1 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Plan Provisions

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁹			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna (in designated sites, including European Sites and Wildlife Sites, and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats) including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor management strategies; and DEDP requirements for environmental protection and management. Contributes towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil. 	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces arising from projects consented through the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. Losses or damage to ecology (these would be: in compliance with relevant legislation; and mitigated as projects would demonstrate compliance with various environmental protection and management measures) 	B1 B2 B3
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of human health including through DEDP requirements for environmental protection and management. Contribution towards the protection of human health as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access. Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities within the Clew Bay area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated. Potential interactions if additional tourists are directed towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. 	PHH1

¹⁹ Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism) that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework including the NPF, RSES and lower-tier land use plans. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, access or accommodation. Mitigation includes that which has been integrated into the Plan – please refer to Section 6 of this report.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁹			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various provisions (e.g. relating to maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed) help to minimise land-take and loss of extent of soil resource. Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination. Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites. Potential for increase in coastal /river bank erosion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces and from sea level rise/coastal erosion. 	S1
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of water resources (including the status of surface and groundwaters), bathing water quality and water-based designations including through integrating requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan. Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in flood risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan. Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by: measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. 	W1 W2 W3
Air and climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking and cycling; and Contribution towards European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures including those relating to resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict, in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors including transport and land use planning, between increases in visitors (which is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions to air, including from aviation, with associated interactions with climatic factors) and local, national and European objectives to reduce carbon emissions. Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and compliance with the Climate Action Plan 2019 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions). Risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate and interactions with issues including flooding and material assets. 	AC1
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure. Contains clear objectives around seasonality and regionality which look not only to spread the benefits of tourism but also the potential impacts/ load associated with tourism. Helps to minimise likelihood of exceeding capacity in material assets as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels. The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Irish Water to provide for such needs). Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies. Increased loading on critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) where no significant problems have been identified with this infrastructure. Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however such risks will be mitigated by: measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework. 	M1 M2 M3

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁹			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage by encouraging greater levels of awareness and appreciation through, use, interpretation and access, in line with the requirements relating to the protection of cultural heritage including: entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context; and entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage. Potential effects on architectural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation. Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Plan. 	CH1 CH2
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations as a result of: facilitating compliance with relevant plans; and maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, estuary, island and ridge areas where, and conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape. Changes in the appearance of the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residual visual effects (these would comply with landscape designation provisions). 	L1

Section 6 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

6.1 Mitigation

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

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

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised.

Mitigation was achieved through the following:

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

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

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

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance²⁰ with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

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

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

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

²⁰ Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.

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

6.2 Monitoring

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

Sources

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

Other existing monitoring sources will be used, including:

- Information gathered through existing Fáilte Ireland environmental monitoring programmes (and any subsequent replacements), including the Monitoring Programme for the Wild Atlantic Way, a sub-programme of which will be extended to/reported on for the Clew Bay DEDP area in order to monitor any effects of visitors;
- Sources maintained by Mayo County Council (such as those arising from the SEA of land use plans) and the relevant authorities e.g. the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Statistics Office; and
- Lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making – including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents – will also be utilised as part of the Monitoring Programme.

Reporting and Responsibility

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

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

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

Table 6.1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan ²¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs' report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years) Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs' National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years) Consultations with the NPWS CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from Plan	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan	
	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan	
	B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan	
Population and Human Health	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Consultations with the HSE and EPA Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Soil	S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent	S1: Contribute towards the target of the National Planning Framework's SEA (2018) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes

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

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
Water	W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)	W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual) • EPA <i>The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland</i> reports • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan	
	W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD	
	W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	
Air and Climatic Factors	AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.	C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Material Assets	M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable	M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water and/or Mayo County Council • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	
	M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans	M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects	

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
Cultural Heritage	CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan	CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
Landscape	L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1 • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes